

**ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA
Canberra Division**

10 April 2008

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Senator Kate Lundy Chair
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

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Dear Senator Lundy,

Inquiry into the role of National Capital Authority

Our nation deserves a National Capital which functions well as the seat of Government. It is the centre of the diplomatic community with the eyes of the world in our midst. It contains our National Library, Defence Academy, ANU, national Art Gallery, High Court, Australian War Memorial, National Museum and Archives, serves as a focus for our National expression and is a place of which all Australians are conscious.

The city or the context within which all these development occur is also part of the Nation's capital. Another component or features of the Nation's Capital are the activities which specifically relate to the Capital. These of course include the activities of the Parliament of Australia as well as others such as the Australia Day and other celebrations.

Engineers Australia believes that all the Capital features of the city and the relevant activities of the Capital should be defined in the National Capital Plan.

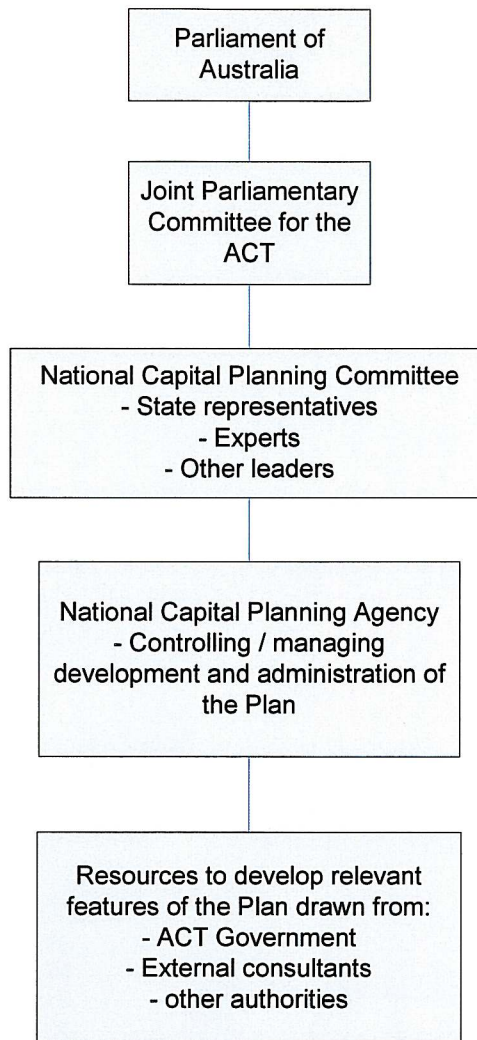
This consists of:-

- The structure of the city recognising the range of important inputs such as the Griffin Plan, the General Plan Concepts etc.
- Development qualities particularly in those areas of National Capital Significance and also generally throughout the city which the overall character of the capital is defined.
- Siting, settings and designs of National Institutions and the areas of National Capital significance.
- Activities related to the city as the nation's capital. This includes those relating to the Parliament of Australia.

The custodian of this plan should be the Parliament of Australia supported by an appropriate agency with specific responsibilities for administering the National Capital Plan. The interests of the rest of Australia represented by other than the Parliament would also be valuable and consistent with the concept of the National and People's Capital.

History has shown that the planning of our National Capital has succeeded to the extent that we can take considerable pride in what has been achieved. This has been the result of the far-sighted vision of people such as Sir John Butters and the staff of the Federal Capital Commission, in the 1920's followed by Sir John Overall and staff from the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) in the 1950s and 60s. A particular feature of the NCDC and its success in planning and developing Canberra as the Nation's Capital was the involvement of both the Parliament of Australia and experts and other leaders from throughout the land in the planning, design and development task.

Something similar would be a useful addition to the current process. An organisational structure with these broad characteristics is shown below.



The current National Capital Authority could be restructured to create a suitable agency for developing and administering the National Capital Plan. The resources for the technical tasks of developing the various components of the plan would be drawn from those of the ACT Government, external consultants, federal government departments or other organisations. The organisation of National Capital events or other activities could also be undertaken by these groups with significant benefits to co-ordination.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry with the National Capital Authority. The Canberra Division of Engineers Australia represents some 2000 professional engineers in Canberra and the region and its members are integrally involved in the planning, design and construction of much of our essential infrastructure. We would welcome the opportunity to make a presentation to the committee carrying out the inquiry when we could further elaborate on the planning needs for the Nation's Capital and our ideas on meeting them in the most effective and efficient way.

Yours Sincerely

Tom Brimson
Deputy President, Canberra Division