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SUBMISSION 3

NATIONAL CAPITAL AUTHORITY
SUBMISSION TO THE
PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

PROPOSED FITOUT OF NEW LEASED PREMISES FOR AUSAID
AT LONDON CIRCUIT, CITY

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Capital Authority (NCA) has prepared this submission in response to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC) inquiry into the proposed fitout of new leased premises for AusAID on Block 20 Section 10 City (London Circuit).

This submission provides the relevant background information on the NCA's role in planning and development in the ACT and the NCA's involvement in the site and its development. It sets out the provisions of the National Capital Plan (the Plan) applicable to the subject site and outlines the NCA's current position regarding the assessment of the proposal.

2. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

The National Capital Planning Authority was established in 1989 as part of the introduction of self-government in the ACT, with a view to securing the Federal Government's continuing interest in the planning and development of Canberra as Australia's National Capital. The name was changed to National Capital Authority on 4 June 1996.

The functions of the Authority are set out in the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* (the Act). One of the functions of the NCA under the Act is to prepare and administer the Plan. Section 9 of the Act sets out the object of the Plan as follows:

Object of the Plan

9. *The object of the Plan is to ensure that Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance.*

The Plan is required to set the general policies to be implemented throughout the Territory, and in particular, the policies of land use (including the range and nature of permitted land use) [Section 10(2)(b)].

In addition, the Act makes provision for the Plan to identify "Designated Areas" – "areas that have the special characteristics of the National Capital". [Section 10(1)]. Within Designated Areas the NCA is the responsible planning authority and all "works" require

the approval of the NCA in writing [Section 12(1)(b)]. 'Works' is defined under the Act to include:

- (a) the construction, alteration, extension or demolition of buildings or structures;
- (b) landscaping;
- (c) tree-felling; or
- (d) excavations;

but excludes anything done inside buildings or structures.

The Act at section 11(2) outlines the effect of the Plan on Commonwealth agencies as follows:

Effect of Plan

11.(2) The Commonwealth, a Commonwealth authority, the Territory or a Territory authority shall not do any act that is inconsistent with the Plan.

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Act and is being administered by the NCA. Provisions of the Plan relevant to the proposed office building being considered for occupation by AusAID are set out below.

3. RELEVANT NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN PROVISIONS

Introduction

Block 20 Section 10 City, ACT is leased Territory Land located within the Designated Areas of the Plan. As such works approval is required from the NCA for the new office building proposed on that site. The internal fitout works, which are the subject of this inquiry, do not require an approval from the NCA.

Land use

The Plan identifies the subject site as part of The Central National Area (City). The land use for the site is 'commercial'. The range of uses permitted in the 'commercial' land use includes offices. The proposed office building is therefore, consistent with the land use policy of the Plan.

Design

The design of the office building would need to be assessed against the relevant provisions of the Plan. Buildings within The Central National Area must show an appropriate quality of architectural design consistent with their location in this area of special national concern.

The lessee and their architects provided the NCA a set of sketch plans on the proposed development in July 2005. Subsequent to that, the NCA had several discussions with the

proponent on the design of the building. The comments provided by the NCA have been taken into consideration and the design of the building has been refined.

Consultation

On receipt of a works approval application, the NCA will undertake consultation with the adjoining neighbours/lessees. Three weeks will be provided for comment on the proposal which will then be taken into consideration by the NCA in making a decision on the application for works approval.

4. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

The design of the building proposed for Block 20 Section 10 City (as developed to date) has been supported in principle by the NCA. Details of the proposal will have to be considered further as part of an application for works approval. Once a works approval application is received, the NCA will assess the proposal against the relevant provisions of the National Capital Plan.