

**Submission to Joint Standing Committee Inquiry into the Administration of the
National Memorials Ordinance 1928**

The Canberra National Memorials Committee and the bodies making recommendations to it need to consult the community at earlier stages and consider more carefully the need for the edifices proposed as memorials and their impact on the Canberra landscape. The cases of the migrant bridge, additional World War I and II memorials and the workers' memorial illustrate this.

The proposal to have a pedestrian bridge across Lake Burley Griffin to commemorate migrants was well advanced before notice was taken of the feeling of Canberra people about its impact on the landscape. Fortunately, an alternative site and format is being considered but further consultation is desirable.

The proposal to have two towering memorials near the Lake's edge was progressed too far before there was public consultation. Not only are such memorials superfluous given the existing role of the Australian War Memorial but they would be blots on the landscape and inconsistent with Griffin's land and water corridors. The Memorials Committee should take notice of the almost universal condemnation in Canberra and veto the proposal.

The recent proposal, as outlined in the *Canberra Times*, for 'a sweeping memorial on the banks of Lake Burley Griffin to honour Australian workers killed on the job' also raises many questions. It is a very amorphous concept. Will it, for instance, commemorate the executive who dies from a heart attack in his/her office or the persons whose work stress shortens their lives?

The proposal to have a national memorial cemetery near the Lake also needs vigorous scrutiny. The Arlington Cemetery in the USA apparently originated from the confiscation of General Lee's property to punish him for leading the Confederate Army in the Civil War. Is it a suitable model? Why should prominent people be buried there rather than in their family's location?

There are better ways to commemorate than littering the Lake shore with edifices. The money could be used to help the living. The Committee needs to be more rigorous and consultative in its approaches. It needs more representation from the people who live in Canberra.

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