



**Australian Government**  
**National Capital Authority**

# **NATIONAL CAPITAL AUTHORITY**

**Authority Meeting A2024/2**

**17 April 2024**

**Public Record**

*I endorse this Public Record of the  
Authority meeting held on 17 April 2024*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Weber', written over a dotted line.

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*Mr Terry Weber, Chair of the National Capital Authority*

This document is a public record of the National Capital Authority meeting held on 17 April 2024. As some matters discussed at Authority meetings are personal, privileged and/or confidential, this record follows but does not represent the formal minutes of the meeting.

## **Administration and Governance**

The following Authority Members attended the meeting: Mr Terry Weber (Chair), Ms Karen Doran (Chief Executive), Ms Jenny Smithson, Mr James Willson and Professor Helen Lochhead.

This meeting was the Authority's second regular meeting for 2024.

The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed members and attendees.

The Chair welcomed Ms Doran as the new Chief Executive of the NCA and congratulated her on being awarded a Public Service Medal in the 2024 Australia Day Awards. The Chair congratulated the NCA for winning gold at the Australian Tourism Awards for Lights on the Lake 2023.

The Authority attended to the standard administrative and governance processes for the meeting including disclosing and managing any conflicts of interest. The Authority agreed to schedule the NCA Strategic Planning Day for 7 May 2024 and discussed a possible bus tour of the estate for Authority members at that time.

## **Performance Measures Report**

NCA officers presented the Performance Measures Report, noting this is the second time the NCA has reported against the new Corporate Performance Measurement Framework. The officers noted that half-yearly performance outcomes had been presented to the NCA Audit & Risk Committee in March, and that the Committee had recognised the positive progress in implementing the Framework.

The officers noted the capital improvement performance measure, whilst tracking below target in the half yearly report, was on target for the end of fiscal year. They also indicated that the baseline for the visitor numbers for the 2024-25 financial year was yet to be finalised. The Authority noted that this performance measure was somewhat dependent upon visitor numbers coming to Canberra, and discussed ways in which the NCA could capture visitors coming into the National Triangle and other Capital sites.

It was noted by the Authority that this reporting would usefully inform quarterly reporting to the Minister.

The Authority also discussed the potential to consider a performance measure going forward around the quality of projects – with an objective of 'award winning' quality projects.

## **Key Governance Matters**

The Authority discussed the Key Governance Matters Report which included updates on risk management, work health and safety, governance, compliance, and audit and assurance.

NCA officers highlighted that the Minister had recently issued a Statement of Expectations (SOE) and the NCA will prepare a Statement of Intent for the Authority's consideration.

The Authority discussed elements of the Strategic Risk Register and made suggestions for renewed consideration of the risk of civil unrest and security arrangements on the estate.



The Authority discussed the NCA's new Works Approval electronic Lodgement (WAeL) system including available functionality, and opportunity for future uses. The Authority requested a report back, after an appropriate period of operation, on the effectiveness of the new system.

Authority members each completed their annual Declaration of Material Interests form.

## **Finance Report**

The Authority received the Finance Report, which provided a summary of key financial events and information on the financial performance of the NCA's Departmental and Administered programs for fiscal year to 29 February 2024, as well as an update on budget processes.

NCA officers noted the NCA was on track to deliver a balanced budget despite lower-than-expected works approval revenue and increased ICT and consultant expenses, including fund movements to the next and following years approved by the Department of Finance in relation to a number of projects.

The Authority sought further information on proposed works on the Centenary Federation Fountains, noting that a figure of \$20m had been mentioned at a recent Senate Estimates. It was advised that alternative proposals for the fountains were being investigated due to the complexity of restoration works at the site. NCA officers discussed with the Authority the steps that would be required to undertake a restoration project, including a referral to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) as a controlled action in light of the Fountains' listing as part of the Parliamentary Vista. The Authority discussed the potential of developing the Fountains as a feature without water during drier periods in Canberra.

The Authority noted the information presented and included in the report.

