

The arguments for and against the Immigration Bridge

Introduction

- 4.1 There are a number of arguments both for and against the construction of the proposed Immigration Bridge. This includes the possible impact the bridge could have on: various users of Lake Burley Griffin (the Lake); vista and heritage values of the surrounding Lake foreshores; and how the bridge is expected to accommodate mobility impaired persons and cyclists.

The potential impact on Lake users

- 4.2 Notwithstanding the NCA's attempts to address Lake user concerns through the Lake Users Group, the sailing, dragon boat and rowing communities continue to have concerns about the impact that the proposed bridge would have on their activities.
- 4.3 Yacht Clubs are concerned about safety issues which would arise if the proposed bridge is built. One of the largest clubs which uses the Lake for water sports, the Canberra Yacht Club (CYC), stated that it is currently:

...going through a very significant growth program both of membership and participation. In the last five years our membership has increased from less than 300 to more than 600.

And our racing fleet numbers have gone up from somewhere around 40 to approaching 90. ...With large numbers of boats, we

need as much space as possible to sail in. When we have major regattas each one typically has well over 100 boats.¹

Because of the existing constraints on the area available for fair and safe sailing, the imposition of any further obstacles or constraints would have a disproportionate impact on the CYC's ability to use the lake, and particularly to support higher levels of competition associated with state and national championships.²

An often raised objection from interstate sailing clubs to Canberra's ability to hold major boating events on Lake Burley Griffin is the already relatively limited area of the lake.³

4.4 Further, CYC stated that, if the proposed bridge is built, aside from the hazard generated by the bridge pylons as obstacles for safe manoeuvring of individual boats, there is also a risk of collision between boats in a waterway confined and obstructed by bridge pylons. The presence of pylons in the space between Acton Peninsula and Lennox gardens 'will inevitably be a hazard, particularly under adverse conditions and with trainees, with safety becoming a real issue.'⁴

4.5 Mr David Townsend made the point that even if the bridge is built 12 metres above water level, with pylons at least 70 metres apart and soft collars where boats might collide with the pylons, and design features to reduce wind turbulence:

...there would still be substantial reduction in the ability of sailing clubs to lay racing and training courses that would not be adversely affected by the structure, whatever the distance between pylons. In some weather conditions, the wide vicinity of the bridge would have to be avoided altogether. This would mean less flexibility in laying courses that would be safe and large enough for a good standard of competition. In turn, this would have a deleterious effect on the ability to continue to grow the sport in Canberra and to attract sailors from elsewhere for major events.⁵

4.6 CYC concluded that from a safety perspective, sailing courses could not be set to pass in the vicinity of, or under the proposed bridge. Water available

1 Canberra Yacht Club, Mr Graham Giles, *Transcript T1*, p. 47.

2 Canberra Yacht Club, *Submission 46*, p. 2.

3 Mr Ken Cartwright, *Submission 59*, p. 4.

4 Canberra Yacht Club, *Submission 46*, p. 3.

5 Mr David Townsend, *Submission 15*, p. 3.

for racing in both West Basin and the eastern end of West Lake, and for training in other than benign conditions, would be constrained.⁶

- 4.7 A member of the CYC who has extensive experience driving rescue boats on the Lake believes that the pylons for the proposed bridge would greatly increase the risk to those sailing on the Lake. Mr Paddy Hodgman stated:

...the complexity of retrieving upturned boats and wet sailors is exponentially compounded when in close proximity to any fixed obstacle, and the highest demand for rescue inevitably arises in weather conditions which exponentially increase the difficulty of manoeuvre, even for a powered vessel.⁷

- 4.8 Yachting ACT stated that the proposed bridge would 'create a significant hazard to yachts seeking to transit the area immediately West of the Commonwealth [Avenue] Bridge.'⁸

- 4.9 Another member of the CYC explained that 'children love sailing up to the fountain' and asserted that this pleasure would be taken away if the proposed bridge is built.⁹

- 4.10 According to CYC, design alone is 'unlikely to adequately ameliorate the adverse impact' of putting the sort of bridge which has been proposed in the suggested location.¹⁰

- 4.11 The Canberra Dragon Boat Association (CDBA) said it would no longer be able to hold Australian Championships and sanctioned international events under the International Dragon Boat Federation if the proposed bridge is built. The reason given is that its 1000 metre course which runs from Commonwealth Avenue Bridge to the CYC tower at Lotus Bay would lose its lanes of clear water to the pylons of the proposed bridge. With no other comparable course existing, the proposed bridge would immediately eliminate the CDBA 1000 metre course and Canberra would no longer be considered as a national or international race venue.¹¹ This would seriously impact the club's future as:

