



SUBMISSION 18



Friday 23 May 2003

The Secretary
Inquiry into the Role of the National Capital Authority
The Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

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The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) is the national professional body which provides the primary leadership, structure and network to harness and focus the intellectual energy of Australian landscape architects in the creation of more meaningful, enjoyable, equitable and sustainable environments. Landscape Architects are called upon daily to develop considered solutions to development within natural settings that balance land management, public amenity, environmental conservation, heritage considerations and developer needs.

Canberra is internationally recognised as the Australia's premier example of a designed landscaped environment. The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and its members have a high commitment to working with governments to ensure that this national treasure is maintained and developed as a designed landscape that Australia's can continue to be proud of.

In this context, The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects wishes to make a submission to this inquiry in order that the future of Canberra as a designed landscape is given the highest priority by the Commonwealth and the ACT Governments.

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects acknowledges that both agencies, the NCA and the ACT Government, have consulted with The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and its members in relation to a number of matters. The Institute supports the work the NCA has been carrying out and acknowledges the valuable impact it has had in its prime role of stewardship of Canberra's landscaped environments

At this point in time, The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects wishes to briefly outline some points that we would like to discuss with the committee, namely:

- That AILA is looking for structures within government that guarantee a higher quality of design, development and maintenance and the built environments.
- That many landscape projects identified by the NCA have taken a long time to be resourced adequately to be progressed in a timely manner; with many known projects remaining as 'pending'. It would seem that the NCA's financial resource base is not adequate to the task expected of it by The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects' members as well as by the general public.

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- That the working relationship between the ACT Government and the NCA has at times been seen to be tense and unresolved, resulting in the decision making processes being far more convoluted than should be necessary given the available public resources.
- In neither organisation is there a 'Principal Landscape Architect' recognised as having a leadership role in landscape architecture in Canberra as a whole. This arrangement is most relevant when applied to this city, given that Canberra is known internationally for its landscaped environments. Neither the ACT Government nor the NCA have a Chief Landscape Architect. The ACT Government while having many landscape architects employed across several sections, continues to have no identified head landscape architect or identified landscape architecture section to oversee the maintenance, development and implementation of visionary design policies for the city.
- There is no apparent set of comprehensive policies for the National Capital that have been agreed to or promulgated jointly. Alternatively, if such joint policies exist, this Institute has not been made aware of them. Such policies would go a long way to being a guarantee of high quality design, development and maintenance of Canberra's landscapes environments.
- That both the NCA and the ACT Government should be showing leadership in developing a harmonious relationship with each other and jointly with landscape architects to deliver more public benefit through the designed landscapes of Canberra.
- In relation to former point, both agencies now have to opportunity to work with The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and other professions in building on the Commonwealth Government's initiative of celebrating 2004 as Australia's "The Year of The Built Environment".

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects has appreciated the opportunity to submit to this inquiry, and looks forward to being called to speak directly to the committee involved.

Yours sincerely
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Executive Director

for
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AILA National President
and
Paul Bombardier
ACT Group President