## **Works Approval Report**

NCA officers presented the Works Approval Report which provided a summary of the NCA's current Works Approval matters. The Authority discussed in particular the following:

- ADFA Living-In Accommodation – NCA officers noted the large scale of the proposed development and that it is at an early stage. The Authority discussed the proposed height of buildings particularly in relation to the Air Safety Envelopes around the Canberra Airport and noted this issue must be resolved before a Works Approval application could be determined. The Authority also discussed the impact on public avenue vistas and the other considerations and approvals, including by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Air Services Australia, and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).
- University of New South Wales (UNSW) Canberra City Campus – Following a January 2024 design review session by the National Capital Design Review Panel, the NCA met the UNSW design team to work through the project proposal. A final design proposal is required for the ACT Government's approval before a Works Approval application can be submitted to the NCA. The UNSW is scheduled to present the proposal at the June Authority meeting.
- National Gallery of Australia (NGA) – The NGA commenced a design competition in April 2024 focused on the reinvigoration/redevelopment of the National Sculpture Garden (and landscape setting). The Authority discussed the NGA proposal's possible impacts on National Land and visitor amenities in the area between the NGA, High Court and National Portrait Gallery.
- National Security Office Precinct – The NCA has participated in preliminary discussions for the redevelopment of the site. The Authority discussed potential issues with security clearance requirements in the planning decision process.
- The Board noted the completion of the "Works Approval Workflow – standard process" flowchart which the Authority agreed to be posted on the NCA website.



The Authority noted the information presented and included in the report.

### Strategic Planning Report

NCA officers presented the Strategic Planning Report, which provided an overview of the NCA's current strategic planning work.

The officers updated the Authority on several of the work areas in the report:

- Canberra Theatre Redevelopment – The Authority discussed the proposal to extend Knowles Place to improve emergency access and service requirements for the site. It was noted that ACT Government representatives were presenting to the Authority on the redevelopment projects that day. The Authority noted they would discuss further aspects of the proposal following those presentations. The Authority agreed to the preparation of a draft amendment to the National Capital Plan to vary the alignment of Knowles Place identified in the City Hill Precinct Code.
- Natural Gas Connections within the ACT – The Authority sought confirmation of the NCA Minister's position, and in that context agreed to the NCA exploring interim measures to support the ACT Government's gas network restrictions. The Chief Executive advised that our Minister would be kept updated on this matter.
- Casey House – The Authority discussed future use of Casey House and the possibility of potential for the site to be rezoned for residential as a permitted use.
- Block 17 Section 102 Symonston – The Authority considered the requested amendment to the National Capital Plan to expand urban areas to the site to allow an additional mix of uses including residential use and agreed the amendment should not be supported at this time, noting the extent of urban development in this area would be determined through the ACT Government's eastern broadacre project.

The Authority noted the other information presented and included in the report.

### Major Projects Report

NCA officers introduced the Major Projects Report, which provided an overview of the NCA's key design, construction, and maintenance projects.

The Authority discussed several of the projects in the Report:

- National Carillon – The NCA confirmed the status on this project, expecting a proposal for refurbishment of the clappers for the National Carillon while maintenance work progresses well on the Carillon's façade.
- Commonwealth Park Concept – The NCA noted it is updating the concept design drawing and preparing a public engagement campaign after receiving advice that the ACT Government was comfortable with the concept vision.

The Authority discussed recent media attention on potential redevelopment projects within the ACT including the proposed entertainment centre at the existing civic pool site.

The Authority noted the other items and information in the Major Projects Report.

### Forward Agenda

The Authority noted the forward agenda for its scheduled meetings in 2024.



## **Presentation – Canberra Theatre Redevelopment**

The Chair welcomed ACT Government representatives to the NCA.

Major Projects Canberra (MPC) officers presented their proposal for the development of a new 2,000 seat lyric theatre, redevelopment of existing Canberra Theatre buildings and new pedestrian linkages throughout the precinct. The proposal also included destination food and beverage areas, undercover spill-out areas, and landscape designs.

MPC noted the National Capital Plan, the Griffin Plan, and the National Apex had been key considerations in the planning phases.

The Authority raised issues about several aspects of the proposal including project timeframes, transitional development plans, interim usage arrangements, retention of the existing library site and/or function, and access issues.

There was discussion around access issues which considered the proposed land bridge, the connecting foyer, drop-off points (in particular noting the lack of front door drop-off for people with mobility issues), and walking distances across a possibly pedestrianised Knowles Place and/or Civic Square.

There was also discussion on whether future developments would incorporate additional basement carparks with direct elevator access to the Theatre complex (see below).

