

Julia Trainor

26 March 2009

The Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

jscncet@aph.gov.au

Sir

**Submission to the Inquiry into the proposed Immigration Bridge**

Thank you for your public consultation in relation to your inquiry into the *Immigration Bridge Australia Proposal*. I submit the following according to your Terms of Reference.

**1. The process adopted by Immigration Bridge Australia to settle the design**

IBA seems to have disregarded established processes for the development of the national capital, which are designed to protect the public interest. IBA's website presents its privately funded bridge as a virtual *fait accompli*, raising expectations among members of the public who contribute funds to the project. This approach is a circumvention of fair process because it could undermine sound planning and open decision-making.

In view of this disregard for the established planning processes, it is hardly surprising that IBA's development take little account of the heritage values of Lake Burley Griffin and its foreshore. The proposed bridge would be transform a graceful and elegant landscape into a cluttered and 'busy' one. The interests of the users of the Lake have clearly not been considered, with detrimental impacts on boat movements and water safety.

There are many ways to commemorate immigration. The case for a bridge should be based first and foremost on the requirement to transport people from one place to another. It should also consider the impact that such a bridge would have on public amenity and traffic around the bridge.

A bridge in the national capital must be maintained in perpetuity with careful regard for town planning, security and public safety. Private funding should not be seen as a means to 'buy' the right to build monuments and structure in this treasured national space, and to commit future generations to funding the maintenance of such a structure.

This country is littered with bridges that are genuinely required but cannot be maintained. For example the railway bridge at Chakola has fallen into disrepair, causing the railway service between Canberra and Cooma (headquarters of the former Snowy Mountains Scheme and home of many supporters of IBA) to be replaced by a bus service. I would like to suggest that if Australian taxpayers cannot afford to maintain bridges that are required for transport of people and freight, we cannot afford to spend public money on bridges for which a genuine transport need has never been established.

**2. The process adopted by Immigration Bridge Australia to raise funds**

The IBA website and publicity appears deceptive in that it does not alert contributors that the project is subject to approval and that approval has not yet been obtained.

It would appear that IBA is accepting money under false pretences, because it apparently misleads the public into assuming that the IBA development proposal will be constructed.

**3. The approval process required under the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 if an application for approval of the Bridge were received by the National Capital Authority.**

It is not clear what encouragement the NCA may have given to the development of this planning proposal. If the NCA has in fact encouraged the IBA to develop a proposal for a bridge over Lake Burley Griffin, then the NCA will have compromised its impartiality and should forfeit any further role in the approval process.

Yours sincerely

Julia Trainor