
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Review of the Griffin Legacy Amendments

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

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Chairman's Foreword

The Griffin Legacy amendments are some of the most significant changes proposed for the future urban planning of Canberra. They seek to restate some of the key planning principles Griffin proposed and articulate specific strategic plans for the Central National Area. The amendments examined by the committee include:

- Amendment 56: The Griffin Legacy – Principles and Policies;
- Amendment 59: City Hill Precinct;
- Amendment 60: Constitution Avenue; and
- Amendment 61: West Basin.

The committee supports the broad aims of the Griffin Legacy Project. The aim of advancing Griffin's plan to guide the future urban planning of Canberra through the 21st Century is enviable.

The committee, however, believes that the Griffin Legacy Amendments can be improved. Through the roundtable public hearing, evidence was provided which questioned the adequacy of parts of these amendments. These criticisms are not easily dismissed.

In relation to Amendment 56 concerns were raised about excessive building height, traffic and transport implications, loss of vistas of national significance and loss of green space. In addition, there were concerns about the scale of the proposed developments and the lack of a rigorous planning rationale. At the same time, the committee's examination revealed that there were concerns about the adequacy of the NCA's consultation process.

The examination of Amendment 59 revealed concerns about the level of detail, issues about public funding and specific concerns about serious disruptions to traffic and excess building heights and loss of vistas.

Amendment 60 notes that Constitution Avenue will become an elegant and vibrant mixed use grand boulevard linking London Circuit to Russell. The amendment was supported by key stakeholders including, for example, the Returned and Services League of

Australia, the Canberra Institute of Technology and St John's Church. Each of these groups have made valid cases for supporting the amendment.

The committee, however, has noted some of the concerns about the amendment which also cannot be easily dismissed. In particular, the scale of the proposal and the possible negative impact on the vista from Parliament House towards Constitution Avenue which is, perhaps, one of the most significant urban vistas in the nation.

Amendment 61 – West Basin is notable for its size and scope. It is proposed that part of the lake be reclaimed using infill taken from the proposed Parkes Way and Kings Avenue tunnel.

The amendment provides for a land bridge over a section of Parkes Way for streets to extend to the lake. A waterfront promenade will be created and stepped back from that will be a series of buildings. Building height on the waterfront promenade will be limited to 8 metres (maximum of two storeys). The parapet height of buildings fronting the promenade will be a maximum of 16 metres, and taller building elements to a maximum of 25 metres, and not exceeding 30 per cent of the site area may be considered. Taller buildings may be considered on sites north of Parkes Way.

In considering this matter further, the committee examined the NCA's 2004 report, *The Griffin Legacy, Canberra – the Nation's Capital in the 21st Century*.¹ In that report, the NCA set out a plan for West Basin which is moderate in tone, less dominated by development and much more inclusive through the use of extensive green area. Evidence to the committee suggested that the scale of development for West Basin should configure more closely to the NCA's 2004 proposal.

As a result of the committee's findings, the committee has recommended that Amendments 56, 59, 60 and 61 be disallowed so that the NCA has the opportunity to further refine the amendments taking into account issues raised in the committee's report. This fine tuning is necessary and in the interests of Canberra and the nation.

I take this opportunity on behalf of the committee to thank all groups, organisations and individuals who contributed to this inquiry.

Senator Ross Lightfoot
Chairman

¹ National Capital Authority, *The Griffin Legacy, Canberra – the Nation's Capital in the 21st Century*, 2004.



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Membership of the Committee

Chairman Senator Ross Lightfoot

Deputy Chair Senator Kate Lundy (from 29/03/06)

 Senator Trish Crossin (to 28/03/06)

Members The Hon. Ian Causley MP

 Ms Annette Ellis MP

 Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP

 Mr Paul Neville MP

 Mr Patrick Secker MP

 The Hon. Warren Snowdon MP

 Senator Kim Carr (from 08/12/05 and to
 08/02/07)

 Senator Trish Crossin (to 28/03/06 and
 from 08/02/07)

 Senator John Hogg

 Senator Barnaby Joyce (from 16/08/05)

 Senator Kate Lundy (from 10/08/05)

 Senator Kerry O'Brien (to 10/08/05)

 Senator Nigel Scullion (to 16/08/05)

 Senator Natasha Stott Despoja

Committee Secretariat

Secretary Mr Stephen Boyd

Inquiry Secretary Mr Justin Baker

Administrative Officer Mrs Doris Cooley



List of abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| ACTPLA | ACT Land and Planning Authority |
| AILA | Australian Institute of Landscape Architects |
| CBC | Canberra Business Council |
| CNA | Central National Area |
| DA | Draft Amendment |
| FOAB | Friends of Aranda Bushland |
| NCA | National Capital Authority |
| NCDC | National Capital Development Commission |
| NCP | National Capital Plan |
| NCPA | National Capital Planning Authority |
| PCA | Property Council of Australia |
| RAIA | Royal Australian Institute of Architects |
| RL 617 | Building height restriction up to 18 storeys |
| RSL | Returned and Services League of Australia |
| WBGS | Walter Burley Griffin Society |



Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads in the future provides the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories with the option of inquiring into every Draft Amendment to the National Capital Plan.

Where the committee requests an inquiry, the Draft Amendment under consideration should not be tabled until after the committee completes its inquiry.

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the National Capital Authority explore options for ensuring that submissions to all the Authority's consultation processes are made publicly available subject to full approval by the submitter and compliance with relevant privacy principles and advise the committee.

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that before 29 March 2007 the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads moves to disallow Amendments 56, 59, 60 and 61 so that the National Capital Authority has the opportunity to further refine the amendments taking into account issues raised in the committee's report.