A significant part of our development plans, future income, as well as more abstract concepts such as recruitment and retention

6 Canberra Yacht Club, *Submission 46*, p. 3.

7 Mr Paddy Hodgman, *Submission 19*, p. 2.

8 Yachting ACT, *Submission 49*, p. 4.

9 Name withheld, *Submission 47*, p. 1.

10 Canberra Yacht Club, *Submission 46*, p. 4.

11 Canberra Dragon Boat Association, *Submission 64*, p. 1.

of participants relies on holding this standard of events, and being able to race them.¹²

- 4.12 The CDBA also expressed significant safety concerns for members during training times if the proposed bridge was built. The CDBA stated:

The proposed alignment of the Bridge will provide difficult and dangerous navigation during night time and early morning hours, and in rough waters, when the regular strong winds and waves are already proving difficult to our membership.¹³

- 4.13 The ACT Rowing Association put the view that for rowers using the Lake, 'any additional structure on the lake is a hazard to rowing.'¹⁴ However, rowers could benefit from a different sort of bridge from the one proposed. The ACT Rowing Association advocated that:

If it were a low-level single-span bridge in the vicinity of Weston Park over to Black Mountain Peninsula or from Weston Park over to Lady Denman Drive, and if it were sufficiently high for rowing boats to get under but not other traffic, there would be attractions in it because it would restrict power boats from going into the rowing area.¹⁵

- 4.14 The ACT Rowing Association noted that:

The tidal range on the lake is very small, so [a bridge height of] a metre and a half would be adequate clearance to get under safely.¹⁶

Pedestrians and cyclists

- 4.15 The IBA described its proposed bridge as 'a pedestrian bridge across Lake Burley Griffin'.¹⁷ IBA also stated that the bridge will be 'disabled people and cyclist friendly'.¹⁸

- 4.16 The issue of whether or not cyclists will also be able to use the bridge, and if it will be safe for cyclists and pedestrians to share the bridge, was raised by many people. Pedal Power ACT noted that:

12 Canberra Dragon Boat Association, *Submission 64*, p. 1.

13 Canberra Dragon Boat Association, *Submission 64*, p. 2.

14 ACT Rowing Association, *Submission 31*, p. 1.

15 ACT Rowing Association, Mr Simon Tulloh, *Transcript T1*, p. 40.

16 ACT Rowing Association, Mr Simon Tulloh, *Transcript T1*, p. 40.

17 Immigration Bridge Australia, *Submission 29*, p. 1.

18 Immigration Bridge Australia, *Submission 29*, p. 3.

All publicity to date has described the Immigration Bridge as a 'pedestrian bridge'. It took considerable effort by Pedal Power to obtain assurances from Immigration Bridge Australia (IBA) that bicycles would even be permitted to use the bridge. To date there is little evidence that bicycle riders will be welcomed users. For example, IBA chairman Andrew Baulch suggested as recently as May 2008 that bicycle riders would preferably have to dismount.¹⁹

- 4.17 Pedal Power ACT added, following several communications with IBA since late 2006, that:

...we understand that bicycles will be permitted on the bridge, but not necessarily that the bridge will be built as a bicycle-friendly facility.²⁰

- 4.18 Pedal Power ACT noted that cycling in Canberra is becoming increasingly popular and, therefore, any new infrastructure like the proposed bridge should accommodate cyclists. Pedal Power ACT explained:

This is primarily because it is relatively cheap and easy to install cycling-friendly infrastructure when something is first built but prohibitively expensive to do it at a later date.²¹

- 4.19 IBA confirmed that the bridge is intended to be constructed with access ramps suitable for bicycles at either end. Pedal Power ACT noted that the specifications for ramps would need to be:

...the shallowest possible inclinations - for ease of climbing and safety when descending. If space at the bridge ends is limited, then spiral ramps would be acceptable. We acknowledge that catering for bridge users (such as wheelchair users, bicycle riders and walkers) and sailors creates design conflicts, but we believe these can be managed with careful ramp design that keeps gradients to a minimum while allowing sufficient clearance beneath the bridge for boat masts.²²

- 4.20 Pedal Power ACT anticipates that a large number of the 400 cyclists who ride across Commonwealth Avenue Bridge each hour at peak times would use the Immigration Bridge because their main destination is the Australian National University. Additionally, Canberra's large recreational cycling community would also use the proposed bridge and

