

11 October 2011

Senator Louise Pratt, Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital & External Territories  
Parliament House,  
PO Box 6000  
Canberra, ACT 2600

Dear Senator Pratt,

**Inquiry into the Administration of the National Memorials Ordinance 1928**

At the public hearing of the inquiry into the Administration of the National Memorials Ordinance 1928 on 14 September 2011 the following question addressed to me as President of the Walter Burley Griffin Society from Senator Gary Humphries (ACT) was placed on notice:

‘There was an article in the *Canberra Times* in October last year by Brett Odgers and Sue Wareham under the subheading ‘We don’t need another war monument’. I take it from the comments you made, Professor Weirick, about the armaments industry, as you called it, that this would reflect the views of the Walter Burley Griffin Society in turn?’ (Hansard, p.6)

At the conclusion of the public hearing, Senator Humphries furnished me with a copy of the article to which he was referring.

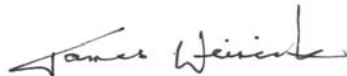
I am pleased to provide the following response on behalf of the Walter Burley Griffin Society.

1. The article in question, entitled ‘New memorial plan misguided: we don’t need another war memorial’ was published in the *Canberra Times* on 4 October 2010 (Attachment 1).
2. Authorship of the article by Sue Wareham and Brett Odgers – and associated input from distinguished experts – was identified in a footer which reads as follows; ‘Dr Sue Wareham is with the Medical Association for the Prevention of War, Brett Odgers is with the Walter Burley Griffin Society. This article was prepared with input from Paul Barrett (former secretary, Department of Defence), Professor Joseph Camilleri (Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University), Professor Stuart Rees (Sydney Peace Foundation) and historian Dr Peter Stanley.’

3. The subject of the article is the proposed World Wars I & II Memorials planned for the Rond Terraces on the northern shore of Lake Burley Griffin.
4. The article consists of a series of statements, and a series of paired questions which address both sides of key issues identified by the authors.
5. The statements are consistent with the views of the Walter Burley Griffin Society, as discussed at the meeting of the Management Committee on 28 September 2010; as posted on the Society's website at <http://www.griffinsociety.org/index.html> , follow prompts to 'News & Events'/'News' - hard copy enclosed (Attachment 2); as published in the Society's April 2011 newsletter (Attachment 3); and as expressed in the Society's submissions to the current inquiry.
6. The series of paired questions posed by Dr Sue Wareham and Brett Odgers are fully supported by the Sydney-based Management Committee of the Society and the Canberra Chapter Committee as a contribution to the public debate on this important topic.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to clarify the Society's position with respect to Senator Humphries' question.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Weirick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Professor James Weirick  
President, Walter Burley Griffin Society, Inc.

enc.

# New memorial plan misguided

We don't need another war monument,  
**SUE WAREHAM** and **BRETT ODGERS** write

Canberra Times 4/10/10

**I**f all goes according to current plan, a stroll around Lake Burley Griffin for Canberrans and their visitors will soon be changed forever, as will the view from Parliament House across the lake to the Australian War Memorial. And the notion that warfare plays a central role in defining us as a nation will be strengthened.

According to plans under development since 2004, largely away from public scrutiny, a significant new war memorial is to be built beside the lake at the end of Anzac Parade, to commemorate Australian lives lost during World Wars I and II. The memorial will incorporate two large towers, each 20m high, joined by a continuous broad granite pavement, plus 12 battlefield walls of mixed concrete and granite. It will dominate the landscape.

The proponents of these new structures claim that the more than 100,000 Australians who died in the two World Wars have been overlooked in our commemoration of warfare. This is an astonishing claim, particularly as the Australian War Memorial contains large sections devoted to these wars (and has just opened new WWII galleries). The AWM Roll of Honour lists all Australians who died fighting in all wars in which we have been involved since the war in the Sudan, with the exception of those killed in armed conflict between Aboriginal and white Australians. Since the AWM opened in 1941, at least 36 more military memorials have been built in Canberra.

By virtue of its size and location, the memorial and its towers would overwhelm the lakeside recreational area. It would also dramatically alter the long sweeping views between the lake, the AWM and Parliament House, views that currently create a feeling of peace and tranquillity.

What would it say about us, as a nation, if the view from our national parliament was to contain not one but three significant monuments to Australia's involvement in war? Is this the overriding ethos we want instilled each day in our politicians, and in all the visitors and future generations of schoolchildren who will visit Parliament House and take in that view? Will such a vista prompt visions of a peaceful world? Or might it support a militaristic frame of mind and help lead to repetitions of horrors past?

The lack of public input into this proposal is alarming. The site has already been approved, a design competition conducted, and the winning entry selected, and yet, despite some meetings with select groups and individuals, "consultation" with the wider public is not planned until next year. It all looks like a fait accompli

in the making. Remaining steps include a heritage and environmental assessment clearance by the federal Environment Minister, a works approval by the National Capital Authority, and the securing of funding.

