

Introduction

The National Capital Authority has produced this kit to provide secondary teachers throughout Australia with a curriculum-based education resource to support the teaching of *Studies of Society and Environment, Australian History and Geography*. The booklet presents teachers with the opportunity to reinforce the role of Australia's national capital and to familiarise students with the unique story of Canberra. It does not cover every aspect of the national capital but has, instead, highlighted some compelling topics which are particularly relevant to the middle secondary student syllabus.

Background notes are provided at the beginning of each unit. These supply the teacher or student with information relating to key dates, events, people and locations within the national capital. Relevant historical quotations are also presented in the background notes, which promote critical social inquiry, discussion and reflection amongst students. These quotes can be used as part of the unit's activity sheets or in general classroom discussions.

Activity sheets within each unit encourage student development through research projects and reports, surveys, debates, creative design, media investigations and site studies. The activity sheets are reproduced in black and white and can be easily copied directly from this education resource. Each can be modified to suit a specific classroom activity or class learning objective.

An extensive reference list is also provided for teachers interested in accessing current sources of relevant information via the internet, journals and books.

This education resource provides teachers, prior to a school excursion to Canberra, with the ideal opportunity to focus classroom-based activities and discussions on the history, planning and at times false perceptions of our national capital.

We hope you and your students embrace the many stories that lie within Australia's national capital and gain a better understanding of the unique and fascinating role Canberra plays in Australian society.

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Unit 1

Federation and the Formation of the National Capital

FEDERATION

Background Notes

Before Federation, Australia was a continent with six colonies (the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory were created after Federation). Federation was discussed as early as 1847, by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Grey, but it was not until the 1890s that the movement gained any serious momentum.

On 24 October 1889, Henry Parkes, one of Federation's strongest supporters, delivered a speech at Tenterfield, in New South Wales, where he declared that it was time for positive action towards the creation of a nation. He called for:

...a convention of leading men from all the colonies, delegates appointed by the authority of Parliament, who would fully represent the opinions of different Parliaments of the colonies.

Parkes' sentiments were supported at the Australasian Federation Conference, held in Melbourne in February 1890, and then, more significantly, at the National Australasian Convention in Sydney just over a year later. Parkes presided over this Convention, where debate centred around his resolutions and the first principles of an Australian Constitution. At the Convention banquet, Parkes famously proposed a toast to:

...One People, One Destiny...

The idea of Federation was further boosted at several conferences during the 1890s: Corowa in 1893; Bathurst in 1896; and in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne, in 1897-1898, at the Australasian Federal Convention. After much debate and discussion, this Convention adopted an amended Commonwealth Bill, which was soon put to the people of the colonies through a referendum.

Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales voted in the referendum on 3 June 1898, while South Australia voted the following day on 4 June 1898. Queensland and Western Australia did not participate in the referendum as they were not happy with certain parts of the Commonwealth Bill. All the participating colonies voted 'yes' to Federation but New South Wales imposed a condition on itself that at least 80,000 affirmative votes must be obtained and it did not reach this mark. This failure to achieve the necessary minimum vote in the most influential colony gave New South Wales Premier, George Reid, the opportunity to seek compromise from the other premiers. Thus, a 'secret premiers' conference' was held in Melbourne in January 1899, and certain requests were put forward by Reid.

One of Reid's prime concerns was to have the federal capital located in New South Wales. He gained this concession, but at a price. The Seat of Government of the Commonwealth was to be located at a point no less than 100 miles (160km) from Sydney. The exclusion zone around Sydney was based on how far a horse could be ridden in two days, thus ensuring parliamentary decisions could not be easily influenced by the people in Sydney.

The second referendum, in 1899, succeeded in gaining the necessary majority for Federation, even though Western Australia did not vote on the second round until 1900.

The final step necessary to achieve Federation was to present the Australian Constitution Bill to Parliament in London. The Bill was well received and Queen Victoria signed the Royal Commission of Assent on 9 July 1900. The Commonwealth of Australia had become a reality. Today, the Royal Assent is stored in the National Archives of Australia. A facsimile is on display in Parliament House, Canberra.

HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Background Notes

Soon after the second referendum in 1900, action was taken to select the site for the federal capital. President of the New South Wales Land Court, Alexander Oliver, was appointed to take charge of the process and advertisements in metropolitan and provincial newspapers were placed inviting suggestions for a suitable site. The response was overwhelming.

A popular misconception emerged during the search for a site. Many Australians of the time believed that a cool climate enabled people of Anglo Saxon descent to 'think' more clearly! During a parliamentary session, where members debated the location of the National Capital, King O'Malley, American-born Labor Member of the Federal Parliament and later Minister for Home Affairs, proclaimed:

...The history of the world shows that cold climates have produced the greatest geniuses... Take the sons of some of the greatest men in the world, and put them into a hot climate like Tumut and Albury, and in three generations their lineal descendants will be degenerate. I found them in San Domingo on a Sabbath morning going to a cock-fight with a rooster under each arm and a sombrero on their heads. I want to have a cold climate chosen for the capital of this Commonwealth...

I must have a cold climate where men can hope.

In 1902, members of the Federal Parliament began inspections of possible sites. Factors influencing the choice of the site included: accessibility, climate, soil productiveness, a good permanent water supply, pleasant outlook, an existing lake or possibility of one, flat land (because it would be cheaper to build on) and a large area for military manoeuvres.

The most bizarre suggestion came from J. G. Drake, a radical politician and journalist, who suggested the National Capital should be located in a federal district of some 50,000 square miles at what is now called Cameron's Corner, the geographical location where the borders of Queensland, South Australia, the Northern Territory and New South Wales meet. The remoteness of the location was intentional, Drake believing that such a site reduced the risk of attack on the National Capital from foreign invaders approaching from the sea.

