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**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AND EXTERNAL  
TERRITORIES - INQUIRY INTO THE IMMIGRATION BRIDGE AUSTRALIA  
PROPOSAL**

**SUBMISSION – YACHTING ACT (YACT)**

Please find attached the Yachting ACT (YACT) submission for consideration by the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories – Inquiry into the Immigration Bridge Australia (IBA) proposal.

As the peak sailing body in the ACT, YACT represents the views of approximately 750 members of sailing clubs and organisations who are one of the largest group of Lake Users in the Australian Capital Territory.

The YACT Committee look forward to continued involvement and engagement with the process of the inquiry and are available to discuss any aspect of our submission or the submissions of our Members at any time.

Yours sincerely



Roger Smyth  
President YACT  
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Attachments:

- A. YACT Submission – Inquiry into the Immigration Bridge Australia Proposal

**ATTACHMENT A: YACHTING ACT (YACT) SUBMISSION**  
**INQUIRY INTO THE IMMIGRATION BRIDGE AUSTRALIA PROPOSAL**

**Executive Summary**

- Yachting ACT (YACT) is the peak body for sailing in the ACT and represents six clubs and with over 750 members and Lake Users.
- Whilst YACT commends the intent of establishing a Memorial to Immigration in the ACT, there would seem to be many options for a Memorial that have not been explored that could achieve a positive outcome with:
  - Limited or no impact on existing Lake Users,
  - An inherent “benefit” to Lake Users rather than an “obstruction and water safety hazard”, and
  - Will result in a “Legacy” that is not financial in terms of high ongoing maintenance costs that will ultimately be borne by the Tax Payer.
- YACT does not support the construction of Immigration Bridge in the proposed location as it will:
  - Eliminate a significant area of the lake for use by sailors who often seek shelter or protected waters in the area between Commonwealth Bridge and the National Museum
  - Create a significant hazard to yachts seeking to transit the area immediately West of the Commonwealth Bridge to gain access to the Central and Western basins of Lake Burley Griffin
  - Remove the ability for sailing (race) courses to include the area between Commonwealth Bridge and the National Museum, thereby further reducing options in an already constrained waterway, and
  - Not truly reflect the intent of the Griffin Legacy in terms of structure or even location and arguably this early concept may not have been prepared with full consideration and investigation of the impacts to regular Lake Users such as the sailors on Lake Burley Griffin.
- YACT seeks to highlight the need for any such application to be subject to comprehensive and independent assessments in terms of:
  - Lake User impacts – including formal engagement with representatives of Peak Bodies and clubs actively using the Lake and its surrounds,
  - Water safety and hazard implications for sailing and other water borne activities,
  - Environmental impacts – particularly in terms of special wind effects and associated hazards, and
  - Modelling of the above impacts for Lake User water-borne activities.

## Introduction

Yachting ACT (YACT) operates as the peak body for sailing in the ACT and represents over 750 active Lake Users who are members of sailing clubs and organisations that include:

- Canberra Yacht Club
- YMCA Sailing
- ACT Scouts
- Australian Defence Force Academy (Sailing Club)
- Sailability ACT, and
- HMAS Harman – Navy Sailing

Whilst YACT commends the intent of establishing a form of Memorial to Immigration in the ACT, there would seem to be many options that could be explored that could achieve a positive outcome that:

- Does not negatively impact on existing Lake Users,
- Offers an inherent “benefit” to Lake Users rather than an “obstruction and water safety hazard”, and
- Will result in a “Legacy” that is not financial in terms of high ongoing maintenance costs that will ultimately be borne by the Tax Payer.

The following observations, comments and recommendations are offered in relation to the Terms of Reference.

### **The Process adopted by IBA to settle the design for Immigration Bridge taking into account:**

- a) The heritage values of LBG and its foreshore, and**
- b) The interests of users of the lake.**

#### The heritage values

The heritage value discussion seems to continually refer to the Griffin Legacy. From our understanding, the structure was to be a small road bridge helping to define West Basin as a nearly complete circle and part of a symmetrical design at the time. Clearly this form is no longer relevant and what was to be a small bridge would now have to be a significant structure that will result in:

- A significant departure from any inferred “heritage value” associated with the Griffin Legacy
- Significant visual impact that would virtually compete with the existing Commonwealth Bridge in such close proximity and
- Potentially high wind effect associated with such as large structure that will potentially impact on the utility of the lake

Whilst any discussion of heritage values is necessary, it would seem misplaced in terms of perceived support to the proposed Immigration Bridge location and form.