19 Pedal Power ACT Inc., *Submission 30*, p. 2.

20 Pedal Power ACT Inc., Mr Terry George, *Transcript T1*, p. 64.

21 Pedal Power ACT Inc., Mr Terry George, *Transcript T1*, p. 64.

22 Pedal Power ACT Inc., *Submission 30*, p. 3.

Pedal Power ACT is 'confident that the numbers of people needing to ride bicycles on Immigration Bridge will more than justify making it a bicycle-friendly facility'.²³

Access for mobility impaired persons

4.21 As mentioned, the IBA has stated that the proposed bridge will be 'disabled people ...friendly'.²⁴

4.22 Concerns that the proposed bridge would provide suitable access for mobility impaired persons and the elderly were raised in several submissions and most noted that proper access would mean that lifts may need to be installed at each end of the bridge.²⁵

Safety and security considerations

4.23 There are two distinct safety issues concerning the proposed bridge:

- the safety of people using the Lake and foreshore area in the vicinity of the proposed bridge and
- the safety of everyone who is on the bridge, including while they are using the access ramps or lifts.

4.24 The question of the safety of people on the Lake in the vicinity of the proposed bridge has been addressed in the preceding discussion on the potential impact on Lake users. The following paragraphs will examine the issue of the safety of people using the proposed bridge.

4.25 Concern was raised that the westerly winds which are common on the Lake can be quite strong and will make crossing the bridge uncomfortable, if not frightening.²⁶ Mr Clever Elliott noted that in the area of the proposed bridge the westerly wind 'is significant in both speed and frequency'.²⁷

4.26 Mr John Holland put the view that a pedestrian bridge in the proposed area would be a forbidding place both during the months when Canberra is subject to cold westerly winds and also in the warmer months when

23 Pedal Power ACT Inc., Mr Terry George, *Transcript T1*, p. 64.

24 Immigration Bridge Australia, *Submission 29*, p. 3.

25 Emeritus Professor D.J. Mulvaney AO, CMG, *Submission 14*, p. 2; Mr David Townsend, *Submission 15*, p. 2; Mr Penleigh Boyd, *Submission 17*, p. 1; Dr John Gray, *Submission 24*, p. 4; and, Mr Simon Johnstone, *Submission 53*, p. 6;

26 Mr Cleaver Elliott, *Submission 12*, p. 3.

27 Mr Cleaver Elliott, *Submission 12*, p. 3.

people on the bridge would experience the strong north-westerlies and westerlies.²⁸

- 4.27 The possibility of crime on the bridge was also raised. It was noted that if the bridge does not carry continuous pedestrian traffic it may become a lonely and even dangerous experience if only a few people are on the bridge at a time.²⁹ Mr David Merz stated that if a crime did occur:

...one could expect a reduction in pedestrians prepared to use the bridge and the crime risk would increase, unless the bridge had a permanent security patrol.³⁰

- 4.28 Further, concern was raised regarding the possibility of collisions between cyclists and pedestrians sharing a narrow bridge. Mr Tim Glover stated:

The potential for accidents would be high, unless cyclists are to walk their bikes across the bridge.³¹

- 4.29 Pedal Power ACT noted that it will be important that a bridge 'be of sufficient width to cope with the expected cycling and pedestrian traffic volumes with minimum user conflict.'³²

- 4.30 Mr Simon Johnstone noted that it might be difficult to insure bridge users because of the mix of potential users on a relatively narrow structure. Mr Johnstone stated:

Introduce prams, disabled and pets, then cyclists and the super fit joggers or optimistic on roller-blades; and I for one would not want to be the Immigration Bridge's insurance company.³³

The potential impact on heritage issues

- 4.31 The ACT Heritage Council stated that it was not convinced that heritage matters associated with the proposed bridge would be identified and pursued in the way they would be in other jurisdictions. The ACT Heritage Council stated:

28 Mr John Holland, *Submission 22*, p. 5.

29 Mr Cleaver Elliott, *Submission 12*, p. 3.

30 Mr David Merz, *Submission 34*, p. 2.

31 Mr Tim Glover, *Submission 56*, p. 3.

32 Pedal Power ACT Inc., *Submission 30*, p. 4.

33 Mr Simon Johnstone, *Submission 53*, p. 6.

We would urge that the Immigration Bridge proposal be robustly assessed in relation to the current heritage assessment of Lake Burley Griffin being undertaken by NCA, the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct National Heritage List nomination and ACT Heritage Register and RNE [Register of the National Estate] registrations, and the current assessment of the adjacent Parliament House Vista.³⁴

