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## **Joint Standing Committee Inquiry into the Immigration Bridge Australia Proposal**

### **National Trust of Australia (ACT) – Supplementary Response**

*Impacts of the proposed Immigration Bridge on the Heritage values of Lake Burley Griffin as determined by the Lake Burley Griffin Heritage Assessment Draft Report, 2009.*

#### **Introduction**

The ACT National Trust (the Trust) wishes to supplement its original response to the Joint Standing Committee with the following comments. This supplementary response is due to the release by The National Capital Commission of the *Lake Burley Griffin Heritage Assessment Draft Report* (the draft report) which was released during the course of the public response phase of the Inquiry.

As the Inquiry Committee was informed in the National Trust response we had asked the NCA in 2008 for a copy of this report but had not received it. The ACT Trust had also asked the Chair of the Inquiry Committee for it to be released and made available for public scrutiny prior to the current deadline for responses. The Trust considers that

if this document had been released prior to the Inquiry Committee sitting it would have been a crucial source of information regarding Lake Burley Griffin and would have enable us, and other organisations wishing to participate in the inquiry, to produce a more informed and valuable submission. The Trust, however, commends the NCA for releasing this document and for the Inquiry Committee to allow us to comment further.

The following comments are based on the *Lake Burley Griffin Heritage Assessment Draft Report*.

### **Heritage Impacts of the proposed Immigration Bridge**

The Trust notes the West Basin of Lake Burley Griffin meets the threshold for eight of the Commonwealth heritage listing criteria:

Criterion A – Historic

Criterion B – Rarity

Criterion C – Scientific

Criterion D – Representative

Criterion E – Aesthetic

Criterion F – Creative/technical

Criterion G – Social

Criterion H – Associative;

and two criteria (E & F) for National Heritage listing:

Criterion E – Aesthetic – The place’s importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.

Criterion F – Creative/technical – The place’s importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular achievement.

Assessments of heritage values against these criteria are in Section 9 of the draft report.

***Heritage conservation policies as specified in the draft report***

The following comments address the Heritage Conservation Policies outlined in the draft report.

Heritage conservation policy C6-1 refers to the West Basin and foreshores of Lake Burley Griffin Vol 1 p.43). It states:

Conserve and manage the integrity of the formal design elements of the West basin deriving from the Griffin plan as well as the later design and construction of the lake and its surrounds.

Actions required under the policy:

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>C6-1.1</b> Ensure all proposals for development around West basin are developed in sympathy with the identified heritage values of the place and that the significance of their potential impacts on heritage values is assessed, in line with the EPBC Act.	High	Immediately

One of the most important values of the Lake, its aesthetic heritage values, is met under Criterion E, for National and Commonwealth listings. The proposed bridge will present a highly visual intrusion across the lake – particularly in the West Basin areas. There would be significant impacts on the lake view from Commonwealth Bridge as well as impacts on lake foreshores, views across West Basin to the city, from Stirling Ridge and to the Brindabella Range mountain backdrop, if any structure such as this

proposed bridge is put in the way. As such the values of the lake under Criterion E would be severely eroded.



This view from Lennox Gardens across the lake to Civic and the ranges beyond is one of the top five views identified from a National Trust Survey. It would be severely impacted by the construction of the Immigration Bridge. (Photo: Shirley Pipitone for the ACT National Trust, 2009)

Actions	Priority	Timing
C6-1.2 Ensure any new development on the foreshores of West Basin provides appropriate view corridors to and from the lake, especially from Commonwealth Avenue.	High	As required

During the public hearing program of the Inquiry Immigration Bridge Australia (IBA) stated that they intended a bridge which would accommodate pedestrians as well as cyclists. Such a bridge would require substantial ramps leading up to the bridge deck. While these ramps could be straight, curved or spiral they would need to be of a sufficient gradient to meet both bicycle and wheelchair access safety requirements. These ramps, together with the on-shore supporting pylons and approach structures of the bridge, would need to be substantial structures taking up space on the foreshores at each end of the bridge. They would then be restricting view corridors to the lake at each end and would impact on the viewsapes to the lake from Commonwealth Avenue. In particular they would be visually prominent in the viewscape from Commonwealth Avenue Bridge to the grounds and structure of the National Museum of Australia.

Actions	Priority	Timing
C6-1.3 Conserve and manage significant views and solar access to the foreshore by managing the height of foreshore development to provide views and prevent overshadowing of the foreshore.	High	As required

The extent of shadow coverage is unknown as the IBA pointed out during their submission that the images of the proposed bridge as depicted on their website is a 'concept design'. We therefore have no knowledge of the form or scale of the proposed Immigration Bridge as IBA have not yet produced a draft design and as such no idea yet as to the nature of overshadowing. However, as discussed above, the access structures leading up to the deck of the bridge and the supporting pillars would have to be of a substantial nature. As well as impacting on the views they would cast significant shadows over the immediate foreshore areas.

