Australian Government

Australian Government response to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories report:

Report on the National Capital Plan Amendment No. 102 – Hume Circle Precinct

November 2026

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Overview

The Australian Government welcomes the report by the Joint Standing Committee National Capital and External Territories (JSCNCET) - Report of the Inquiry into Amendment No. 102 – Hume Circle Precinct, 1 October 2026 (the Report).

The Amendment No. 102 to the National Capital Plan establishes a new designated precinct – Hume Circle Precinct - and responds to an identified opportunity for the Government, working with the National Capital Authority (NCA), to:

- reinstate elements of the original Griffin's intent in an area on the eastern approach route the Central National Area
- enable a high-quality new urban precinct that is well located, close to transport, employment and other infrastructure, through a precinct- based approach to the planning, design and development of this area
- revitalising an area of the city which has become underutilised as industrial lands and is ready for regeneration
- contribute to new housing for Canberra consistent with the National Housing Targets of the Government.

The Government remains committed to this opportunity and the role the NCA can play in achieving these outcomes for the benefit of Canberra and the National Capital.

If Amendment No.102 were not to continue, planning for this precinct would remain under the Territory planning framework. While this would not mean development could not proceed, it could result in that development occurring in a more piece meal manner – site by site – with an inconsistent outcome for the community and with a missed opportunity for reflecting the importance of this area in the context of the National Capital and the legacy of the Griffin's design for our capital.

The Government is committed to working with the NCA in responding to these identified areas for improvement. The NCA has acknowledged learnings from this process, and is in the process of reviewing its approaches to engagement and consultation for NCP amendments and works approval.

The Recommendations of this Inquiry will complement work already underway and will inform the forward processes for the Hume Circle Precinct as it moves through the subsequent stages of planning, design and development proposals and works applications. More broadly, these recommendations will inform the NCA's engagement and consultation processes across all its planning and other activities.

Australian Government response

The Australian Government's response to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories Report on the National Capital Plan Amendment No. 102 – Hume Circle Precinct is set out in detail below.

Recommendation 1:

2.178. The Committee recommends that the National Capital Authority (NCA) strengthen its consultation for both Amendments and Works Approvals. This includes improving processes for contacting affected residents directly and providing sufficient opportunities for community comment and input.

The Government **supports** this recommendation.

The Australian Government supports this recommendation, and through the Responsible Minister, will work with the NCA to implement this requirement, noting the NCA has already commenced a review of its community engagement and consultation policies and processes.

The NCA has also undertaken to engage with the community as it progresses its review, to enable community input to be considered in improving the engagement and consultation processes.

The NCA has commenced work on updating the information and materials available on its website relating to planning matters with the objective of providing more useful information for community on the planning roles and responsibilities of the NCA and the interrelationship with Territory planning responsibilities. This will include advisory notes and guidance materials to explain the processes for Amendments of National Capital Plan and for Works Approvals.

Recommendation 2:

2.179. The Committee recommends that the NCA improves transparency of its processes including through the provision of supporting technical studies, including transport, economic, environmental, heritage, First Nations engagement and visual impact assessments, prior to the commencement of public consultation.

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

The Australian Government notes this recommendation, and through the Responsible Minister, will work with the NCA to implement this requirement, in the context of the NCA's commitment to reviewing its community engagement and consultation policies and processes.

Technical studies of the kind described in this recommendation must necessarily come after the land has been brought into the National Capital Plan. The strategic planning for Hume Circle Precinct can be expected to progress through multiple stages and over multiple years. Supporting materials and studies will reflect the stage of the process and the level of detail available at that stage. In making these materials available to community and stakeholders, they will necessarily be presented in that context and reflect the fact that studies and analysis will evolve in detail as the detail of the development proposals evolve.

The NCA has undertaken to improve transparency of technical studies and associated supporting materials, as they are undertaken at the various stages of strategic planning and as part of ongoing community engagement processes.

The establishment of the Hume Circle Steering Committee, to which the NCA and ACT Government have committed, will be an important mechanism for improving transparency of the ongoing Hume Circle planning process. It will allow a coordinated and integrated approach to bringing relevant parties and information together and facilitate regular and consistent communication to stakeholders and community.

Recommendation 3:

2.180. The Committee recommends that a Steering Committee be established between the NCA and the ACT Government, as a matter of priority, with clear terms of reference developed and endorsed as soon as practicable. The Committee further recommends that the Steering Committee establish transparent mechanisms for community representatives and stakeholders to provide input on matters relating to the Hume Circle Precinct that directly affect them, including, without limitations, giving serious consideration to a community representative being a member of the Steering Committee.

The Government **supports** this recommendation.

The Australian Government supports the recommendation to establish a Steering Committee between the NCA and ACT Government for the purpose of overseeing the Hume Circle Precinct ongoing strategic planning, noting the establishment of such a committee has already been agreed between the two parties. The Steering Committee, once established, will give serious consideration to a community representative being a member of the Committee.

