

27 March 2009

Secretary of the Committee  
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories  
Inquiry into the Immigration Bridge Australia Proposal

Via email: [jscncet@aph.gov.au](mailto:jscncet@aph.gov.au) and [committee.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:committee.reps@aph.gov.au)

Dear Secretary

### **Inquiry into the Immigration Bridge Australia Proposal – CDBA objections**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed Immigration Bridge on Lake Burley Griffin.

The Canberra Dragon Boats Association (CDBA) submission will focus primarily on term of reference 1(b) - the interests of users of the Lake; but will also incorporate comments from the Executive and general membership on 1(a) - the heritage values of Lake Burley Griffin and its foreshore.

#### **CDBA Executive comments**

The CDBA is opposed to the Bridge in its current proposed format because of the impact it will have on our sporting and recreational activities.

While the concept of the Bridge and its symbolism enjoys broad support by our membership of nearly 1000 ACT and region residents, the location and structure is causing great concerns about safety. Its proposed location also cuts across our regularly used race course, and will make holding Australian Championships and sanctioned international events under the International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) under requirement guidelines, an impossibility.

The CDBA is currently preparing its bid for the Australian Championships in 2011, and 2012 Trans-Tasman Club Crews Championship. To be eligible for consideration, a host city must meet certain requirements, including a 200m, 500m, 100m and 2000m course. The 2000m course is a time trial style of event, which runs around the outside of the 500m course. This means our 200m, 500m and 2000m events are not immediately impacted upon by the Bridge.

However, our 1000m course, which runs from Commonwealth Avenue Bridge to the Canberra Yacht Club safety and officials' tower at Lotus Bay, will have its lanes of clear water replaced by concrete pylons.

Comparable infrastructure easily accessed by the Association does not exist, so the construction of the Bridge will immediately eliminate the 1000m course for our regular local season, and also mean Canberra will not be considered as a national or international race venue.

A significant part of our development plans, future income, as well as more abstract concepts such as recruitment and retention of participants relies on holding this standard of events, and being able to race them.

**Member of the Australian Dragon Boat Federation (AusDBF)**



**Canberra Dragon  
Boats Association  
(CDBA)**

---

ABN 89 647 128 044

#### **Patron**

Senator Kate Lundy

#### **CDBA Clubs**

Blue Gum Community  
School

Canberra Griffins

Canberra Titans

Diamond Phoenix

Dragon Flyers

Dragons Abreast

Grammar

Ice Dragons

NAVMAT Dragons

Saints

Uni Dragons

---

#### **Executive**

##### **President**

Kel Watt

##### **Vice President**

Michele Moroney

##### **Secretary**

Andrew Churches

##### **Treasurer**

Kylie Bromwich

##### **Equipment Officer**

Robyne Whytcross

##### **Membership Officer**

Natalie McLean

##### **Training Officer**

Robyne Kellett

##### **Development Officer**

Tran Tran

---

#### **Correspondence**

GPO Box 2325  
Canberra ACT 2601

[admin@cdba.com.au](mailto:admin@cdba.com.au)  
[president@cdba.com.au](mailto:president@cdba.com.au)  
[www.cdba.com.au](http://www.cdba.com.au)

The ACT state team and club crews are currently medal holders at the Australian Championships, and our inability to race these distances under regulated conditions will have a serious impact on our sporting ambitions and elite development program, which has had thousands of dollars invested into it in the last two seasons.

Further to this, we have significant safety concerns for our membership during training times. The proposed alignment of the Bridge will provide difficult and dangerous navigation during night time and early morning hours, and in rough waters, when the regular strong winds and waves are already proving difficult to our membership.

### **Membership comments**

a) *My view is "why?" To my mind it does not add to but detracts from the lake view, which I presume is mostly the point. As a tourist attraction, why would people flock to Canberra to see another bridge over the lake? Also most people (it being Australia, after all) I would expect would prefer to drive around rather than walk!*

*Of course I endorse the concerns that a row of pylons in the middle of our 1km course might prove decidedly awkward.*

*Also in this time of economic problems, there must be more deserving projects which would employ a more general section of the community rather than (what I presume would be) highly specialised engineers, architects and builders, at high cost to benefit few. I suspect also that bridge building expertise would need to be imported, so a significant proportion of the money would not directly benefit the local community.*

*Upgrading the pedestrian and cycle access via our existing bridges would seem both more sensible, more cost effective, and more benefit to everyone.*

b) *It would be a headache for our 1000m course, but otherwise I'm neutral about it. However, noting that the Water Police have confirmed that the site where they propose to build is almost in the centre of the roughest part of the lake in windy weather, if it were to go ahead, I would request that they place a low platform and ladder at the base of each pier, to permit lake users to get out of the lake via the bridge in the event of a capsize or foundering.*

c) *Aesthetically the bridge is an eyesore and looks like it has been plonked on the lake without forethought. The bridge disrupts the view of the lake from Commonwealth Bridge and I can image would cause significant disruption to boats and their ability to access the greater lake. Further it is an awkward place to access the bridge from the parliamentary triangle as there is insufficient parking if people wish to walk across to the museum.*

*Surely there are other options and possibilities.*

d) *I am not happy with the new proposed bridge. It will be disruptive to our training and it is also unfair for the yachts as it cuts them off.*

e) *Although the bridge looks to be OK for most occasions, (eg the short races) it still presents an obstacle to training and long races.*

1) *For example, although people who have not done any boating might not appreciate it, the pylons will present a severe problem to passage of dragon boats if there is any cross wind. (Whilst sweeping a dragon boat last week for the first time in a cross wind I nearly wrapped it around a pylon of the Commonwealth Bridge because I did not anticipate the effect of current and wind on a turning boat.) My point is that the bridge represents an obstacle to passage that could become critical in wind/rough water conditions.*

2) *The problem will become worse in winter/night when we try to enter the main basin to run alongside the shore lights past reconciliation place. At the moment the bridges are well lit down into the water and the pylons widely spaced. If the immigration bridge is poorly lit and/or the pylons are closely spaced we run the risk of colliding with them in the dark.*

*I imagine that the problem of manoeuvring boats through the bridge will be even worse for the yachts;  
but the yachties need to argue that one themselves.*

We look forward to the Inquiry's outcomes, and are available to discuss this with the Committee further should we be required.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kel Watt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kel" and the last name "Watt" clearly distinguishable.

**Kel Watt**  
CDBA President  
president@cdba.com.au  
0411 707 489