- 4.32 As highlighted in Chapter 3, the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts confirmed that the design and construction of a pedestrian bridge has the potential to impact on possible heritage values of the Lake.³⁵
- 4.33 The National Trust of Australia (ACT) (the Trust) listed the Lake and surrounding foreshores as a Classified Place in 1986. In 2008 the Trust included the Lake and foreshores in the national 'Heritage at Risk' programme because of what it considered to be a range of inappropriate development and development plans which would impact on the Lake's heritage values, including 'construction of the open car parking areas by Commonwealth Avenue Bridge', Draft Amendment 53 (DA53) for the Albert Hall precinct and 'draft Weston Park Management Plan'.³⁶
- 4.34 The CYC believes that so far IBA has:
- ...failed to properly take into account either the heritage values of the lake or its foreshore, or the interests of users of the lake (or of the wider community).³⁷
- 4.35 Friends of the Albert Hall expressed a 'deep concern' that the proposed bridge would impact adversely on the heritage values of the Albert Hall and the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct, including impact on water and landscape vistas; intrusion on landscape by bridge pylons and ramps; and loss of public amenity of surrounding land.³⁸
- 4.36 DA53 defines the area west of Commonwealth Avenue to Lennox Gardens and north from the croquet club to the lakeside at the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge as the Albert Hall precinct.³⁹

34 ACT Heritage Council, *Submission 55*, p. 2.

35 Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, *Submission 66*, p. 1.

36 National Trust of Australia (ACT), *Submission 42*, pp 3-4.

37 Canberra Yacht Club, *Submission 46*, p. 1.

38 Friends of the Albert Hall Inc., *Submission 21*, p. 1.

39 Friends of the Albert Hall Inc., Dr Lenore Coltheart, *Transcript T2*, p. 14.

4.37 Friends of the Albert Hall's concerns are primarily about the heritage impact of the bridge proposal. Friends of the Albert Hall stated:

The Friends do not have a formed view on an immigration memorial in Canberra, nor on whether this could be a bridge. However, we have serious concerns about the impact of the proposed bridge, as identified in DA53, on both the public amenity and the heritage values of the DA53 precinct, particularly the heritage values identified within the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct. The allocation of 2,000 square metres of lakeside land for the onshore access and facilities area for the bridge would lead to the loss of a well-used public amenity. We are concerned about the impact of parking and other facilities for cars and tourist buses on the amenity and the heritage values of the DA53 precinct. The bulk and intrusion of bridge pylons high enough to give the bridge clearance and safety for vessels would compromise the lake and landscape vistas identified as significant elements of the Albert Hall Heritage Precinct.⁴⁰

4.38 The Walter Burley Griffin Society and Yarralumla Residents Association noted that other heritage issues deserve consideration under the bridge proposal. These included:

- The interests of local indigenous people: both Lennox Crossing and the bend in the Molonglo are sites of special significance to local indigenous people.⁴¹
- The history of sailing on the lake over the past 45 years.⁴²

The potential environmental impact

4.39 Concern was expressed about the visual and physical intrusion of the land-based entry and exit towers and ramps of the proposed bridge on the land at either end of the proposed bridge's anchors. CYC stated:

The towers are likely to need to be large enough to include lifts, stairs and ancillary systems (e.g. security). The ramps, from an elevation of 12m above the water, have been estimated by IBA to

40 Friends of the Albert Hall Inc., Dr Lenore Coltheart, *Transcript T2*, pp 14-15.

41 Walter Burley Griffin Society, *Submission 32*, p. 5.

42 Yarralumla Residents Association, *Submission 45*, p. 2.

each need to be 280m long, a very significant structure whether linear or spiral.⁴³

- 4.40 The environmental impact of creating carparking spaces in the existing area was another issue raised, especially on the Lennox Gardens side of the proposed bridge. Dr John Gray expressed concern that IBA has not included any reference to parking because it sees parking 'as an Australian Government responsibility'. Dr Gray stated:

...parking should be an integral part of the design of any major infrastructure project that attracts public use, not as an after-thought.⁴⁴

- 4.41 The Trust advocated that to access the proposed bridge from Flynn Place would require people to walk from the nearest carparks either east of the National Library (670m approximately) or from the carpark on the West Basin side of Commonwealth Avenue (760m approximately). Alternatively, it would be necessary to construct pay parking in Flynn Place.⁴⁵ The Trust is of the opinion:

...that a carpark in such a prominent position on the lake edge, adjacent to Lennox Gardens would be a visual disaster under any circumstances. On the edge of Lake Burley Griffin it would encroach on and intrude into the landscape in a way totally unacceptable to the parkland theme and integrity of the Lake.⁴⁶