The Government, through the Responsible Minister, will work with the NCA and the ACT Government to ensure terms of reference for the Committee includes establishing transparent mechanisms for community representatives and stakeholders to provide input to and receive feedback from the Steering Committee on matters relating to the Hume Circle Precinct.

The NCA has committed to transparency of Steering Committee processes, including making publicly available the terms of reference, committee membership and minutes of meetings.

The NCA has also already undertaken to consider, together with the ACT Government, the relative merits of a community representative member on the Steering Committee, in the context of other mechanisms which would provide for community input to and feedback from committee processes. For example, a working group of the Steering Committee may provide a mechanism for broader community input and discussion, with the working group then providing consolidated views as input to the Steering Committee.

Alternatively, the mechanism may provide for ‘a community representative’ most appropriate to the issue being considered by the Steering Committee being invited to the meeting where that issue is being discussed.

Recommendation 4:

2.181. The Committee recommends that Staffordshire Terrace be removed from Amendment 102.

The Government **does not support** this recommendation.

The Australian Government does not support this Recommendation , and instead, supports Recommendation 5 in principle. The area where Staffordshire Terrace is located, referred to as Sub-Precinct D in the Amendment No.102, also includes the McMillan Gardens units, Avalon Apartments and an area of land owned by the Suburban Land Agency. To remove Staffordshire Terrace would necessarily imply the removal of the whole of Sub-Precinct D. It is suggested this would also raise issue of policy consistency, as to the inclusion of Sub-Precincts A (the School) and B (the Hotel and existing residential apartments).

In recommending the designation of the Hume Circle Precinct to the Minister, the NCA Board considered that achieving the objectives of establishing the precinct as a key gateway to the National Central Area and recognising its national significance required designation of the entire precinct. This approach preserves Griffin's original circular geometry and supports a long-term, precinct wide urban renewal strategy.

Removing Staffordshire Terrace (and adjacent areas of the precinct) would undermine the policy intent, and legal basis, for designation of the Hume Circle Precinct. It would weaken the objective of reinstating the Griffin’s original plan and, hence, one of the primary premises for undertaking the Amendment.

Recommendation 5:

2.182 The Committee recommends that if Staffordshire Terrace remains in Amendment 102, residents receive guarantees that they will be no worse off under the NCA designation in terms of planning requirements – including when Works Approvals are required; and the cost of obtaining Works Approvals – than would be the case were they to remain under ACT planning requirements

The Government **supports in principle** this recommendation.

The Australian Government supports in principle this recommendation and the Responsible Minister will work with the NCA to put in place measures to achieve its effect. The Amendment already establishes for residents in Sub-Precinct D (the area in which Staffordshire Terrace is located) that land use is limited to residential uses and that building heights in this area are limited to a maximum of 3 storeys. This is a stronger guarantee of continuity of the existing character of the area than under the existing Territory planning requirements.

In terms of the NCA requirements relating to Works Approvals, it is noted that

- Works Approval is not required for repairs and maintenance works, or works internal to the building, regardless of the scale of those works.
- Where Works Approval is required, the NCA establishes (and is currently achieving) a Key Performance measure to assess 80% of works applications within 15 business days.

As the development of the precinct proceeds, the NCA will actively engage with the residents of Staffordshire Terrace (as well as all affected residents and landowners in the precinct) to ensure this urban development opportunity delivers benefits to the existing residents in and around the precinct, and to understand where planning approval processes can replicate the processes that would have applied had they remained under the ACT planning framework.

Recommendation 6:

2.183 The Committee recommends that the NCA provides an assurance that Canberra's established centres of hierarchy be retained in the Hume Circle Precinct

The Government **supports** this recommendation.

The Australian Government supports this recommendation, and through the Responsible Minister, will work with the NCA to implement this requirement, noting the hierarchy of centres principle is also reflected in the National Capital Plan.

Through the Hume Circle Steering Committee, and working with the ACT Government, the NCA has undertaken to work with parties with the objective of replicating the established hierarchy of centres in principle and in the context of the practical application of those principles as applied by the ACT Government.

Recommendation 7:

2.184 The Committee recommends that the NCA require that development of the Hume Circle Precinct include social and affordable housing.

The Government **supports** this recommendation.

The Australian Government supports this recommendation, and through the Responsible Minister, will work with the NCA and the ACT Government to implement this requirement.

Amendment No.102 already requires that a development proposal provides information on the contribution it will make towards social and affordable housing as part of the Detailed Conditions approval stage.

Working with the ACT Government, the NCA has undertaken to adopt the ACT Government target requirements for social and affordable housing, applied as part of the precinct level planning for the Hume Circle Precinct and considered in the broader context of the Eastlake Place Plan ongoing planning processes.