MPC advised further work was to be completed on the proposal. The Authority asked, given the staging of the project, whether the Authority could expect a Works Approval request for Stage One only or covering all proposed stages. The latter was indicated by MPC.

The Authority noted and thanked MPC for their presentation.

## **Presentation – Draft Canberra Civic and Cultural District Development Masterplan**

The City Renewal Authority (CRA) presented their proposal in relation to the Canberra Civic and Cultural District Development. The Development Masterplan is intended to help inform the major Canberra Theatre Redevelopment as well as define other development sites to the north of the proposed Lyric Theatre.

The Authority raised issues about several aspects of the proposal including the site shapes and impact on built form, line-of-sight views from various vantage points, impacts from possible future tram route plans, space utilisation including dead space, the planned pedestrianisation of Knowles Place. A significant issue of discussion was the universal access issues for the district, including the proposed indirect access into the theatre buildings from underground car parks and associated emergency and service vehicle access into the site.

The CRA noted that there were numerous design options under consideration, and the CRA would consider the Authority's comments in further developing the masterplan proposal. The CRA undertook to work closely with the NCA during the further development of the proposed plans and as the Canberra Theatre Redevelopment proposals are refined.

The CRA requested whether the Authority would endorse the Canberra Civic and Cultural District Development Masterplan.

The Authority noted and thanked CRA for their presentation and noted the Canberra Civic and Cultural District Development Masterplan is not a statutory document and has no force under law.



Following the departure of ACT Government representatives, the Authority and NCA representatives discussed the two presentations with NCA officers providing further context on the planning concepts contained in the proposals. The Authority agreed to consider endorsement of the Canberra Civic and Cultural District Development masterplan if it were formally submitted to the Authority.

### **Chief Executive Report**

The Authority received a report from the Chief Executive including updates on a range of strategic issues, Parliamentary and Ministerial events, procurement activities and human resource matters.

The Chief Executive noted that the Attorney-General had now approved the deferral of the sunseting of the *National Land (Road Transport) Ordinance 2014* to 1 April 2025. The re-making of the Ordinance is being managed by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) in consultation with the NCA.

The Chief Executive provided the Authority with an update on the actions in response to the Statement of Expectations, noting a Statement of Intent is currently being drafted and will be provided to the Authority within the coming weeks for early input and later discussion at the Strategic Planning Day on 7 May 2024. Both the Statement of Expectations and Statement of Intent will be published on the NCA website and reviewed annually.

The Chair commended the Executive on the approval of the NCA Enterprise Agreement noting the high-level of staff participation in the vote and support of the Agreement. The Chair noted this was a direct reflection of the positive culture within the NCA. The Authority noted the high level of staff preferring to work in the office was also attributable to the positive culture within the NCA.

The Authority noted the other items and information in the Chief Executive Report.

### **Draft Amendment 99 – Molonglo Town Centre**

The Authority noted the request from the ACT Government for an amendment to the National Capital Plan to identify a new town centre in the District of Molonglo Valley and discussed elements of the Molonglo Town Centre proposal.

The Authority agreed to the preparation of Draft Amendment 99 – Molonglo Town Centre and for its release for public consultation.

### **Eco Suites**

The Authority was provided with an update in relation to the Eco Suites proposal for installation at Yarramundi Peninsula (Acacia Inlet) on the foreshores of Lake Burley Griffin, in particular noting the request from the proponent for a three-year trial period to establish financial viability.

The Authority discussed issues with the location and aesthetics of the proposed structures including impacts they may have on the surrounds. Access to the proposed site, waste removal, energy consumption, and natural and Indigenous heritage values were highlighted as important matters for consideration in any proposals.

The Authority requested the further advice, including on financial, design and environmental impacts before returning to the Authority.

### **Centenary of Women's Suffrage Fountain**

The Authority was briefed on a petition tabled in Federal Parliament, requesting that the timeline of the fountain be expanded to include a range of further contributions by women to Australian politics.

The NCA noted it proposes to consult the Office for Women in relation to the need for, and nature of, any expansion of the suffrage timeline, and developing and consulting on a curatorial guideline that includes a schedule of periodic review for updates.

The Authority noted the petition and agreed to stakeholder engagement considering potential updates to the timeline.

### **Other Business**

The Authority requested an update on the strategy for activation of the lake and the establishment of the Lake Burley Griffin Activation Steering Committee.

The Authority noted its next regular meeting is scheduled for 19 June 2024.