



Public Notification

14 November 2023

Federation Fountains – Call for Design Concepts

The National Capital Authority (NCA) is seeking design concepts for the renewal of Federation Centenary Fountains and their immediate precinct as an alternative to their reconstruction.

The call comes after a detailed analysis showed the Fountains need to be completely rebuilt and their operation would have a significant environmental impact.

Respondents will be asked to develop two costed designs:

- Option 1: demolition of the central reflection pool and retention of the ‘Wedding Cake Fountains’ (and pools) on either side with a new design proposal for the immediate precinct
- Option 2: complete demolition of all water features with a new design proposal for this area.

In recognition of the heritage significance of the fountains, both design proposals will need to be accompanied by a heritage impact statement suitable for submission to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

The Fountains were envisaged by Walter Burley Griffin in his plan for Canberra but were not commissioned until 1968 and refurbished between 1997 and 2000. From 2000 to 2013, operation of the Fountains was intermittent and ceased completely in 2014.

Detailed analysis of the work necessary to refurbish the Fountains revealed that a complete reconstruction of the Fountains’ infrastructure would be required to bring them back into operation at a capital cost of between \$15 and \$20 million. Operational costs would also be significant.

The operation of the Fountains would also have a significant environmental impact. The large, shallow body of water central to the Fountains design results in high evaporation rates. This water would be drawn from Canberra’s potable water sources. The operation of pumps and filters will result in significant electricity use and potential greenhouse gas emissions.

Quotes attributable to Sally Barnes, Chief Executive of the National Capital Authority:

“The National Capital Authority is seeking design concepts for the alternative use of Federation Centenary Fountains and their surrounds. We are looking for innovative ideas that reimagine the Fountains for contemporary use, while being respectful of their heritage significance and their location in the Parliamentary zone.”

For more information on this project, please visit the NCA website at [National Capital Authority \(nca.gov.au\)](https://www.nca.gov.au)