



Katy Gallagher MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

MINISTER FOR HEALTH

MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MINISTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Senator Louise Pratt
Committee Chair
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator ^{Pratt} Pratt,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the inquiry into the allocation of land to diplomatic missions in the Australian Capital Territory.

The ACT Government recognises the importance of diplomatic missions to the role of Canberra as the National Capital and the need to provide sites for diplomatic missions to enable the city to perform this role. The ACT Government will continue to work with the National Capital Authority (NCA) to identify appropriate sites to meet the growing needs of diplomatic missions.

It is important that the selection of sites for diplomatic missions does not compromise the Territory's capacity for urban intensification along major transport corridors or near major centres. For this reason it is important that the NCA seeks the Territory's views of potential sites as early as possible, given the Territory's knowledge of the constraints/opportunities on development of certain sites. The ACT Government can assist the NCA in assessing the suitability of sites and/or identifying potential sites, taking into account the Territory's planning and transport strategies, maintenance costs, location of infrastructure and possible revenue implications.

Attachment A sets out the Submission in response to the terms of reference of the inquiry. The contact in relation to the ACT Government Submission is Dr Erin Brady, Executive-Director of City Planning, erin.brady@act.gov.au or (02) 6207 7226.

Yours sincerely

Katy Gallagher MLA
Chief Minister

13 FEB 2013

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6205 0840 Fax (02) 6205 3030

Email: gallagher@act.gov.au Facebook: KatyGallagherMLA Twitter: @katyGMLA

ACT Government Submission: Inquiry into the allocation of land to diplomatic missions in the Australian Capital Territory

The ACT Government recognises the importance of diplomatic missions to the role of Canberra as the National Capital and the need to provide sites for diplomatic missions to enable the city to perform this role. We continue to work effectively with the National Capital Authority (NCA) to identify appropriate sites to meet the growing needs of diplomatic missions.

It is important that the selection of sites for diplomatic missions do not compromise the Territory's capacity for urban intensification along major transport corridors or near major centres. For this reason it is important that the NCA seek the Territory's views of potential sites as early as possible, given the Territory's knowledge of the constraints/opportunities on development of certain sites. We are willing to assist the NCA in assessing the suitability of sites and or identifying potential sites, taking into account the Territory's planning and transport strategies, maintenance costs, location of infrastructure and possible revenue implications.

The NCA has prepared draft Amendment 78 to the National Capital Plan. The proposed adjustment of land use boundaries results in a net increase in open space for the area while fulfilling the NCA's responsibility to provide sites for the purposes of diplomatic use to the south west of Stirling Ridge and for a future residence for the Prime Minister of Australia. The ACT Government is not opposed to the draft Amendment.

The June 2012 report prepared by planning consultants SGS Pty Ltd for the NCA considered three potential diplomatic sites:

- land adjacent to the Federal Golf Course at Red Hill;
- land south west of Stirling Ridge at Yarralumla; and
- land near the Old Canberra Brickworks at Yarralumla.

The NCA subsequently removed the Federal Golf Club from consideration.

The SGS assessment of the Stirling Ridge and Yarralumla sites, respectively, was:

"The land to the south-west of Stirling Ridge presents an opportunity to expand the diplomatic estate in the short term with the lowest estimated development costs. After consideration of opportunities and constraints, an area of approximately 4ha can be developed for nine blocks. The cost of servicing each block is \$434,444. Any development on this site will require referral under the EPBC Act due to its proximity to a listed endangered habitat. Impacts to adjoining residents can be managed but will require further assessment in a more detailed site plan. Further investigations are also recommended on this site for clarifying other options for long term use such as the future Prime Minister's lodge. A more detailed investigation of European and Indigenous heritage values on this site is also warranted to confirm that there are no heritage values on this site as found through this study. The site is owned by the Commonwealth which removes the need to acquire the land. This combined with relatively low infrastructure costs makes the Stirling Ridge site a viable option for continued assessment"

"The Old Canberra Brickworks site presents an opportunity to expand the diplomatic estate in the short to medium term. The site yields the most developable area but has relatively high estimated costs due to service connection, road upgrades and land acquisition. After consideration of environment and bushfire risk reduction constraints, an area of approximately 10.7ha can be developed for up to 15 blocks. The cost of serving each block is \$461,333. Four of these blocks would be subject to an EPBC referral before development can proceed due to the presence of a Natural Temperate Grassland community in moderate to good condition. Further investigations are warranted for possible contamination especially in the area closest to the Brickworks. Further negotiations with the ACT Government regarding this land use will be required before undertaking any further assessment".

The Brickworks site presents an opportunity for the Territory to establish in the future a medium to high density development integrated with public transport. The development of the site for nine diplomatic missions is not supported as it would be a lost opportunity to implement the directions of the ACT Planning and Transport strategies.

Other sites have been suggested in the November 2012 NCA consultation report. These included:

- North Curtin Horse Paddocks (Broadacre zoning);
- land West of Empire Circuit (National Capital Uses);
- land between Forster Crescent and Alexandrina Drive (National Capital Uses and some public land);
- Mugga Lane or Symonston (Broadacre zoning) - constraints identified in Eastern Broadacre study);
- Campbell Section 5 (Anzac Parade/Constitution Ave - in LRP - location suggests it should be for a more intensive use than diplomatic missions);
- Yarralumla Bay Oval (Urban Open Space);
- land between Mugga Way and Hindmarsh drive (Hills, Ridges and Buffers);
- land south of Carruthers St in Hughes (Urban Open Space); and
- land along Northbourne Avenue (Bega/Allawah Flats).

The development of diplomatic missions in many of these areas does not present the most efficient use and would compromise the Territory's capacity for urban intensification; this is especially the case for sites on Northbourne Avenue and the North Curtin Horse Paddocks.