The issue of funding raises additional concern. In *The Canberra Times* on March 14, 2009, historian Ken Inglis stated that the funding, estimated at \$21 million, will come largely from firms supplying our present armed forces - that is, those who profit from warfare. It is highly offensive that an industry that profits from war's carnage should help commemorate that carnage. It is akin to the liquor industry erecting memorials to those killed by drunk drivers or the tobacco industry commemorating victims of lung cancer. (Meanwhile, sufficient funds for a far more modest memorial to those who've died or served with peacekeeping missions are still lacking.)

We must ask ourselves: How would those whose lives were taken on so many battlefields have us commemorate their sacrifices? At the opening of the AWM, on Armistice Day 1941, then Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, anticipated how future visitors would respond to the galleries and the commemorative area: "Every one of them I am firmly convinced will declare, and will declare with no uncertain voice, never again, never again." How can this plea, shared by so many soldiers, become more than another quaint piece of history?

Would our war dead be more pleased by a nation that erects endless grand memorials or by a nation that uses its public spaces, its schools and universities, its public discourse and its parliaments to promote peace? If it is the latter, then how can we best do that?

The most appropriate way to mark the lives lost and shattered during the two greatest wars of the last century would be to ensure that "never again, never again" do we sink into such an abyss. To do this we must promote a culture of peace, with public monuments that celebrate humanity's finest achievements, and invite us to recommit ourselves to our shared human future. That would be the ultimate mark of respect for our war dead.

■ **Dr Sue Wareham** is with the Medical Association for Prevention of War. **Brett Odgers** is with the Walter Burley Griffin Society. This article was prepared with input from Paul Barratt (former secretary, Department of Defence) Professor Joseph Camilleri (Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University), Professor Stuart Rees (Sydney Peace Foundation) and historian Dr Peter Stanley.

## **Attachment 2**

Walter Burley Griffin Society - Statements on the World Wars I & II Memorials from the Society's website:

### **PUBLIC MEETING**

**Save The Lake Shore –**

**Stop these unnecessary memorials!**

Wednesday 23 March 2011, 7.30pm

Albert Hall, Canberra

This public meeting with a panel of eminent speakers has been called by the Lake War Memorials Forum, a group of concerned organisations including the Walter Burley Griffin Society's Canberra Chapter.

Operating behind closed doors and indifferent to overwhelming public opposition, a group called the Memorials Development Committee has been allocated land on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin to construct two unsightly, unnecessary monoliths which have been rejected by many veterans. The existing Australian War Memorial provides a fitting monument to those who served in the two world wars.

The Walter Burley Griffin Society is concerned about the adverse impacts on Griffin's land axis and the design and vistas of his National Capital plan.

Further information: [www.lakewarmemorialsforum.org](http://www.lakewarmemorialsforum.org)

### **Prominent Australians Oppose Memorial media-information session Wednesday 2 February 2011, 11:00 am to 11:30 am**

A media-information session and website launch will be held at St John's Church hall, Constitution Ave., Reid.

A group of prominent Australians has announced its opposition to a proposed new memorial to World Wars I and II on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. Despite strong public protest when this project was first announced, work has apparently continued behind closed doors, with citizens' views being either ignored or not sought.

The Lake War Memorials Forum has been established to give all Australians the chance to express their views.

All media and members of the public are warmly invited to attend.

For further information: [www.lakewarmemorialsforum.org](http://www.lakewarmemorialsforum.org)



Photo montage Karina Lee, reproduced with permission of the Lake War Memorial Forum

## **Grandiose war monuments are a flawed proposal for Canberra**

9 November 2010

The proposed WWI and WWII Memorials, that would stand as 20 metre towers, are a grandiose scale that if built would be detrimental to the recreational foreshore parklands, and impede the Griffin vista towards Mt Ainslie. This vista creates appreciation of the natural form of the mountain, as intended by Griffin and the open nature of the Vistas in both north and south directions i

The Land Axis and clear vista are fundamental, enduring elements of the 1912 winning design for the National Capital. The memorials would break the length of the Land Axis and narrow the width of Griffin's 'Parkway' (Anzac Parade). Moreover the Lake foreshore is a horizontal, flat landscape that would be upset by the pronounced vertical towers.

Griffin envisaged that the city would develop around his parkway, using the lakeside gardens as a promenade between cultural and recreational facilities. He never wanted it to be overburdened by the memory of war.

On any sunny weekend a great many people and groups, including tourists, can be seen all over the terraces enjoying picnics, games, walking, cycling and sports. The ambience is conducive to these activities. One enjoys unhindered vistas to iconic buildings, structures, mountains and the passing scene on land and water. The towers and other structures of the war memorials would create an altogether different and much less enjoyable ambience and outlook, practically monopolising the site.

The presumption of a military theme displacing recreational, cultural and other national symbolic themes and achievements is unacceptable.