In total 35 sites in New South Wales were considered (not all were inspected):

Albury, Armidale, Barber's Creek, Bathurst, Batlow, Bemboka, Bombala, Bombala-Eden, Braidwood, Buckley's Crossing, Canberra (located within Yass-Canberra), Carcoar-Garland, Cootamundra, Corowa, Dalgety, Delegate, Dalgety-Tooma, Forest Reefs (Millthorpe), Gadara, Goulburn, Lake George, Lyndhurst, Mahkoolma, Molong, Moss Vale, Murrumburra, Orange (Canobolas), Queanbeyan, Tooma, Tumut, Wagga Wagga, Wellington, Yass, Yass-Canberra and Young.

In 1904, Dalgety was the first choice for the National Capital, to some extent because of its cold climate, but disputes between the Federal Government and the New South Wales Government continued for several years. Finally, in 1908, after much political maneuvering, the Federal Parliament passed a Seat of Government Act that declared:

It is hereby determined that the Seat of Government of the Commonwealth shall be in the district of Yass-Canberra in the State of New South Wales.

The district of Yass-Canberra comprised a number of grazing properties. It was home to Aborigines, estate owners, convict and immigrant workers, independent labourers and shepherds. As one newcomer stated:

This district abounds with cattle stealers, runaways and those who harbour them and the keepers of illicit spirit shops.

By the time the Yass-Canberra district was chosen as the site of the National Capital of Australia, the properties that made up the central area of this district were mostly in the hands of descendants of Robert Campbell, the founder of Duntroon Estate. Duntroon Estate was founded in 1825, when Robert Campbell was granted 4000 acres of land in the Yass-Canberra area, 400 head of sheep and 2000 pounds cash as compensation for the loss of his ship, the 'Sydney', while undertaking government business. Blundells Cottage, one of the workers' cottages of Duntroon Estate, exists today on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin as a reminder of life before the National Capital.

NAMING THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Background Notes

In 1912, the Commonwealth Government invited the Australian public to find a suitable name for their future capital. People responded with imagination and good humour and over 700 names were proposed, including references to place names, the 'Mother Country', politics, Australian animals and flowers, hopes, fears, historical people, plus the odd joke or two.

Although many of the names are considered odd or amusing today, these names were significant at the time as they demonstrated that Australia was developing a lively identity of its own. Democratia, Empire City, Economy and Labor City were all politically themed suggestions for the National Capital. The then Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher (1862-1928) inspired submissions such as Andrewton, Fisher (which is now a suburb in Canberra), Fisherdale and Piscatoria (Pisca from the Latin for fish). The names of statesmen involved

with Federation were also put forward, including Barton, Deakin, Braddon and Reid, all of which are suburbs in present-day Canberra. Attempts were even made to create a name from Australia's capital cities at the time: Admelsalra, Meladneyperbane, Sydbourne, Sydmebane and Sydmebadperbrisho.

Fortunately, there were many supporters of the name 'Canberra', the existing name of the district since the early days of European settlement (and some variations on the name, including Canberramerri, Canberrington, Canber and Canberraford).

The original European name for the district now known as 'Canberra' was the 'Limestone Plains'. The earliest written record of the name 'Canberra' is found in an application to purchase land by one of its first settlers in December 1826 - the area was actually referred to as 'Canberry'. The origin of the word 'Canberra' is still widely debated. Some say that the word is a variation of an Old English place name; others claim it is an Aboriginal word meaning 'woman's breasts' and refers to the two adjoining hills close to the city centre. The most popularly held belief is that the word was used by local Aboriginal people meaning 'meeting place'.

On 12 March 1913, at an official ceremony on Capital Hill (where Parliament House and its surrounding grounds are now located), Lady Denman, the wife of the Governor-General of Australia, mounted a platform and opened a small gold case containing the name of the National Capital. She declared, in a clear English voice:

*I name the Capital of Australia Canberra , and then added, the accent is on the **Can**.*

Today's commonly accepted meaning for the word 'Canberra' is seen by many as an appropriate term which reinforces the belief that Canberra is a 'meeting place' for many parliamentarians, diplomats and public servants, who maintain one of the many functions of the National Capital.

WALTER BURLEY GRIFFIN

Background Notes

Walter Burley Griffin, the eldest of four children, was born in Chicago, Illinois, on 24 November 1876. His father, George Walter Griffin, was an insurance adjuster and his mother, Estelle, a socially active homemaker. Even as a child, Griffin had an inherent interest in landscape design and gardening.

Griffin studied architecture at the University of Illinois and graduated in 1899. He returned to Chicago and quickly found work with other contemporary (and very progressive) architects, including America's most famous architect, Frank Lloyd Wright.

Both Wright and Griffin freely acknowledged the influence upon them of their older charismatic contemporaries; Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) the founder of a distinctive

American architectural tradition, and the New England Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), who shaped the beginnings of a unique American intellectual tradition. As a direct result of these influences, both Wright and Griffin often discussed the concept of 'Democratic Architecture'. In short, the democratic architect would be inspired by nature, not classical architecture, and would contribute to the creation of an egalitarian society.

Such high-minded concerns no doubt fuelled Griffin's interest, as a teenager, in the Australian colonies. We know that Griffin had an active interest in Australia from the 1890s, probably dating back to 1893 when Chicago hosted the World's Columbian Exposition (which featured a popular pavilion organised by the colony of New South Wales). Indeed, in a letter to King O'Malley, the Minister for Home Affairs, Griffin acknowledged this long-term passion:

I...entered this Australian event to be my first and last competition, solely because I have for many years greatly admired the bold radical steps in politics and economics which your country has dared to take, and which must for a long time set ideals for Europe and America ahead of their possibility of accomplishment.