The potential impact on the vista and Lake foreshores

- 4.42 The Trust put forward the view that, in the context of loss of visual amenity, the proposed Immigration Bridge:

...will present a highly visual intrusion across the lake, particularly in the Central and West Basin areas. After about 45 years without a bridge across Acton Peninsula, the primary heritage issue is whether any bridge at all is a good idea if it adversely impacts upon the anticipated Commonwealth heritage significance assessment of Lake Burley Griffin. ...Views across West Basin and from Stirling Ridge to the Brindabella Range and the mountain backdrop would be impacted if any structure, such

43 Canberra Yacht Club, *Submission 46.1*, p. 1.

44 Dr John Gray, *Submission 24*, p. 4.

45 National Trust of Australia (ACT), *Submission 42*, p. 8.

46 National Trust of Australia (ACT), *Submission 42*, p. 8.

as this proposed bridge, is put in the way. ...These views are extremely important to Canberrans, as the National Trust has recently shown.⁴⁷

- 4.43 The claim by the Trust that views across the Lake are important to Canberrans was reiterated by Ms Beth Slatyer who called the view to the Brindabella mountains from Regatta Point a 'national treasure' and advocated its protection.⁴⁸ Ms Gina Pinkas noted that the view across the Lake was 'one of the joys of living in Canberra.'⁴⁹ Ms Pinkas further stated:

The proposed bridge will totally mar this beautiful vista. ...The eye is unimpeded by any structures as it looks up the Lake. The lake and the landscape flow to the blue background. What a wonder in the middle of our National Capital. Any structure crossing the lake at the proposed point would really spoil that view.⁵⁰

- 4.44 Others in opposition to the proposal commented on the adverse impact that the proposed 12-metre high bridge would have on the existing views across the Lake.⁵¹

- 4.45 In contrast, Dr David Headon expressed the view that the proposed bridge might be 'an adornment'. Dr Headon stated:

There are so many bridges around the world and in this country which are adornments to their cities and which in fact create views. ...I think that a bridge which is a brilliant design somewhere near this spot would only adorn the area.⁵²

- 4.46 Mr Ken Eynon noted the adverse impact that the proposed bridge could have on the Lake foreshores. Mr Eynon stated:

...large areas of land on both sides of the lake would be required to get pedestrians up and onto and off the proposed bridge. I don't think there is this much land available at each end for this without creating problems for lakeside users.⁵³

47 National Trust of Australia (ACT), Dr Peter Dowling, *Transcript T1*, p. 56.

48 Ms Beth Slatyer, *Submission 68*, p. 1.

49 Ms Gina Pinkas, *Submission 35*, p. 4.

50 Ms Gina Pinkas, *Submission 35*, p. 4.

51 Walter Burley Griffin Society, *Submission 32*, p. 3; Mr David Townsend, *Submission 15*, p. 1; Mr John Holland, *Submission 22*, p. 3; Emeritus Professor D.J. Mulvaney AO, CMG, *Submission 14*, p. 2; and, Mr Hamish Lindsay, *Submission 27*, p. 1.

52 Dr David Headon, *Transcript T2*, p. 25.

53 Mr Ken Eynon, *Submission 4*, p. 1.

4.47 The Katie Bender memorial⁵⁴ situated on the southern side of the foreshore, near where the bridge would be anchored, could be affected if the bridge were to be constructed. In regard to the memorial the NCA noted that:

The memorial is not particularly identified within the heritage management plan, but, as we would with any site that required sympathetic attention, we would look for appropriate treatment of that in the works approval. And, in our experience in dealing with proponents, they generally do not try and steamroll over such important matters.⁵⁵

Is there a need for a pedestrian bridge?

4.48 A number of opponents to the bridge proposal noted that it served no real purpose.⁵⁶ Mr Simon Johnstone called the proposed bridge:

...a bridge from nowhere to nowhere for no demonstrated community need.⁵⁷

4.49 The NCA stated that the symbolism of the bridge appealed to the IBA in its choice of a memorial to immigration.⁵⁸

4.50 The NCA noted that some form of pedestrian bridge was included in the Griffin Plan, then later in *The Griffin Legacy* and was also part of the winning NMA design.⁵⁹ However, it also confirmed that despite its in-principle support for the Immigration Bridge that no formal studies about pedestrian use of a proposed footbridge have been conducted.⁶⁰

4.51 A number of supporters of the bridge are more specifically in favour of commemorating the contribution of migrants and see the bridge proposal as a way to do that.⁶¹ One supporter of the proposed bridge put the view:

54 The Katie Bender Memorial, located along the Lake front, was completed in July 2007 by the NCA. Katie Bender was fatally injured during the demolition by implosion of the Royal Canberra Hospital in July 1997.

