



Australian Government
National Capital Authority

NATIONAL CAPITAL AUTHORITY

Authority Meeting A2021/3A

2 June 2021

Public Record

*I endorse this Public Record of the
Authority meeting held on 2 June 2021*

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

Mr Terry Weber, Chair of the National Capital Authority

This document is a public record of the National Capital Authority meeting held on 2 June 2021. 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), Mr Dennis Richardson, Ms Jenny Smithson (by video), Mr James Willson and Ms Sally Barnes (Chief Executive).

The Chair welcomed members and attendees to a special meeting to consider the early works application for the redevelopment of the Australian War Memorial (AWM).

Mr Willson noted his company had undertaken a consultancy with the AWM between September 2019 and July 2020 developing the 'Our Continuing Story' brand and program.

The Authority discussed the perception of a potential conflict of interest for Mr Willson, given the deliberative nature of this meeting's planned discussion (noting previous Authority discussions on the AWM were more for information). The Authority determined, for an abundance of caution, Mr Willson be excluded from the discussions – Mr Willson left the meeting at that point.

Australian War Memorial – Works Approval Application for Early Works

NCA officers presented a paper updating the Authority on the Works Approval application including the background and context of the application, and, especially, the key issues raised in the public consultation process.

The paper addressed the key issues that had been raised in the 601 submissions, as well as the NCA's assessment and position on these issues.

The presenters noted some key matters raised were not within the NCA's scope for consideration. In particular, the Public Works Committee (PWC) had recommended the House of Representatives resolves that it is expedient to carry out the AWM redevelopment project on 22 February 2021; and the Minister for the Environment had approved, with conditions, the environment and heritage aspects of the proposal on 10 December 2020 satisfying the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* requirements of the National Capital Plan. Staff noted that the explanatory note of the NCA website inviting comments of the Early Works Application had outlined matters agreed through the PWC and Minister's approval process would not be revisited in this consultation. Further, it was noted that some broader issues raised, including that the redevelopment may be seen as a glorification of war or that the resources allocated to the works may be better used elsewhere, were outside the scope of the NCA's legislated role and function.

The Authority considered and discussed the central issues of the Works Approval application in detail.

The Authority stressed the importance that all public submissions are being considered and appropriately responded to as well as summarised in the summary report.

The Authority discussed the issue of consideration of the redevelopment in parts – that is, consideration of the Early Works package without having the detail of subsequent packages or the overall project known. NCA officers noted that the overall plans for the project were reasonably well known and articulated, such as through the Public Works Committee process, the display room at the AWM and national forums held. The NCA had good knowledge of the overall project and confidence that the final project will not depart significantly from the plans and details of the overall project available at this time.

NCA officers noted they have had ongoing and substantive input to the works to ensure the overall project will be of high quality and consistent with the National Capital Plan. To date, the NCA had provided input and direction on the overall vista and situation or proposed structures in the landscape, lighting, material selection and building access.

The Authority discussed the proposed removal of trees, noting all those proposed were checked as needing to be removed but that a greater number of advanced endemic and native trees were to be planted in their stead.

Following detailed discussion, the Authority noted that the Early Works application is not inconsistent with the National Capital Plan and agreed that the NCA's decision and Consultation Report and detailed attachment be finalised and publicly released.

The Authority asked the NCA to ensure it continues to provide substantive input and engagement in the redevelopment project to ensure it will continue to be of the highest possible quality.

Other Business

The Authority noted its next meeting is scheduled for 9 June 2021.