Griffin would expand on the connection in a magazine article:

Australia, of most democratic tendencies and bold radical government, may well be expected to look upon her great future, and with it her Federal capital, with characteristic big vision...we may be justified in believing that she will fully express the possibilities for individual freedom, comfort and convenience for public spirit, wealth and splendour of the great democratic city ideal for which her capital offers the best opportunity so far.

The competition for the design of Australia's National Capital gave Griffin the perfect opportunity to apply on a grand scale the philosophical, cultural and spiritual ideas he strongly believed in.

In 1906, Griffin started up his own successful practice and, through mutual business associations, met and fell in love with Marion Mahony, another architect and gifted artist. They married in June 1911, Marion joining Walter's staff as chief draftsman. The call for design submissions for the National Capital of Australia occurred shortly before they were married, in April 1911, and it was only through Marion's insistence that Walter finally sat down at the drawing board three months before the deadline. The winning designs were finally completed with Marion's vital contribution. Her beautiful graphic techniques expressed the interlocking of geometric architecture and the free flowing forms of nature. This unique representation brought Walter's plans to life and captured the eye of the judges. The competition submission comprised two parts. The first was the design drawings presented on a variety of treated cloths, expertly rendered by Marion, and the second part was a detailed report from Walter Burley Griffin describing the nature of a democratic, modern capital city. Towards the end of 1911 the submission (entry number 29) was carefully sealed in a container five feet square and sent by rail and then sea, from Chicago to Melbourne.

On 23 May 1912, it was declared that Walter Burley Griffin's submission had won the National Capital design competition. Walter came to visit Australia briefly in late 1913, and then in 1914 he and Marion settled in Melbourne, regularly visiting Canberra. Griffin was appointed Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction in order to convert his design into a reality. Unfortunately the intervention of World War One, a lack of funding and bureaucratic obstacles made it difficult to bring his ideals of a modern city to fruition in the short term. Due to many differences with Public Service officials and his own uncompromising vision, Griffin left the National Capital project in 1920. However, because the Griffins were captivated by the pristine Australian landscape, they decided to stay on in Australia. They applied their unique architectural and town planning skills to the New South Wales towns of Griffith and Leeton. Griffin also designed a wide range of private buildings in Sydney and Melbourne, including a university college, cinemas and office buildings.

In 1935, Walter Burley Griffin was invited to India. He designed a new library and a number of other buildings in Lucknow. Griffin died of peritonitis on 11 February 1937, at the age of 61, and was buried in Lucknow.

MARION MAHONY GRIFFIN

Background Notes

Marion Lucy Mahony was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1871. She graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1894. Marion was only the second woman in the United States to graduate with a degree in architecture and the first woman in the world to become a certified architect.

Five years his senior, Marion Mahony married Walter Burley Griffin and joined him professionally just prior to the launch of the international competition for a design for the new capital city of Australia. Walter had longed to design a city, but if not for Marion, the Griffins' competition entry may never have occurred:

For the love of Mike, when are you going to get started on those Capital plans? How much time do you think there is left anyway? Do you realise that it takes a solid month to get [the drawings] over there after they have started their way? That leaves exactly nine weeks now to turn them out in. Perhaps you can design a city in two days but the drawings take time and that falls on me ... What's the use of thinking about a thing like this for ten years if when the time comes you don't get it done in time! Mark my words and I'm not joking either, either you get busy on that this very day, this very minute (with rising tones) or I'll not touch a pencil to the darn things .

Their personalities were very different and yet the Griffins worked together superbly, producing designs that reflected geometric order and democratic values (Walter), and natural beauty reflected through the interpretation of nature (Marion).

Marion Mahony was an exceptionally talented artist and draftsman. Her presentation drawings were based loosely on the style of Japanese prints. Buildings were shown as interlocking architectural geometry and the surrounding landscape reflected her interest in

the natural world, with flowing forms complementing the buildings they surrounded. Both Marion and Walter had a passion for nature and a love of the Australian landscape.

After Walter's death, Marion returned to America. She lived in Chicago until her death in 1961. Her ashes remained in an unmarked grave in Graceland Cemetery, Chicago, before being re-interred there in 1997, with a plaque and headstone appropriate to her life and her status.

Unit 3

The Griffin Legacy

A DESIGN FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Background Notes

Working in his Chicago office, Walter Burley Griffin created his design from a topographic map, contour plans, a series of panoramic paintings, a plaster model (located at the British Consul's office), and a detailed description of the site.

The Griffins' winning design symbolised democracy. They wanted the city to reflect the values of an emerging nation:

*I have planned a city not like any other city in the world. I have planned it not in a way that I expected any government authorities in the world would accept. I have planned an ideal city -
-
a city that meets my ideal of the city of the future .*

Walter Burley Griffin, 1912

Many competition entrants responded to the Yass-Canberra site as a blank canvas, distorting it to accommodate traditional design principles. Griffin actively recognised the importance of the surrounding hills, distant mountains and the Molonglo River landscapes as valuable features that could be set within a modern and democratic city design.

Local topography gave Griffin the opportunity to generate two symbolic axes on which to arrange elements of the city. The 'Land Axis' extended from Mount Ainslie through Capital Hill, Red Hill and beyond to Mount Bimberi. It linked designated government spaces with commercial and residential areas on the opposite side of Lake Burley Griffin. Crossing the Land Axis at right angles was the 'Water Axis', which stretched across the Molonglo River and was expressed in Griffin's design as a chain of parks and waterways. These axes effectively locked the city into its site.

