

SUBMISSION

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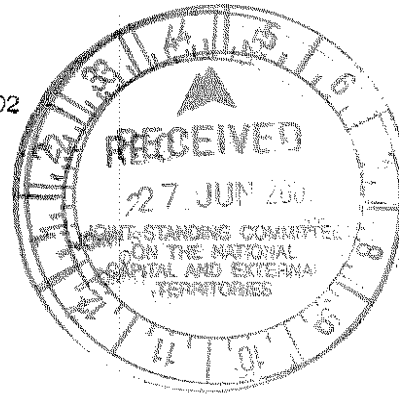


National Capital Commission
Commission de la capitale nationale

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Building through Canada's Capital
Le développement de la capitale nationale
Le développement symbolique
et des territoires

June 26, 2003

Mrs. Mary Walsh
Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee
on the National Capital Authority and External Territories
Department of House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Australia

BY FAX

Dear Committee Secretary:

As Chairman of the National Capital Commission (NCC) in Canada's Capital Region (which includes the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau), the National Capital Authority's (NCA) counterpart agency in Canada, I would like to provide input on the Joint Committee's inquiry regarding the role of the Authority. The NCC has had a long-standing relationship with Canberra and the Authority, exchanging information and staff, welcoming NCA representatives and organizing events that feature Australia. In 2002, our Winterlude celebration, a winter festival, highlighted Australia, and this year the Tulip Festival featured Australia with a slogan of *G'Day Australia - Tulips Down Under*. The assistance we have received from NCA staff has been invaluable as we prepare our first Commemoration Plan that will comprise the urban design, artistic and thematic approaches.

Last year in Canberra, I had the pleasure of joining Annabelle Pegrum and our colleagues from planning authorities in Washington and Brasilia to launch the Capital Alliance. This is a forum to discuss the planning, design and development issues that affect national capital cities. I would like to offer my views on the unique role of federal planning organizations in meeting the development needs of national capitals and their relationship with their local governments.

National capitals are special cities, because planning for municipalities that have a federal seat of government often involves political and symbolic concerns distinct from those of other urban areas. National capitals bear the burden of representing a whole country, embodying its hope and inspiring its people as well as providing effective spaces for ceremony and administration, and allowing for the demands of security, tourism and business.

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During my visit to Canberra, where I met Authority leaders as well as local and territorial planning representatives, it was interesting to see the many similarities between our two capitals. I understand the evolving and dynamic relationship between the Authority and the local territorial establishment. As with the NCC in Canada, the Authority seeks to advance Australian interests in a way that contributes to local planning and development policies while building pride and unity amongst all Australians. However, the short-term development needs of the Territory may not always coincide with the long-term interests of the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, it is important to seek partnerships that benefit both federal and local needs. The NCC has developed a strong partnership with the cities of Ottawa (Ontario) and Gatineau (Quebec) by establishing a National Capital Tripartite Planning Committee, which I preside, and is comprised of the mayors of both municipalities. This Committee reports to the NCC Board of Directors in a public forum and addresses joint planning, design, development and programming initiatives. For example, it provided the impetus for collaboration between the NCC and the City of Ottawa, on the Downtown Urban Design Strategy, currently underway, that aims at improving the design of both the civic and capital realms in downtown Ottawa.

As in Canberra, the NCC is also working to build a Capital that represents and expresses the idea of "Canada". Much has been achieved, but as we move into the 21st century, Canada is changing and our organization must adapt to respond to many social and economic factors. What remains constant is the NCC's commitment to help shape and express the Capital as a Canadian model of cultural diversity. In today's world, that is a mission of considerable importance.


To accomplish this, the NCC was given a mandate broader than the NCA's that includes not only planning, development and maintenance but also programming, events, festivals, tourism marketing, education and outreach responsibilities. In April of this year, the NCC was a lead partner in securing the JUNOs in Canada's Capital Region. These Canadian music awards are equivalent to the American Grammy Awards. Television ratings for the Canadian show exceeded those of our American neighbours. A more concrete example of our broad mandate includes our involvement in planning a center that celebrates Aboriginal peoples' cultures in a highly symbolic location in the Capital.

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I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very interesting and challenging issue. On a personal note I would like to say that I have been highly impressed with the professionalism, level of expertise and leadership of the National Capital Authority, as well as its clear sense of direction, its mission and its dedication to planning and developing a national capital that reflects the values and aspirations of the Australian people.

Yours sincerely,



Marcel Beaudry
Chairman