55 National Capital Authority, Mr Gary Rake, *Transcript T2*, p. 13.

56 Mr Cleaver Elliott, *Submission 12*, p. 2; Ms Gina Pinkas, *Submission 35*, p. 1; Mr Simon Johnstone, *Submission 53*, p. 3.

57 Mr Simon Johnstone, *Submission 53*, p. 3.

58 National Capital Authority, Mr Gary Rake, *Transcript T1*, p. 20.

59 National Capital Authority, *Submission 60*, p. 4.

60 National Capital Authority, Mr Gary Rake, *Transcript T2*, p. 3.

61 Mrs Phoebe Bischoff, *Submission 5*, p. 1; Mr Joe Bailey, *Submission 51*, p. 1.

My family are in favour of the proposed bridge for the following reasons:

- it is a means of commemorating our predecessors' entry to Australia
- the design is appealing both architecturally and aesthetically
- while we were aware of the memorial to Australia's early migrants in Sydney, the proposed bridge in Canberra has infinitely more appeal to our family
- a pedestrian bridge over Lake Burley Griffin has appeal not only to Canberra residents but would be a wonderful walkway for our many visitors/tourists
- recognition of the Immigration Bridge proposal is shown by the many thousands who have registered their ancestors' names, and paid for the privilege
- in my family's application we had to explore our archives and other avenues to obtain correct details - a useful family exercise.⁶²

4.52 Mr Joe Bailey advocated that the bridge could be both a memorial and a tourist attraction. Mr Bailey stated:

The Immigration Bridge should go ahead to be a permanent monument in the Nation's Capital to commemorate the contributions of migrants to Australia and the opportunities that Australia has gained from the millions of migrants that have enhanced Australia's development as a modern multicultural society. ...[The bridge] will prove to be a huge tourist attraction for Canberra.⁶³

4.53 Another supporter of the bridge sees the proposed bridge as a more pleasant alternative for people who would otherwise cross the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, stating the new bridge would be:

...a real enhancement for those joggers/walkers who like to walk the Lake Burley Griffin circuit. It is certainly not very pleasant to cross Commonwealth bridge as a walker with the noise & petrol fumes from cars. Having a footbridge that people can use to cross the lake will encourage more people to get out and use the lake facilities.⁶⁴

4.54 The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) support the IBA proposal because it puts the view that:

62 Mrs Phoebe Bischoff, *Submission 5*, p. 1.

63 Mr Joe Bailey, *Submission 51*, p. 1.

64 Ms Meredith Batten, *Submission 72*, p. 1.

...the Australian immigration and immigrant experience is respectfully honoured in our national capital as proposed by the Immigration Bridge Australia. This is a superb concept which deserves the full support of the ACT and Federal Government and parliamentarians.⁶⁵

4.55 However, FECCA noted that the importance of any proposal should 'be respectful of the views and aspirations of Canberra residents including existing Lake Burley Griffin users and recreational users.'⁶⁶ FECCA states that its support of the bridge is contingent upon:

...finding a suitable place on Lake Burley Griffin which ensures maximum local community support for the bridge.⁶⁷

4.56 The possible impact of the proposed bridge on development in the West Basin drew opposing views. Mr David Headon stated that such a bridge would surely stimulate development in the West Basin area,⁶⁸ while Mr Peter Dalton offered the view that the NCA's plan to develop tourist facilities and a restaurant precinct in the vicinity of West Basin would be 'severely compromised'.⁶⁹

4.57 The strongest support for a bridge in the suggested location came from Pedal Power ACT, under the proviso that the bridge has suitable access for bicycles. Pedal Power ACT noted:

Given that the ANU is Canberra's biggest individual cycling destination, and that the Immigration Bridge would become the shortest route option for many journeys ...we estimate that ...around 90-130 riders per hour are likely to change to the Immigration Bridge if it is constructed and if it facilitates cycling.⁷⁰

4.58 Pedal Power ACT believes that the construction of the proposed bridge in the suggested location would provide a shorter route than currently available for:

- people riding from Belconnen and some parts of North Canberra to the Parliamentary Triangle and most of South Canberra

65 Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, *Submission 61*, p. 1.

66 Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, *Submission 61*, p. 1.

67 Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, *Submission 61*, p. 2.