Having established the Land and Water Axes, Griffin provided another geometric reference, the National Triangle. The Triangle provides a focus for the Seat of Government and the location of important cultural buildings and recreational areas. Events, memorials, protests, parades and important Federal Government decisions were to take place in the Triangle and give the National Capital purpose and meaning. At the apex of the National Triangle, Griffin planned his Capitol building, centrally located and visible from practically every part of the

city. The Capitol building was intended to commemorate the achievements of Australians in literature, science, art, politics and much more - a place of the people. Today, Parliament House sits on the site once reserved for the Capitol. Close to Parliament House is the road called Capital Circle, followed by State Circle, National Circuit, Dominion Circuit and Empire Circuit. The wide avenues radiating out from Parliament House, like the spokes of a wheel, symbolise the democratic links between the states and the Federal Government. Each radial avenue is named after a state capital.

Griffin also made space at the base of Mount Ainslie (in line with the 'Land Axis') for a 'Casino'. Unlike the casino of today, where gambling occurs, Griffin's Casino was to be seen as a centre for public leisure with outdoor gardens, restaurants and recreational areas providing a prominent meeting place for the community. Today, the Australian War Memorial is located on this site and the parkland leading to Lake Burley Griffin is called Anzac Parade. This national shrine, although not a Griffin proposal, represents a sympathetic adaptation of Griffin's concept, an important place that symbolises Australian sentiment, achievements and ideals.

In 1928, Griffin supported the location of the Australian War Memorial.

Due to the many differences of opinion Griffin had with Public Service officials, and the onset of World War I, many of Griffin's original concepts and designs were altered or not carried out. Griffin resigned as Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction in 1920 and the continued construction of the National Capital became the responsibility of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee.

There is considerable (and rapidly growing) public interest in the life and works of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin. Today, the Griffin plans have been preserved and stored at the National Archives of Australia, in Canberra, where they are recognised as a significant national treasure for all Australians.

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AUTHORITY AND THE GRIFFIN LEGACY

Since its beginnings, Canberra has been the result of the aspirations, ideals, pragmatism and hard work of the many Australians involved in the making of the city: they made a place that stands forever at the centre of the nation's identity. They made the capital of Australia.

This concept informed Walter Burley Griffin's Plan in its multi-faceted aspects, a beautiful plan with its places, avenues, vistas and landscapes that now looms large in the environmental consciousness of the world. This plan, whilst reflecting the democratic principles of human settlements, goes beyond a mere ethical or aesthetic project: it has become a powerful symbol of solidarity for a nation.

This new assessment of the value of such heritage is timely and significant. For such heritage is rather a seed for a realistic and vigorous growth based on principles set at the city's beginnings. Canberra remains among the nation's greatest achievements .

Romaldo Giurgola AO, Principal Design Architect of Parliament House

The National Capital belongs to all Australians. It is a city that is internationally recognised for its highly symbolic and democratic design. There is a particular responsibility for future generations of Australians to look after the National Capital and to invest wisely in its future.

The National Capital Authority is the Commonwealth agency responsible for the planning and further development of the National Capital. Recently, the National Capital Authority produced a comprehensive document that details a strategic vision for the National Capital in the 21st century: **The Griffin Legacy**. This document seeks to enlarge the appreciation of the Griffin design and to guide its development through to the city's centenary in 2013 - and beyond. It sets a new course for Canberra as the Nation's Capital with its strategic framework for the city's development. At a crucial stage in the city's development, the National Capital Authority has initiated a study which clarifies the following:

- what components of the Griffin design have been established;
- what elements must be protected;
- what elements have been lost;
- what elements have been altered, to the benefit or detriment of the city;
- what elements are no longer relevant; and, most importantly,
- what elements can be recovered or adapted for the benefit of Canberra in the 21st century.

For those interested in purchasing a copy of **The Griffin Legacy**, which contains over one hundred beautiful historical and contemporary colour plates, please visit the National Capital Exhibition in Commonwealth Park or, for further information, phone within Australia **(02)62571068**.

A PLAN FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Background Notes

Walter Burley Griffin recognised that his competition-winning design was far from perfect. Indeed, he made many significant changes to it as early as 1913. Later versions show a refinement of ideas and a response to practical conditions such as local geography, increased population projections, budgetary considerations and political interference.

While the 1912 Plan was prepared in distant Chicago, it still managed to convey a unique three-dimensional form from the competition's contour maps, models, paintings and geographical information. When Griffin arrived in Canberra in 1913, and walked the site for the first time, he commenced his first review of the original design and created the *1913 Canberra Federal Capital of Australia: Preliminary Plan*.

After several interim versions, a final overarching master plan called the *Canberra - Plan of City and Environs*, was issued in 1918. It brought together the detailed design development of the previous plans and expressed Griffin's more intimate knowledge of the site derived from discussions with local engineers and stakeholders. This is the last general plan of Canberra signed by Griffin as the Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction. Further plans were produced by Griffin and his office team which showed the detailed

layout of critical areas within the city and adjoining neighbourhoods, and also included the detailed design of streets, tramways and planting schemes.

In 1920, Griffin ceased work on the plan for the National Capital. The Federal Government eventually approved a watered down version of Griffin's work - called the *1925 Gazetted Plan*. On closer inspection of the Gazetted Plan you can see the inner ring of Civic Centre has been removed and no longer links to the lake. Griffin's recreation area located along the edge of the Molonglo Basin no longer exists and many roads have been removed. Only a few of Griffin's grand public buildings remain, including the Capitol flanked by two official residences.

View from Mt Ainslie by Marion Mahony Griffin

A PLAN FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Map

1912 Competition Plan

Canberra Federal Capital of Australia: Preliminary Plan (1913 Preliminary Plan)

*Canberra: Plan of City and Environs
(1918 Plan)*

1925 Gazetted Plan

NATIONAL CAPITAL COMPARISON
Background Notes

1912 - Competition Plan drawn by Marion Mahony Griffin

1957 - view from Mount Ainslie

2004 - view from Mount Ainslie

The image at the top shows a portion of the 1912 Competition Plan so expertly rendered by Marion Mahony Griffin. The plan shows a view from Mount Ainslie across an ornamental lake towards Capital Hill. Many of the hills have been left bare of construction and are said to remind the citizens of their unique Australian environment. The city design fits neatly around its natural surroundings and works well, enhancing the landscape.

