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The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

# **Difficult Choices:**

**Inquiry into the role of the National Capital Authority in  
determining the extent of redevelopment of the Pierces Creek  
Settlement in the A.C.T**

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories**

August 2004  
Canberra

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ISBN [Click **here** and type ISBN Number]



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## Foreword

Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,  
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.<sup>1</sup>

This was a particularly difficult inquiry for all concerned. It has, of course, been difficult for the former residents of Pierces Creek, the homes of whom were devastated by bushfires and who continue to face uncertainty as to whether they will be able to return home. It has also been difficult for the ACT Government and the National Capital Authority, who both want to do the right thing by these residents, but have other responsibilities to consider at the same time.

In the Committee's view, there are two priorities in determining the future of the Pierces Creek settlement. The first is the return of the original residents, whose futures should not be determined by the bushfires. The second, is protecting the integrity of the National Capital Open Space System which provides the landscape setting for the national capital. Any substantial expansion of the Pierces Creek settlement would run contrary to the principles of the open space system which gives the 'bush capital' its character.

The Committee has therefore recommended that the ACT Government and the National Capital Authority come up with a suitable proposition for the settlement which recognises these two priorities.

**Senator Ross Lightfoot**  
Chairman

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<sup>1</sup> John Howard Payne – US Dramatist (1791-1852).



## **Membership of the Committee**

**Chairman**     Senator Ross Lightfoot

**Deputy Chair**     Senator Trish Crossin

**Members**     The Hon Ian Causley MP                     Senator John Hogg  
                         Ms Annette Ellis MP                             Senator Kate Lundy  
                         Mr Paul Neville MP                                Senator Nigel Scullion  
                         The Hon Warren Snowdon MP                     Senator Natasha Stott Despoja  
                         Mr Cameron Thompson MP  
                         Dr Mal Washer MP

## **Committee Secretariat**

**Secretary**                     Mr Quinton Clements

**Research Officer**             Mr Justin Baker

**Administrative Officer**     Mrs Donna Quintus-Bosz



## **Terms of reference**

On 4 August 2004 the Committee resolved that, as an extension of the review of the Annual Report of the National Capital Authority for 2002-03, which was tabled in the House of Representatives on 4 November 2003 and stands referred to the Committee for inquiry if the Committee so wishes, the Committee conduct an inquiry and report on the role of the National Capital Authority in determining the extent of redevelopment of the Pierces Creek settlement in the ACT.



## List of recommendations

### 3 The Options

#### Recommendation 1

That the National Capital Authority negotiate with the relevant ACT Government authorities to facilitate the return of the original residents of the Pierces Creek Forestry Settlement as soon as possible; and further, that:

- the number of houses to be rebuilt at the settlement remain as small as practicable; and
- the original residents, if eligible, be given the opportunity to purchase their houses.

#### Recommendation 2

That the National Capital Authority report back to the Committee in December 2004 with an update as to how the implementation of Recommendation 1 is progressing.