

27 March 2009

Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital  
Department of House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

I welcome this opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry on the Immigration Bridge Australia Proposal, as announced by the Joint Standing Committee on 26 February 2009.

This submission refers to the broader developmental aspects of the case for a proposed IBA, which need to be taken into account by the National Capital Authority before a decision is taken on any application that may be received for its approval.

#### **Developmental Aspects**

The idea of a footbridge across the lake at this location was probably inspired by the "indicative" *Parliamentary Zone Review* of March 2000, which at pages 60-61 showed building sites replacing the approach roads at the southern end of Commonwealth and Kings Avenue bridges. The NCA's subsequent Draft Amendment 53 sought to clear the way for a development scheme that included a pedestrian way on the extended alignment of King Edward Terrace, across Commonwealth Avenue via traffic lights, and extending across the Lake to Acton Peninsula.

In response to strong community-based submissions to its Inquiry in April 2008 the Parliamentary Standing Committee recommended that "*Draft Amendment 53, Albert Hall Precinct, not proceed and that proposed changes to traffic conditions south of the Lake on Commonwealth Avenue Bridge also not proceed*". Although the National Capital Authority [NCA] does not yet appear to have acted on the spirit of that recommendation, DA53 cannot in effect proceed because its envisaged removal of approach roads to the Parliamentary Zone always was, and will remain, wildly impractical.

- ❖ The *PZ Review* considered that approach roads around the southern ends of Commonwealth and Kings Avenues were redundant, arguing that they were only needed in the early 1960s as a means of providing access to a planned lakeside Parliament House. In fact they provide important connections to and from the whole of the PZ zone, via the bridges and Flynn Place and Bowen Drive.
- ❖ There is growing justification for all of these connections because, despite the southward shift of parliament, we still have a substantial PZ workforce plus the collective lakeside attractions of the National Gallery, Reconciliation Place, Portrait Gallery, Science and Technology Centre, and National Library.

Visitors, especially those from interstate, need a safe and efficient means of gaining access to these institutions.

- ❖ A major preoccupation of the NCA in making a case for DA53 was the excessive use of King Edward Terrace by through traffic, especially heavy vehicles. The NCA's punitive solution to this problem, following on from its proposals at page 39 of the *PZ Review*, was to create 'T' junctions with traffic lights on the main avenues and remove Bowen Place and Flynn Drive.
- ❖ The recent, more positive approach to traffic management adopted by the NCA for King Edward Terrace, has gone some way toward achieving the *PZ Review's* objective of giving it a "main street" character: the installation of traffic signals at Parkes Place West; a roundabout at Dorothy Tangney Place. Further traffic calming could be achieved, for example with 'speed humped' pedestrian crossings and cobblestone surfacing.

DA53 provided the developmental underpinning essential for a pedestrian bridge across the lake: continuity of points of interest for pedestrians, convenient parking close to the bridge, a nearby source of potential users. Without that developmental underpinning there is no justification for a lake crossing at this location.

With regard to the more general issue of parking in the Parliamentary Zone:

- ❖ The *PZ Review* was justifiably critical [Page 40] of the amount of space devoted to surface car parking, and the lack of a system of pay parking which would make it feasible to replace free parking areas with parking structures. Now that the ACT Government is publicly pushing the Commonwealth to agree to a structured parking station for Barton office workers, there is some prospect of making headway on this fundamental issue, with the help of a positive recommendation from the Standing Committee.

Given these contextual developments since the *PZ Review*, and the Standing Committee's recommendation that DA53 not proceed, there is clearly a need for the Standing Committee to recommend to the NPA that a new plan be prepared for the Parliamentary Triangle.

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