The 1957 view from Mount Ainslie shows an almost treeless plain with only a few established suburbs and the beginnings of Anzac Parade. The building in the foreground is the Australian War Memorial and the building in the middle of the photograph is (Old) Parliament House.

The view from Mount Ainslie in 2004 is a very different one. The ornamental waters of Lake Burley Griffin take the place of the Molonglo River. The Australian War Memorial has been expanded, and Anzac Parade extends from the War Memorial to the lake. Old Parliament House can still be seen and Parliament House, opened by Queen Elizabeth II in 1988, is now situated on Capital Hill.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Background Notes

Walter Burley Griffin - 1918 map

Urban form and activity

Walter Burley Griffin's 1918 Plan shows commercial businesses and higher density residential areas located on the perimeter of the National Triangle, along the main avenues and around the junctions of these avenues. This design gives the public ready access along the main avenues and supports a busy public transport service. Building intensity gradually decreases as you travel away from the main avenues and eventually the buildings merge with the landscape altogether as you reach the base of the inner hills surrounding the city. Grand public buildings dominate the urban skyline with distinctive silhouettes. Non-public

buildings have not been positioned outside a containment line. The height of the containment line was approximately 617m (the height of Capital Hill, where Parliament House is now located) and ensured the visual domination of the Capitol building. It also made sure that the surrounding hills were kept clear of construction and offered beautiful vistas and scenic landscapes.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Background Notes

Canberra - 2004 map

Urban form and activity

Obvious variations from the Griffin 1918 map can be seen on the Canberra 2004 map.

The configurations of the lake and the surrounding parks have been altered slightly and appear less formal than the original Griffin design. The spread of urban housing has moved beyond the 617m containment line. Commercial businesses and higher density residential areas are no longer located on the perimeter of the National Triangle or the majority of main avenues. There are fewer public buildings sited within the National Triangle, and Parliament House sits atop Capital Hill.

Unit 4

Your National Capital

THE ROLE OF A NATIONAL CAPITAL

Background Notes

The role of a national capital is a not a simple investigation. Capital cities throughout the world take on varying roles and responsibilities. Some national capitals are ancient cities with long and impressive histories, others are relatively new creations and strive to represent modern ideals:

...a national capital is more than a city. As the Seat of Government it requires a symbolic presence to promote a sense of national identity. It is not too outlandish to regard the capital as a symbol of the ideals, dreams, aspirations, achievements, culture and history of the nation.

Looking to the Future: Australia's National Capital, Central National Area Design Study (1994)

As the National Capital of Australia, Canberra shares the following characteristics with most global national capitals. It is the home to, or site of:

The Seat of Government

'Capital' comes from the Latin word 'caput', meaning head or headquarters. As a capital city, Canberra is the location for the Seat of Government and is the centre of national administration. Many public buildings accommodate the day-to-day workings of a government and, within them, a large number of public servants assist in a wide range of public services including national administration, finance, defence, immigration and education. An important role for a national capital is to accommodate the people who assist in the running of the nation.

The National Parliament

Canberra houses the Australian Parliament. It is the place where our Federal Government operates and the place where our federal representatives meet and make laws that affect the lives of all Australians.

Embassies and Diplomatic Missions

Many of the world's national capitals are home to embassies, diplomatic missions and international organisations. The diplomatic missions maintain the formal relationships between a country and the governments of other nations.

In Canberra, there are over eighty embassies, high commissions and consulates. Many of these impressive buildings are situated in picturesque suburbs close to Parliament House. The Embassy of the United States of America was the first embassy built in Canberra and the first to introduce the notion of reproducing design characteristics representative of the cultures of the particular mission's home country. Many other missions have followed, including India, Japan, China, Thailand, Malaysia and Egypt. Their striking designs symbolise the distinctive cultural identity of each nation.

National Institutions and Memorials

National capitals around the world contain a wide variety of important cultural buildings and memorials. These buildings often showcase particular objects and documents that the country treasures. These comprise an integral part of the history of the country in question and its modern identity.

Visitors to Canberra can experience the National Capital's history through interactive displays, exhibitions, historic objects and story telling. Many of these experiences create a lasting impression and form a fundamental part of Australia's history.

Commemorative Works and National Monuments

All cultures create emblems whose primary purpose is commemoration - the celebration of people, history or events that have meaning and value for the community at large. A nation's capital is often seen as the most appropriate symbolic site for national commemoration as it fosters a social and cultural environment which closely reflects the values of a nation and its community.

Memorials are a physical expression of prevailing ideas and beliefs within a community. As permanent structures, their strength resides in the fact that they will remain as constant markers to be appreciated by generations to follow. Canberra's memorials inform current and future generations of the values held by the Australian community at particular points in time.

National Protest, Celebration and Ceremonial Events

A national capital is a centre of symbolism, sacredness and cultural expression. It is often a place for national protest, celebration and official events. As the political pulse of the nation, the capital city will host regular visits from international world leaders, royalty and heads of state.

Canberra is the home to national events, national celebrations and national memories. These occasions can take the form of political demonstrations, often focused on a Federal Government decision, or official celebrations, such as the Australian of the Year Awards (which recognise the personal achievements of Australians).

National Symbolism

National capitals are a symbol of unity for all citizens, a Seat of Government and a place where the buildings and institutions symbolic of the values of the nation are to be found. A capital city is a national symbol, an embodiment of national identity. A national capital promotes images that symbolise national identity and conveys the qualities that a country wishes to present to the world.

A capital city's character and relationships often evolve to recognise changing times and attitudes. Cultural expression, technological innovations and concepts of national identity are just some of the things that can impact on the future direction of a national capital.

