

SUBMISSION NO. 2

To: Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Parliament House Canberra

Dear Committee Members

Regrettably I am unable to attend the Roundtable Review of the Griffin Legacy Amendments scheduled for Friday 23 February 2007. However, I would like to have the opportunity to present my views in this letter.

My involvement in Canberra's planning dates back to the early 1970's when I worked for the NCDC. In 1997 I held the position of ACT Commissioner for Land and Planning until 2003 when I was appointed Chair of the ACT Planning and Land Council. I have been City Planner for City of Sydney, and Manager of City Planning and Development, Melbourne. I am a Fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and former National President of the Planning Institute of Australia and recently was Deputy Lord Mayor of Sydney. I am also a long standing member of the Walter Burley Griffin Society. I feel obliged to comment on the Griffin Legacy planning proposals from both a local and national perspective.

As a member of the Griffin Legacy Advisory Panel, I have been considerably encouraged by the direction set for the planning of Central Canberra by the Griffin Legacy. The professional rigour and quality of the work undertaken by the National Capital Authority has been exemplary.

I am aware of some opposition recently expressed in the media to aspects of the proposed Griffin Legacy Amendments to the National Capital Plan (DA 56, DA 59, DA 60 and DA 61). As a member of the Griffin Legacy Panel, I wish to register my disappointment with the views expressed and lend support to the proposed amendments.

The Griffin Legacy provides a much needed unifying framework of an overall vision for central Canberra. It is a long term vision. It does not preclude ongoing social, environmental or transport planning within the clear framework established by the Griffin Legacy amendments, or the finessing of design outcomes through detailed precinct plans, development control plans and specific architectural proposals. High calibre design review panels can be applied consistent with best practice urban design arrangements adopted in other capitals.

Canberra has never been a singular planning project. It has, and will continue to be, worked on by many hands. Canberra has the advantage of a unique structure set down by Walter and Marion Griffin that can evolve and respond to contemporary needs. The Griffin Legacy amendments affirm the advantages of this structure, of a city connected to its landscape with capacity to accommodate urban growth. The structure demands consolidation and density around the core to realise its advantages as a walkable, public

transport based city, and to achieve a vitality that is expected by most Australians. Canberra has the potential to realise a quality public domain second to none.

The Griffin Legacy presents a timely policy direction for the development of Australia's National Capital Plan, combining a respect for Canberra's extraordinary planning heritage with a contemporary response to the challenges of environmental sustainability, absolutely essential in this current era.

The substance of most criticism appears to relate to matters of detail and implementation. This should not prevent the clear passage of the Amendments through Parliament.

Yours faithfully

Councillor John McInerney