The Australian War Memorial at the foot of Mt Ainslie is perhaps the most memorable Vista in Canberra because it has a human scale, engages our emotions, and engages us with the dramatic natural form of the mountain. The building at the foot of the Mountain speaks honestly and nobly.

There is a great difference between memorialising the realities of war and monumentalising them. The siting and excessive size of the proposed monuments would diminish the Land Axis, Mt Ainslie and the Australian War Memorial.

The Walter Burley Griffin Society reaffirms its opposition to these memorials at the Rond Terraces near the foreshore of Lake Burley Griffin.

Source: <http://www.griffinsociety.org/index.html> (follow prompts to 'News & Events'/'News') - accessed 3 October 2011

Walter Burley Griffin Society - Statements on the World Wars I & II Memorials from the Society's *News Update*, no.55, April 2011, p.2:

Please send cheque or money order to  
The Treasurer, WBSG Canberra Chapter  
50 Gollan Street, Evatt, ACT 2617

The Marion Mahony Griffin Lecture is an initiative of the Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc and organised by the Society's Canberra Chapter with the support of the ACT Government. The lecture is part of the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival 2011 and is sponsored by the Canberra100 Taskforce.

### SAVE THE LAKE SHORE – STOP THESE UNNECESSARY MEMORIALS! PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday 23 March 2011, 7.30 pm  
Albert Hall, Canberra

This public meeting with a panel of eminent speakers has been called by the Lake War Memorials Forum, a group of concerned organisations including the Walter Burley Griffin Society's Canberra Chapter.

Operating behind closed doors and indifferent to overwhelming public opposition, a group called the Memorials Development Committee has been allocated land on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin to construct two unsightly, unnecessary monoliths which have been rejected by many veterans. The existing Australian War Memorial provides a fitting monument to those who served in the two world wars.

The Walter Burley Griffin Society is concerned about the adverse impacts on Griffin's Land Axis and the design and vistas of his National Capital plan.

In Griffin's Plan, Anzac Parade would terminate with Public Gardens including recreational areas, a stadium, baths, gardens, museums and the opera, with buildings such as the stadium recessed into the slope of the Lake foreshore so as not to interrupt the continuous vista along the Land Axis. The central basin of his Lake was much smaller but the land use envisaged was recreational and cultural. The Land Axis and clear vista are fundamental, enduring elements of the 1912 winning design for the National Capital, which is at the heart of Canberra's claims for World Heritage status as a planned city.

As stated by Rosemarie Willett last year "The Australian War Memorial at the foot of Mt Ainslie is perhaps the most memorable vista in Canberra because it engages our emotions. Firstly it engages us with the dramatic natural form of the mountain, its presence monumentalised for greater significance by its relationship with the small building at its foot.

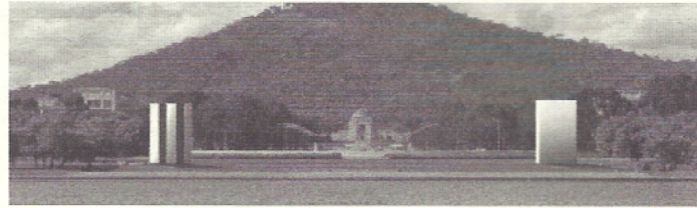


Photo montage Karina Lee, reproduced with permission the Lake War Memorials Forum

The War Memorial has human scale, and the human tragedy of war, the enormity of the struggle and human sacrifice tugs at the heart. The building at the foot of the Mountain speaks honestly and nobly".

The Society is thus opposed to the proposed memorials near the lake's edge.

### MELTING MOMENTS – INCINERATOR ART SPACE OPENING EXHIBITION

Wednesday 2 March to Sunday 27 March, 2011

The restoration and adaptation of Walter Burley Griffin and Eric Nicholl's Willoughby Incinerator, Small Street, Willoughby is now complete. The Mayor of Willoughby City will formally open the new Incinerator Art Space in early April, and describes the opening as a celebration of "the new role of this iconic and much-loved building as a unique visual arts centre".

Willoughby City Council is to be congratulated on its decision to restore and convert this magnificent industrial building into such a valuable community resource. The Walter Burley Griffin Society played a pivotal role working with Council in the early stages to return the incinerator to community use. Federal and State Governments have assisted the Council with some funding to restore and adapt the incinerator into a café, exhibition space and artist studios.

The opening exhibition for the new Incinerator Art Space is titled *Melting Moments* and features the work of Janet Tavener.

Frozen in time (as well as temperature?), Tavener displays dramatic black and white photographs of her sculptures of ordinary food objects, which assume a mysterious transformation because they have been seemingly hewn from ice or cast in oil. The images of a hamburger, Coca Cola bottle, or serving of French fries, are dramatically set against an all-concealing black emptiness, which intensifies the sparkling patterns of light reflecting from their crazed icy surfaces. The "oil" sculptures, such as Cheese or Octopus, are in fact painted plaster; photographs of these appear much more menacing and sinister, possibly alluding to the devastation that leaking oil can have on our environment.

While the images take on the sharp focus and