Canberra is Australia's National Capital. It is a planned city and a conscious creation of an emerging nation. The Australian people have sought to build a National Capital of which they are proud: a beautiful city; a capital which symbolises our unity as a people; a capital which stands proudly in the ranks of national capitals throughout the world.

It should be noted, that the information in this section is not representative of all national capitals. Individual national capitals vary in their roles and responsibilities. Further investigation is recommended if a particular national capital is being researched.

CAPITAL HILL

Background Notes

Walter Burley Griffin's original design for the National Capital called for a grand construction on the peak of Capital Hill. This area was to be part of Griffin's apex for his National Triangle and the primary building (the Capitol) was to be a striking architectural creation that could be viewed from many parts of the city.

Griffin's idea for the Capitol building was well ahead of its time. He proposed that the official residences of the Governor-General and Prime Minister be located on Capital Hill on either side of the Capitol building. The Capitol, Griffin explained, was to have:

...a limited function, either as a general administration structure for popular reception and ceremonial, or for housing archives and commemorating Australian achievements rather than for deliberation or counsel; at any rate representing the sentimental and spiritual head, if not the actual working mechanism of the Government of the Federation.

Although appearing quite small in the original Griffin Plan, the Capitol was a huge building, as high as a twenty-storey building above the summit of its prominent hill site. Marion Mahony Griffin illustrated the Capitol in the shape of a large stepped pyramid, a construction totally different from the traditional dome design such as the Capitol in Washington. The Griffins intended their Capitol to be an expression of ancient civilisations such as Egypt, Babylonia, India, Mexico or Peru.

Parliament House was to be located below the Capitol on Camp Hill, a spur of Capital Hill and a natural platform for an important building that would both unify and dominate the government buildings located below within the Parliamentary Triangle. The elevated location of the Capitol building, compared to Parliament House, was intended to symbolise the fact that in a democracy the people should always stand above their elected representatives.

This deliberate design placement by Griffin was radical for its time. After Griffin's resignation as Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction in 1920, debate about a permanent Parliament House and its location was virtually unheard of from the time of the opening of the Provisional (Old) Parliament House in 1927 through to 1957, when the Joint House Department began discussing likely sites for the new Parliament House. It was eventually decided that Parliament House should be located on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. However, after intense discussion and debate, both Houses passed the 1974 Parliament Act that confirmed the location for Parliament House to be on Capital Hill (Griffin's proposed location for the Capitol).

The Griffin dream for a Capitol building was never fulfilled, but the architectural firm of Mitchell/Giurgola & Thorp, which eventually won the competition to design Australia's Parliament House, did cleverly (and sympathetically) acknowledge Griffin's original design for the Capitol. Principal Design Architect Romaldo Giurgola created a building that contains a monumental centerpiece and pavilion style buildings on either side. This is representative of Griffin's large Capitol and the location of the residences for the Prime Minister and Governor-General.

The Capitol Building and Parliament House

This image shows an overlay of two architectural images sited on Capital Hill in the National Capital. You can see an image of Parliament House and its flag pole (Old Parliament House is located in the foreground), but if you look closely you can also see a ghostly image of Griffin's design for the Capitol building, expertly rendered by Marion Mahony Griffin.

When designing Parliament House, Romaldo Giurgola said that he could feel Walter Burley Griffin looking over his shoulder. Many design aspects of our new Parliament building pay homage to Griffin's Capitol building.

Giurgola's design of the Australian flag pole, situated on the top of Parliament House, allows for Griffin's design for the Capitol building to fit neatly within the flag's triangular supports.

Parliament House is largely built into the sides of Capital Hill, allowing for large areas of lawn to cover the sides and crown of the building. This distinctive design allows the Australian people and their visitors physically to walk above the Federal Parliament and may be interpreted as an acknowledgment of Griffin's belief that in a democracy the people should always stand above their elected representatives.

PUBLIC PLACE NAMES IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Background Notes

From 1928 to 1989, public places in the National Capital were named solely in accordance with the National Memorials Ordinance 1928. Following ACT Self-Government in 1989, public place names in the National Capital are either determined by the Commonwealth Minister for National Land areas, or in accordance with the Public Place Names Act 1989 for Territory Land areas administered by the ACT Government.

The respective legislation provides for the relevant Minister to determine the names of geographical locations, suburbs and street names.

The ACT Government has formed a Place Name Committee November 1998, with members including government experts in heritage, roads and traffic, cultural planning and mapping. The Committee's role is to establish policies and guidelines for the determination of public place names on Territory Land in the National Capital and to provide recommendations to the ACT Minister.

The Commonwealth Government Minister makes determinations in accordance with the National Memorials Ordinance 1928 for place names on National Land.

The following is a section from the ACT Government guidelines that have been produced to assist in the selection process of a place name in the National Capital:

1. It is preferred that the name of any person proposed for commemoration should have contributed significantly to the area where the street name or suburb is located. When such a name is applied, it should be given posthumously, at least twelve months after the date of death.
2. Duplication of names must be avoided.
3. Long names can not be applied to short streets. Street names with five or less characters enable the street name to be legible when reproduced on an A4 map.
4. Offensive names, or names considered likely to cause offence, must be avoided in all circumstances.
5. The use of hyphens in connecting parts of names should, as far as possible, be avoided.
6. Street names are chosen according to the theme assigned to the suburb in which they are located. For example, the streets in Mawson are named after Antarctic explorers.
7. A person considered to have attained exceptional prominence or standing may have a major road or thoroughfare named after them using both their christian and surname.
8. Suggestions from individuals and organisations are to be given due consideration.

