

The implication of this inquiry seems to be a questioning of the role that the Commonwealth Government should play in the future planning and development of Canberra.

Canberra, as a purpose-built capital, exists primarily to be the seat of government (in the broadest sense), a centre of knowledge and culture, and a place of ceremony. All Australians should have ownership of Canberra, and be proud of it as their city. Canberra should be a showcase of the very best possible for Australia, as it is what we present first to the world. It has been said that the state of a capital city is one of the most important measures of a society, and so our nation's leaders should pay special attention to its building and maintenance.

Canberra was conceived as a city to embody ideal relationships between the people and nature, and the people and their government. Canberra has a history of designing significant buildings for national institutions, but equally ideal suburbs for the city's residents. The world has looked to Canberra for leadership in city building for most of the last century.

Unfortunately we have been negligent in recent years, and many politicians wrongly believe that since the completion of Parliament House upon Capital Hill the building of Canberra is complete. A city is in constant evolution, and it is impossible to anticipate the future needs of the Commonwealth. There is a constant curatorial role required of the Commonwealth Government as the representatives of the Australian people and the custodians of their capital.

It is necessary that an independent statutory authority be responsible for the design and maintenance of buildings and areas of particular national significance, as well as for strategic planning processes that ensure a quality built environment for all of Canberra.

Duplication of processes and work is unnecessary and should be avoided, but tension between national and local authorities is healthy and in fact crucial. There is no city in Australia that doesn't have tension between their local councils and state government – and it should be quite obvious that as at times national and local interests have the potential to be in conflict, there needs to be a mechanism for the effective resolution such issues.

The National Capital Authority or an equivalent organisation needs to be given appropriate capacity to fulfil the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government and the expectations of the Australian people in regard to the building and maintenance of Canberra.

I am keen to discuss this further and would be happy to be called to a hearing.

Regards,



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