68 Dr David Headon, *Submission 43*, p. 1.

69 Mr Peter Dalton, *Submission 44*, p. 3.

70 Pedal Power ACT Inc., *Submission 30*, p. 2.

- south Canberra residents riding to the Australian National University Campus, CSIRO and related precincts, and Belconnen.⁷¹

Conclusion

4.59 The committee noted that no study has been undertaken to assess if there is an existing need for a bridge to be built at the proposed location. The committee also noted that the proponents of the bridge have never claimed that there is an existing need for a bridge to be built at the proposed location but rather that the proposed bridge is to be a commemorative structure.

Alternative positions for a bridge

4.60 Various alternative locations for a bridge were suggested, including some locations where a new bridge would serve a practical purpose as well as a commemorative one. These locations included:

- Across Bowen Drive and up on to Kings Avenue.⁷²
- From the Museum to the north side of Commonwealth Bridge and then people could park on the lakeside car park used for Floriade. ...A North side Immigration Bridge would not interfere with the sailing course and the recreational activities of Canberrans.⁷³
- A bridge across the entrance to the Nerang Pool in Commonwealth Park could provide the over water symbol ...[and] would provide a logical flow from an Immigration Celebration area across the Nerang Pool Bridge into Citizenship Place.⁷⁴
- Central Basin, which is east of the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, and East Basin, which is east of Kings Avenue Bridge.⁷⁵
- From Black Mountain Peninsula across to Weston Park, towards the top end of Tarcoola Reach.⁷⁶

71 Pedal Power ACT Inc., *Submission 30*, p. 2.

72 Mr Ken Eynon, *Submission 4*, p. 1.

73 Mr David Roberts, *Submission 3*, p. 1.

74 Mr Peter Cooke-Russell, *Submission 50*, p. 6.

75 YMCA Sailing Club of Canberra, Mr Iain Balfour, *Transcript T1*, p. 36.

76 YMCA Sailing Club of Canberra, Mr Iain Balfour, *Transcript T1*, pp 36-37.

4.61 The NCA confirmed that it is within its scope in assessing a project such as the IBA proposal to look at other prospective sites for a pedestrian bridge across the Lake. The NCA stated:

If a proponent came to us and said, 'We would like to build a bridge from X to Y,' we would assess whether that were consistent with the National Capital Plan. If at that point it was not, we would then talk to the proponent about what we would need to go through if we were to propose an amendment to the plan, whether that were appropriate and would fit within the context of planning in Canberra.⁷⁷

4.62 The NCA confirmed that a change in location for the proposed bridge could be considered if the IBA proposal fails or if the IBA changes its proposal.⁷⁸

Alternative ways to recognise the contribution of migrants

4.63 The IBA stated that the bridge is designed to:

Recognise the immense contribution made to Australia by migrants from all over the world since 1788.⁷⁹

4.64 Various opponents to the proposed bridge made the point that while they support the idea of recognising the migrant contribution to Australia, the proposed bridge in the suggested location is inappropriate.⁸⁰ One such comment being: 'nice theme, wrong idea and wrong place'.⁸¹

4.65 There were many suggestions for alternative ways that the contribution of migrants could be recognised. Many of the people who suggested alternative structures stated that they were either migrants themselves or descendants of migrants and that their opposition to the proposed bridge should not be seen in any way to be an anti-migrant stance. Mr Michael Burgess stated:

I am a descendant of two First Fleeters and I am certainly in favour of commemorating the arrival of migrants in Australia, but not with a bridge across Lake Burley Griffin.⁸²

77 National Capital Authority, Mr Gary Rake, *Transcript T1*, pp 28-29.

78 National Capital Authority, Mr Gary Rake, *Transcript T1*, p. 29.

79 Immigration Bridge Australia, *Submission 29*, p. 2.

80 Mr Michael Burgess, *Submission 13*, p. 1; Mr Gordon Shannon, *Submission 16*, p. 2; Mr Simon Johnstone, *Submission 53*, p. 3.

81 Mr Simon Johnstone, *Submission 53*, p. 3.

82 Mr Michael Burgess, *Submission 13*, p. 1.

4.66 Further, Mr Simon Johnstone stated:

I support the idea to honour the role of immigration and the people involved in this significant part of Australia's history. I am a migrant and proud to be, and delighted that the country let me come and share this wonderful place.