**CANBERRA
SUBURB**

**STREET THEME FOR
SUBURB**

**CANBERRA
SUBURB**

**STREET THEME FOR
SUBURB**

CHAPMAN	Film industry	HOLT	Sportsmen and sportswomen
CHIFLEY	Scientists and educationalists	KINGSTON	Explorers
CHISHOLM	Notable women	LYONS	Tasmanian towns
DEAKIN	Governors and Governors-General and diplomats	MACARTHUR	Names associated with the wool industry
DUNLOP	Inventors and inventions	McKELLAR	Journalists
FADDEN	Queensland politicians	MELBA	Musicians
FISHER	Mines and mining towns	NGUNNAWAL	Notable Aborigines and Aboriginal words
HIGGINS	Judges		

The Central National Area

THE CENTRAL NATIONAL AREA

Background Notes

Located within the heart of the National Capital, you will find a large triangular area bounded by Commonwealth Avenue, Kings Avenue and Lake Burley Griffin. This area contains symbols and structures of the nation's culture, history and aspirations - effectively, it is Australia's national domain.

The geometric centre of Walter Burley Griffin's original design for the central national area was to provide the focus for the Seat of Government, cultural institutions and the recreation areas of the capital. It was to be the location for events, memorials, protests, parades and the workings of democracy, all of which would add meaning to the National Capital and be a source of pride for all Australians.

Prior to Canberra becoming the National Capital, the landscape was one of cleared land where wheat was harvested and sheep grazed. The Molonglo River ran through the area, which would eventually be transformed into Lake Burley Griffin. Today, the central national area is an excellent example of landscape and urban planning integrated within the Australian landform.

Several major development periods have occurred in this area. The first occurred in the 1920s with the creation of Old Parliament House and nearby gardens. The second, from 1950 to 1970, included the construction of Lake Burley Griffin and the National Library of Australia. A mix of deciduous and Australian trees and shrubs were planted to assist in the creation of formal parks, gardens and open spaces, and to accentuate the lake shoreline. In

the 1980s the construction of the High Court of Australia and the National Gallery of Australia occurred, along with the subtle planting of Australian flora in the Gallery's Sculpture Garden.

The last major development, within the central national area, was Parliament House (opened in 1988). This project was the result of an international design competition and it demonstrated how architecture and landscape could be successfully integrated - a passion that both Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin demonstrated when designing Canberra.

The central national area is in some ways a record of the political events and social changes in Australia over the last seventy years. This role will be maintained and expanded into the future.

Places of interest include:

- Parliament House
- Federation Mall
- Commencement Column
- Old Parliament House
- Electoral Education Centre
- Old Parliament House Gardens
- National Rose Gardens
- Centenary of Federation Fountains
- Magna Carta Place
- National Portrait Gallery
- National Archives of Australia
- National Library of Australia
- Questacon, The National Science and Technology Centre
- The High Court of Australia
- The National Gallery of Australia
- Commonwealth Place
- Reconciliation Place
- International Flag Display
- Peace Park

COMMEMORATIVE WORKS IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Background Notes

All cultures create objects and emblems whose purpose is to commemorate the celebration of historical moments, events, people or ideas that have meaning and value for the community at large. Commemoration in Australian society can take the form of special issue

stamps and coins, the naming of holidays and festivals, the dedication of streets, gardens, parks and buildings and the construction of memorials.

Commemorative works such as memorials are a physical expression of unity and beliefs within the community. As permanent objects, their strength resides in the fact that they will remain a lasting physical feature to be acknowledged by future generations. Such works, when located within a country's capital city, have a special 'national significance'. Canberra's memorials inform current and future generations of the values held by the Australian community at particular points in time.

...a national capital is more than a city. As the Seat of Government it requires a symbolic presence to promote a sense of national identity. It is not too outlandish to regard the capital as a symbol of the ideals, dreams, aspirations, achievements, culture and history of the nation.

Looking to the Future: Australia's National Capital, Central National Area Design Study (1994)

The *National Memorials Ordinance 1928* provides for the location and character of national memorials in the Australian Capital Territory. The Ordinance applies only to land that is currently being used by the Commonwealth. As part of the Ordinance, a Canberra National Memorials Committee has been created and consists of: the Prime Minister as Chair of the Committee, the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, the Leader of the Government in the Senate, the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives, the Chief Executive of the National Capital Authority and two other members appointed by the Governor-General from amongst residents in the Australian Capital Territory. The Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads considers all matters referred to him or her regarding the location or character of national memorials in the National Capital and seeks the support of the Committee. The Committee may approve the proposal, recommend alterations, reject the proposal or return it for further consideration.

The National Capital Authority has produced a set of guidelines for commemorative works in the National Capital. These guidelines provide clear instruction on the assessment criteria (and possible locations) for commemorative works on Commonwealth land. An individual, group or organisation may use these guidelines and put forward a proposal for a memorial or commemorative work.

Core values expressed within the guidelines include:

- egalitarianism
- civility
- humour
- democratic principles
- civic awareness
- mateship
- diversity

- freedom
- social justice for all
- openness
- social responsibility
- concern for the environment
- irreverence
- fairness

King George V Memorial

Location - King George Terrace, opposite Old Parliament House

The King George V Memorial commemorates the English monarch reigning at the time of the opening of Old Parliament House in 1927. He died in 1936, and the Federal Cabinet immediately began to consider an appropriate memorial dedicated to him to be prominently located in the National Capital. It was decided that the memorial should take the form of a symbolic bronze statue to be located on the vacant square immediately in front of (Old) Parliament House. The statue was to symbolise:

- the association of the late King with the birth and first 25 years of Federation;
- continued unity of a Commonwealth of Nations within the British Empire; and
- the main events of Australia's national life, including Federation, the opening of Australia's Federal Parliament, World War I and Edmund Barton as Australia's first Prime Minister.

