



10 April 2007

1<sup>st</sup> Floor North Building  
Corner London Circuit and Civic Square  
Canberra City ACT 2601

The Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on the  
National Capital and External Territories  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

PO Box 1144 Civic Square 2608  
Phone 02 6230 0533  
Fax 02 6230 0544  
ABN 50 797 949 955  
E-mail [info@act.nationaltrust.org.au](mailto:info@act.nationaltrust.org.au)  
[www.act.nationaltrust.org.au](http://www.act.nationaltrust.org.au)

## **INQUIRY INTO THE ROLE OF THE NCA**

We are pleased to make a submission to this inquiry. The key points we make are:

1. There is a role for the NCA or an equivalent body to look after the Commonwealth and National interests in Canberra. To date the two planning authorities have failed to protect National Heritage interests and Canberra as a National Capital. The planning infrastructure has failed to deliver an efficient functioning Canberra (roads and water) and has presided over a less than satisfactory development and planning of Civic.

It is essential that planning authorities recognize that Canberra is our National Capital and a city of high planning and heritage interest and that National heritage values need to be articulated and understood and then planned and implemented at all levels.

A suitable planning model for the ACT would be the same as the systems operating in the States where State planning agencies set standards and policies which local government authorities must follow and implement. The same should occur in Canberra with the Commonwealth responsible for the nationally significant aspects of the capital (as intended by the Constitution) including areas of national significance such as the inner hills, lake Burley Griffin and major transport infrastructure. The Commonwealth as the superior planning body would establish overarching planning policies and major infrastructure plans, with the Territory administering local matters such as housing and residential sub-division.

2. There remains a role for the NCA or an equivalent body for National promotion and responsibility for National Projects.
3. There are problems with the current structure in that heritage places on NCA controlled land which have no Commonwealth interest are not protected by the EPBC Act and not protected by the ACT Heritage Act. This is clearly untenable and needs to be rectified. There needs to be some legal and /or administrative arrangement implemented between Territory/Federal Authorities to correct this anomaly.

4. There needs to be some administrative review process for NCA decision other than an appeal to the Joint Standing Committee. Planning decisions throughout Australia are subject to some appeal mechanism as part of good governance and this needs to be available for NCA planning matters as well. This has become particularly relevant with several NCA proposals which have been put forward without appropriate consultation and have only been subject to a review as a result of intense public pressure.
5. NCA control of residential areas such as part of Forrest is quite inappropriate and inconsistent with a unified residential planning control of Canberra. This has led to some unfortunate events in the past such as unsympathetic development, demolition of heritage significant houses and a different planning policy from one side of a street to another without any clear understanding of the reasons why. To overcome this it is essential that one planning authority has planning control for Residential areas.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. J. Martin', written in a cursive style.

Eric J. Martin, AM  
*President*