However, this bridge is not an appropriate way to reflect the spirit of the many millions of migrants.⁸³

4.67 Mr Paddy Hodgman suggested that the bridge would engender resentment for the cause:

By detracting very significantly from the heritage values, life and usage of Lake Burley Griffin, the proposed bridge would be a self defeating, jarring and most inappropriate form of memorial.⁸⁴

4.68 A number of alternative memorials to immigration were suggested, including:

- The recent development of the RG Menzies Walk and the display celebrating Australia's Citizens of the Year Awards are 'excellent, sensitive, readily accessible examples of what can be achieved without the enormous costs involved in the IBA proposals'.⁸⁵
- Expansion of the National Museum of Australia, within the NMA buildings.⁸⁶
- An over-the-water boardwalk, with short protruding jetties, from the Hospital Point wharf at the National Museum around the shoreline.⁸⁷
- A memorial tower on the lakeshore, preferably in stone.⁸⁸
- A world class boat marina with cafes, shops and restaurants along the shores of the West Basin allowing immigrants to purchase plaques and mount them on the marina.⁸⁹
- A walkway around the lake shore.⁹⁰
- An elaboration of the Sydney Immigration Wall model, or the erection within the National Triangle in Canberra of a monument to *all* migrants to Australia.⁹¹

83 Mr Simon Johnstone, *Submission 53*, p. 1.

84 Mr Paddy Hodgman, *Submission 19*, p. 5.

85 Mr Gordon Shannon, *Submission 16*, p. 2.

86 Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc. Canberra Chapter, *Submission 32.3*, p. 4.

87 Mr Tim Glover, *Submission 56*, p. 7.

88 Dr Nicholas Reid, *Submission 2*, p. 1.

89 Mr Simon Wallis, *Submission 6*, p. 1.

90 Mr Cleaver Elliott, *Submission 12*, p. 6.

- A handrail or other minimal structure along the lakeshore ... between Lennox Gardens and Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, merging into the Australians of the Year plaques and other national symbols around Central Basin.⁹²
- Nerang Pool at Commonwealth Park is longer than 400m along its East to West axis. A sensitively designed footbridge could perhaps be built over it. This would be inexpensive to construct and the location is a well used, protected public place which receives many interstate visitors during Floriade.⁹³
- An additional footbridge from Aspen Island in Central Basin to Kings Park.⁹⁴
- A memorial garden similar to the memorials on Anzac Parade would be more appropriate and a better tourist attraction.⁹⁵
- A garden setting similar in format to Nara Gardens.⁹⁶
- A good architect given a decent site somewhere else could design a fabulous year round complex, that commemorates all the diversity of immigration and where it can stand on its own merits and have space for the required expansion and infrastructure.⁹⁷
- The edge of the lake where the Australians of the Year are remembered is terrific ... maybe consider something similar in lieu of an unnecessarily grand bridge.⁹⁸

Conclusions

4.69 Various Lake users presented strong opposition to the construction of the proposed bridge. The committee is aware of the view presented by Lake users that activities on the Lake could be impeded and could become dangerous if the proposed bridge is built across West Basin.

4.70 The committee acknowledges the consultation that has been undertaken to date by IBA and notes that the issues outlined by Lake-users and the concerns about how vista and heritage value of the Lake and its surrounds may be affected by the construction of the Immigration Bridge will be key

91 Emeritus Professor D.J. Mulvaney AO, CMG, *Submission 14*, p. 2.

92 Mr David Townsend, *Submission 15*, p. 4.

93 Mr John Holland, *Submission 22*, p. 6.

94 Mr John Holland, *Submission 22*, p. 6.

95 Ms Gina Pinkas, *Submission 35*, p. 2.

96 National Trust of Australia (ACT), *Submission 42*, p. 9.

97 Mr Simon Johnstone, *Submission 53*, p. 6.

98 Mr Rod and Mrs Susan Page, *Submission 62*, p. 1.

considerations in the assessment of IBA's proposals in the remaining stages of the process.

- 4.71 The committee understands that Lake-users would prefer a single span bridge with a minimum height of 12 metres. Cyclists have indicated that they would require ramps at both ends of the bridge with the shallowest possible inclines or a spiral ramp where space is at a premium. In addition, lifts may be needed to provide adequate access for mobility impaired persons.
- 4.72 The committee commends IBA's expressed intentions to consult extensively to ensure that all issues are addressed in the design brief of the bridge proposal.
- 4.73 The committee believes that there is community-wide support for the construction of a memorial which celebrates migration, but at the same time there is notable opposition to the proposed bridge to be built at the suggested location.

Recommendation 3

- 4.74 **The committee recommends that Immigration Bridge Australia seeks to reconcile competing issues relating to Lake users, vista and heritage value of the Lake and its foreshores.**

If IBA finds that this challenge cannot be met or its development application for the proposed bridge is unsuccessful then IBA should consider:

- **changing the location of the proposed bridge; or**
- **proposing an alternative memorial to migration.**

**Senator Kate Lundy
Chair
22 May 2009**

