

Baker, Justin (REPS)

From: Horn, Graham [Graham.Horn@ato.gov.au]
 Sent: Friday, 23 May 2003 3:40 PM
 To: 'jscncr@aph.gov.au'; Baker, Justin (REPS)
 Cc: 'Warren Nicholls & Katie Saxby'; 'James Satrapa'; 'Graham Horn'; 'Graham gpl Horn'
 Subject: Inquiry into the role of the NCA - sent to additional address as jscncet address rejected



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Submission to Inquiry into the role of the National Capital Authority from North Canberra Community Council.

The report of the National Capital Authority (NCA) on Gungahlin Drive Extension (GDE) released in December 2002 is demonstrably flawed and biased. It gives undue weight to minor issues, such the preservation of a portion of a former road, and too little weight to more significant issues such as the preservation of the natural bushland of O'Connor and Bruce Ridges.

It also proposes amendments to its favoured (eastern) route to "enhance" it, while not taking similar action with respect to the alternative (western) option.

From a professional engineering point of view, both the report and its "independent peer review" are biased and severely deficient. The NCA, and its professional engineers have undertaken no action (so far as I am aware) to remedy these shortcomings.

It proposed a road that is longer, slower, more curvy, more dangerous, more expensive and more environmentally damaging than what is necessary with the Western Alignment it opposes. Furthermore, it generates an inferior solution for the AIS athletes, for whom the NCA's preferred alignment was intended to benefit, from a number of aspects. Its proposal is a bad road that is worse for all stakeholders, especially the residents of Gungahlin and the ACT in general, and also including the AIS athletes.

I also understand that the NCA's charter obliges it to protect the ridges and hills in the ACT from development, and that its actions in regard to GDE do not comply with those obligations.

The NCA has also changed its policy on this road since the ACT election, and this is evidently a matter of political expediency.

Furthermore, its report criticises numbers of aspects of the ACT Government's proposed alignment instituted to meet requirements reportedly nominated by NCA.

Based on experience in older communities in Australia and elsewhere around the planet, this road will likely last for hundreds of years. It will affect local residents into perpetuity. The AIS may not always remain in the ACT, indeed it may not always be a viable entity. However, Canberra residents will always live in the area, and wish to benefit from the Canberra Nature Park in this area.

In view of the resistance to alignments for a GDE to the east of the AIS, and the inferior qualities of such an alignment, no Eastern Alignment should be built. Instead, a western alignment should be negotiated that provides the maximum satisfaction to all stakeholders, especially representatives of those who are affected into perpetuity, such as the local residents.

There are numbers of residents quite willing to assist with the development of an optimised Western Alignment, people who strongly believe, and have done so for decades, that a western alignment is the best solution overall for all genuine stakeholders.

An issue has been the need to protect the interests of the AIS athletes occupying the residences along the western side of the AIS. However, it is now apparent that these residences are to be moved close to another heavily trafficked road - Ginninderra Drive. There is no reason why such residences should not be moved to the east of the AIS, where they could benefit from the calm of the bushland, and also be closer to the ridges in which many of them like to train.

Also, I understand further air quality assessments have been completed since the issue of the NCA report, and these confirm the Eastern Alignment is actually worse for the AIS athletes. Yet the NCA has not taken action consistent with its stated priorities. This is evident because Amendment 41 of the National Capital Plan was placed before Federal Parliament months ago, and no action was taken by NCA to amend it within the six sitting day disallowance window.

Recently, the issue has been raised of commercial development of the land between the AIS and Fern Hill. This fits in with long held suspicions that the reason for the support for an Eastern Alignment has been to facilitate such development. Short term commercial gain should not take precedence over long term benefit to stakeholders.

Furthermore, there is no reason why such developments should not take place over a western alignment. Even this factor does not provide valid grounds for insisting on the eastern alignment.

In short, the GDE eastern alignment demonstrates that the NCA acts without due regard to its nominated principles and statutory obligations. Furthermore, there is no national interest ground that can justify this behaviour.

Given the above shortcomings demonstrated with respect to the GDE, it is evident that the NCA cannot be relied on to provide beneficial outcomes for the ACT.

A related issue is that the NCA answers to the Minister for Territories, and it is evident that this arrangement does not ensure good outcomes for either the ACT or the nation.

It is therefore necessary to replace the current structure with one that achieves what the current arrangement is failing to do. If the NCA is unable to deliver on its worthy objectives, the only option that makes sense is to replace it with replace it with a body that can do so, and is removed from direct political control. The role of its current staff makes it imperative that they not be redeployed in any related roles.

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On behalf of
North Canberra Community Council

-----Original Message-----
Subject: Inquiry into the role of the NCA

This is the link to the main page
<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ncet/NCA/index.htm>

A submission can simply be a letter, on which you can expand upon once the inquiry commences. Hope this is useful, I look forward to receiving a submission, and please pass this on to other interested persons. cheers Adina
Inquiry into the Role of the National Capital Authority
The Annual Report of the National Capital Authority for 2001-02 was tabled in the House of Representatives on 12 November 2002 and stands referred to the Committee for inquiry if the Committee so wishes. Accordingly, on 26 March 2003 the Committee resolved to conduct an inquiry and report on the role of the National Capital Authority.

The Committee invites interested persons and organisations to make submissions addressing the terms of reference by 23 May 2003.

In order to facilitate electronic publishing of submissions, the committee would prefer them to be emailed <<mailto:jscncet@aph.gov.au>> or sent on disk to the secretariat <./index.htm>, if possible.

Terms of Reference

On 26 March 2003 the Committee resolved to conduct an inquiry and report on the role of the National Capital Authority. In particular the Committee will consider:

- * the role of the National Capital Authority as outlined in the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988;
- * the Authority's overall management of the National Capital Plan;
- * management issues relating to designated land under the National Capital Plan; and
- * the relationship between the Authority and Territory planning authorities.

Other

National Capital Plan

<http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au/plan/index.htm>

PALM ACT 1988

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ncet/NCA/ACTPalmACT1988.pdf>