Actions	Priority	Timing
C6-1.4 Ensure foreshore development enhances and contributes to the reflective qualities of the lake setting and provides plantings designed to contribute to the lake's character	High	As required

The bridge across West Basin and the supporting onshore structures and approaches would dominate the foreshores of Acton Peninsula and reduce the reflective qualities of

the lake setting as they extend out from and impact open the existing open space and parkland areas. They would appear as bulky, metal/concrete structures contrasting with the present green and open settings. The sense of tranquillity in these areas would be severely reduced if not lost.

Actions	Priority	Timing
C6-1.5 Retain the sense of the lake and its surrounding developments as located in an open park setting.	High	As required

The open park settings, in particular the southern grounds of the National Museum of Australia and to a lesser extent Lennox Gardens would be impacted and reduced by the approach structures of the bridge. As noted above these approach structures would be substantial consist of the bridge pylons on shore, steps, and wheelchair/bicycle access ramps up to the deck of the bridge.

Actions	Priority	Timing
<p><b>C6-1.6</b> The design process for the proposed pedestrian bridge should be rigorously managed to ensure that it is sympathetic to the existing heritage values of the place. It should not obscure significant views or have a negative impact on the design qualities of Commonwealth Avenue Bridge and the surrounding foreshore areas. Guidelines for its materials, colour, scale, bulk and massing should be developed to ensure that it is sympathetic to the existing heritage values of the place.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Immediately</p>

The two bridges across Lake Burley Griffin – Commonwealth Ave aligned with the southern slopes of City Hill and northern slopes of Capital Hill & Kings Ave Bridge aligned with the eastern slopes of Capital Hill and western Russel Hill - clearly and symmetrically define the boundaries of the Parliamentary Triangle and link it to the surrounding land features. The proposed Immigration Bridge set at an angle to Commonwealth Avenue Bridge is not aligned with any land feature other than its northern termination on Acton Peninsula. What more, it is likely to be a greater height than Commonwealth Avenue Bridge. As such this proposed bridge would detract from the city to the landscape symmetry which was a major feature of Griffin’s design.

A second impact on Griffin’s design would be detraction to the east –west symmetry of the lake also aligned with, and embracing the natural landscapes of Capital Hill, City Hill and Black mountain



In his 1911 winning entry plan and subsequent 1912, 1913, 1915 plans for Canberra, Griffin drew in the two main bridges we now have and a lower road crossing the lake in approximately the same area as the proposed Immigration Bridge. However, scrutiny of these plans reveals that the two main bridges were to be the dominate crossings of the lake and the third, a more subdued lower level crossing, giving way in landscape dominance to the two main bridges. Construction of any bridge crossing the West basin of Lake Burley Griffin should not and must not impact on the relationship the present bridges and lake have to the surrounding landscapes and horizons. A severe loss of the lake’s heritage values meeting criterion E for Commonwealth and National listing would be incurred by a third bridge of such a dominate nature as has been envisaged by IBA.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timing</b>
C.6-1.7 The proposed pedestrian bridge should not have an adverse impact on the use of West basin and Westlake for sailing and other recreational, non-motorised water based activities	High	Immediately

During the public hearing program of the Joint Inquiry we learnt from the presentation by the Canberra Yacht Club that the proposed Immigration would have a strong impact on sail boat activities and events in the West Basin. They pointed out some of the impacts from the proposed bridge. The in-water support pylons of the bridge and the height of the bridge would impose the risk of collision and thus severely restrict sailing in that part of the basin. The club could not set race courses to go under the bridge because of the manoeuvrability of the boats. The bridge would also obstruct entry into the northern section of West Basin in what is now used as a safe haven for the sail craft

in the cases of string winds. Overall the bridge would reduce the already restricted usable sections of the basin.

Such restrictions to the sailing activities would have a high impact on the aesthetic nature of the lake. West Basin full of sailing boats can be a magnificent sight, even when briefly viewed when crossing the lake over Commonwealth Avenue Bridge. Construction of the Immigration Bridge, blocking the viewscape from Commonwealth Avenue would seriously reduce the visual and pleasing impact the yachts convey. Such an imposition would then have an impact on the heritage values of the lake as assessed under Criterion E.



This view of yachts in West Basin sailing past the National Museum of Australia will most likely be gone forever if the Immigration Bridge was to be constructed. (Photo: Shirley Pipitone for ACT National Trust, 2009)