The pursuit of a memorial that reflects the heritage values of “open spaces” would seem better placed rather than creating congestion in terms of visual impact with two large bridges in very close proximity and increased physical congestion and obstruction on an already confined lake area.

### The interests of users of the lake

From a YACT perspective, the most critical point, in relation to the Immigration Bridge, is the significant and negative impact it will have on the interests of users of the lake.

As one of the largest single group of Lake Users, the sailing community are arguably the most frequent users of the lake and due to the natural conditions are the users that take most utility from the existing water area between the Commonwealth Bridge and National Museum for:

- Protection from strong winds
- Access to Central and Western Basins
- Sail Training activities – particularly for our junior members
- Racing both at a regular club level and for the increasing level of National Regattas hosted on Lake Burley Griffin.

In terms of negative impact on the interests of Lake Users, YACT does not support the construction of the Immigration Bridge as it will:

- Eliminate a significant area of the lake for use by sailors who often seek shelter or protected waters in the area between Commonwealth Bridge and the National Museum
- Create a significant hazard to yachts seeking to transit the area immediately West of the Commonwealth Bridge to gain access to the Central and Western basins of Lake Burley Griffin
- Remove the ability for sailing (race) courses to include the area between Commonwealth Bridge and the National Museum, thereby further reducing options in an already constrained waterway, and
- Not truly reflect the intent of the Griffin Legacy in terms of structure or even location and arguably this early concept may not have been prepared with full consideration and investigation of the impacts to regular Lake Users such as the sailors on Lake Burley Griffin.

Whilst many options for a memorial should be explored, a Memorial Boardwalk, or similar, would have the potential to benefit Lake Users, residents and visitors in terms of access to the water's edge, walking, cycling, boat access etc and not generate the same level of negative impact on existing and future users or generate a significant legacy of ongoing maintenance costs.

Lake Users need to be consulted more comprehensively and be given the opportunity to present alternatives to any Immigration Memorial project.

*In summary, YACT do not believe that adequate independent and qualified assessment of the potential impact of the proposed Bridge in terms of the Environment and Lake Users, has been completed to inform the viability, level of community support and/or design of the proposed Bridge.*

### **The process that has been adopted by IBA to raise funds for the construction and ongoing maintenance of the Bridge**

The capacity for an interest group to raise significant funds for an Immigration Memorial should be applauded. However, a financial legacy to the Nation should not be created from the generosity of such a "gift" and the true utility of such a gift should be objectively considered.

The process to raise funds for a Memorial is not an issue that YACT wishes to specifically address, but would encourage consideration be given to:

- ensure the greatest utility be borne from such an investment for all Lake Users, residents and visitors to the National Capital, and
- whatever the final form of Immigration Memorial, there must be a clear understanding of the cost to be borne for ongoing maintenance, and where that responsibility will lie. This does not seem to have been fully described to date for the Bridge.

**The approval process required under the ACT (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 if an application for approval of the Bridge were received by the NCA.**

YACT believe that the NCA will carry out the approval process, required under the ACT (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988, with full consideration of the policies and guidelines of the ACT and with full regard to any representations made by the public.

YACT would only seek to highlight the need for any such application to be subject to commitment to comprehensive and independent assessments in terms of:

- Lake User impacts – including formal engagement with representatives of Peak Bodies and clubs actively using the Lake and its surrounds,
- Water safety and hazard implications for sailing and other water borne activities
- Environmental impacts – particularly in terms of special wind effects and associated hazards
- Modelling of the above impacts in terms of wind implications, access and safety for Lake User water borne activities, and

**Summary**

Whilst the initial concept of a Memorial Bridge would seem to have merit, the planned location and form does not lend itself to an enhancement or progressive development of Lake Burley Griffin and the Foreshore but rather the creation of significant negative impact on Lake Users and in particular the sailing community in the ACT.

To this end, YACT submit that:

- Alternatives Memorials should be explored that further enhance the amenity of the lake for its users,
- Any Memorial of this size and impact should be subject to extensive engagement with Lake Users and the community, and
- NCA should require that any application for a Bridge construction should be subject to comprehensive and independent impact assessments, including impact and hazard modelling, which must be made available to the community at the time public comment is sought so that informed decisions can be made.