

The National Capital Authority (NCA) today responded to recommendations raised in the 'An Estate for the Future' report.

The report was prepared by the Joint Standing Committee on National Capital and External Territories (JSCNCET) into the allocation of land to diplomatic missions in the ACT.

The Authority discussed the JSCNCET's recommendations at its bimonthly meeting held on Friday 12 April. The committee's recommendations and the NCA responses are outlined below:

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that, in order to better utilise limited resources for the allocation of land to diplomatic missions, the Australian Government implement:

- Strengthened policies and regulations surrounding diplomatic leases to ensure compliance, with the policy of resumption of land within 36 months where development has not commenced being rigorously enforced
- Medium- and high-density options for housing chanceries
- Policies to allow the subdivision of existing sites within the diplomatic estate
- A policy framework that allows more extensive use of residential and commercial properties to house chanceries, along the lines adopted in Washington DC
- In the future, a steady evolution towards a more commercial approach (as in Washington DC) should be encouraged.

NCA Response: The NCA notes this recommendation. This is a matter for the Australian Government. The NCA is ready to assist if requested.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the National Capital Authority develop a long term strategy for the allocation of land to diplomatic missions in the Australian Capital Territory. This strategy should be developed in conjunction with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Federal Police and ACT Government and integrated with the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan. It should forecast demand and supply and establish the various mechanisms by which these forecasts may be met, including:

- Designating sites for future diplomatic enclaves
- Establishing a clear and binding framework for the granting and resumption of leases to diplomatic missions
- Establishing a policy for medium and high density properties
- Creating a mechanism for the subdivision of existing leases
- Establishing a framework for more extensive use of residential and commercial properties for chanceries
- Managing impacts on local residents
- Working out what role the private market might play.

The long term strategy should also involve a thorough review of land resources in O'Malley, Yarralumla and Deakin to ensure their optimal use for diplomatic purposes. The views of the diplomatic community should be sought during the development of the strategy.

NCA Response: The NCA accepts this recommendation and will include the proposed master plan and land reviews in its forward work program.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that Draft Amendment 78 be withdrawn.

NCA Response: The NCA accepts this recommendation. In deference to Recommendation 2, the NCA will withdraw Draft Amendment 78 as a stand alone proposal.

Draft Amendment 78 proposed to reduce the area available for development on Stirling Ridge by adjusting land use boundaries to permit diplomatic use on land to the southwest of Stirling Ridge, retaining and refining the reservation of Attunga Point as a potential site for a future Prime Minister's Lodge and changing the permitted land use of the remaining portions from 'National Capital Use' to 'Open Space' in recognition of high ecological values.