The memorial was designed by G. Rayner Hoff in 1937. After Hoff's death in the same year, his assistant, John E. Moorfield, completed the memorial in accordance with Hoff's design.

Originally, the King George V memorial was sited directly in front of Old Parliament House but it was relocated to one side in 1968 because it disrupted the view from the steps of Old Parliament House - part of Griffin's premier Land Axis - towards the Australian War Memorial.

The memorial displays ten medallions around its base, to commemorate Australia's national life. These include medallions recognising the 1891 National Australasian Convention, Australian Federation and Australia's first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton. There are also medallions commemorating the role of each service of the armed forces that served in World War I.

It is worth noting the devoted work of the Australian Service Nurses, who had an active part in the 1914-18 campaigns, is recognised.

In the Hoff memorial, the overwhelming size of the statues of St George and King George V dominate visually. The Australian elements of the memorial almost appear as an afterthought. Why do you think this is the case? Is this because of the time period in which the memorial was conceived and, ultimately, built? What does this memorial tell you about the Australia of that time? Do you think Australia is a different place today? Why?

Australia in the 1930s was an active supporter of the British Empire, despite the decline of the English colonial endeavour in the first decades of the twentieth century. Australia suffered enormous loss of life as the result of its involvement in World War I, yet these losses did not exert any noticeable impact on Australian ties with Great Britain. Are these ties as important to Australia in the first years of the twenty-first century? If not, why not?

New Zealand Memorial

Location - Anzac Parade

The New Zealand Memorial commemorates the long and close relationship between New Zealand and Australia.

A competition was held in 1996 for the design of the memorial, open to both Australian and New Zealand designers. The competition specified that the theme for the intended memorial should have a clear New Zealand identity and should express the Anzac relationship in all its diversity and richness. Sited at the gateway to Anzac Parade, the memorial was intended to link with other memorials on the parade and commemorate the bonds forged in war. As it looks out to the Federal Parliament, it was also intended to express the wider political and social relationships.

The winning design is the work of Kingsley Baird and Studio of Pacific Architecture, both from New Zealand. The major element of the design is two eleven-metre high bronze handles derived from a Maori basket (kete). One handle represents New Zealand, the other represents Australia. The central metaphor is expressed in the Maori proverb inscribed on the pavement of the memorial - 'Mau tena kiwai o te kete, maku tenei / Each of us at a handle of the basket'. It is a metaphor for sharing the load and mutual experiences, both in peace and in war.

At the memorial, soil from Gallipoli has been buried under stones from each country. On the Australian side, it comes from Lone Pine and is contained within a jarrah box. On the New Zealand side, the soil comes from Chunuk Bair and sits in a rimu box.

Speakers Square - Canada's Gift to Australia

Location - Commonwealth Place

Canada and Australia have a tradition of exchanging gifts to mark significant events in each country's history. In 1967, to mark Canada's Centennial, the Australian Government presented the Government of Canada with two magnificent oil paintings by the eminent Australian artist Sir William Dobell. In 2001, in honour of the Australian Centenary of

Federation, the Canadian Government reciprocated by presenting the Australian Government with a ten-metre square stone pavement, designed by Canadian artist John McEwen. Speakers Square is a part of Commonwealth Place, located in close proximity to a number of cultural and political institutions. It provides a stage, or focal space for events, celebrations and ceremonies.

John McEwen's design for the Centenary of Australian Federation gift from Canada represents the shared experiences of peoples of all nations, living together as one under the heavens. The Canadian and Australian elements are represented by the northern and southern hemispheres, joined together by curved bands representing the bonds of friendship amongst peoples, and the common values that unite them. The bands are also symbolic of the warm relations that have developed between Australia and Canada over the last one hundred years.

National Emergency Services Memorial

Location - Kings Park

Following the tragic loss of lives in the Victorian bushfires in late 1998, the Commonwealth Government committed one million dollars to the design and construction of the National Emergency Services Memorial. Melbourne landscape architects, Aspect Melbourne Pty Ltd, won the national design competition for the memorial in March 2003.

On 12 July 2004, Prime Minister John Howard dedicated the National Emergency Services Memorial in honour of the thousands of men and women who serve and have served in Australia's emergency management and services organisations.

The National Emergency Services Memorial is the first of many proposed civilian memorials to be located in Kings Park on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. The memorial appears like a blanket or stretched tarpaulin, giving the viewer a sense of safety and security. A feature of the memorial wall is a three-dimensional concrete frieze which gathers a collection of images reflecting the diversity of emergency services personnel at work and records some of their experiences.

The eastern face of the memorial wall is highly polished, revealing words that represent the values and professionalism of the emergency services personnel. The National Emergency Services Memorial is a place of celebration, as well as reflection and contemplation. It provides a national focus for organised special events and services for all people involved, and the emergencies to which they have responded. The memorial is designed to encourage moments of reflection, engaging the visitor by providing an endless range of interpretation.

Located in Kings Park by the shore of Lake Burley Griffin, the National Emergency Services Memorial is well worth a visit and can be accessed by path from the Rond Terraces car park and the cycle path along Lake Burley Griffin. It can be seen from across Lake Burley Griffin by day and night, and can be best viewed when the sun casts shadows across the memorial, or at night when it is highlighted by a sympathetic lighting scheme.

Other sites which have cultural heritage significance include:

- The vista from Parliament House to the Australian War Memorial, including Commonwealth Place, Anzac Parade and Reconciliation Place
- Blundells Cottage
- Old Parliament House Gardens, including Centenary of Women's Suffrage Commemorative Fountain
- Magna Carta Place and surrounding historic trees
- Commencement Column, Federation Mall
- Peace Park
- National Rose Gardens

Magna Carta Place

Old Parliament House Gardens

*Commencement
Column*

*Centenary of Women's Suffrage
Commemorative Fountain*

Peace Park

