



Submission to the National Capital Authority on Block 3 Section 39 Campbell - Australian War Memorial

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the NCA consultation on the works approval for the Australian War Memorial (AWM).

As the Member for Canberra, the federal electorate that is home to the AWM, I have been contacted regularly by Canberrans about the proposed development of the AWM. The concerns they raise are consistent – public consultation has been insufficient, ANZAC hall should be repurposed rather than demolished, and that the AMW must be a memorial to honour the sacrifice of those who have served and died in war rather than a museum celebrating the technology of war. A common theme is also that our other national institutions are underfunded and in need of more support from the Federal Government. I agree with each of these points of view and the Canberrans who have put them forward do not feel they have been listened to by the AWM or the Federal Government.

I met with Matt Anderson PSM, Director of the AWM, in August 2020 after I raised similar issues in an opinion piece published in July 2020:

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6839395/canberrans-need-to-be-heard-when-it-comes-to-the-war-memorial/>. In that piece, I was echoing the voices of my constituents who said that consultations conducted by the AWM had been insufficient. The AWM belongs to all Australians and is a constant in the daily lives of Canberrans who live and work nearby the building every day. They visit the AWM regularly and attend ANZAC Day dawn services and other events year in year out. Canberrans regularly expressed to me that they thought their views had been dismissed. Unfortunately, this was confirmed when Kerry Stokes AC, Chair of the AWM, identified Canberrans as ‘special-interest’ when appearing before a Parliamentary committee on the AWM development.

I reiterated these points to Mr Anderson in our meeting. Mr Anderson was confident that continued consultations would appease the concerns of many Canberrans. It is clear to me that the program of consultations was increased following our meeting. However, the key issue that I believe many Canberrans now have is that while further consultations may have been held, their views have not been reflected in subsequent plans for the AWM development. Indeed, the plans being considered by the NCA indicate that the scope of the works has possibly increased, with additional carparking, demolition of trees and use of public land during construction.

I understand that the NCA will not be considering the need for the expansion or the cost of the development as this has already been considered by the Australian Parliament’s Public Works Committee, which recommended that the House of Representatives resolve to carry out the development. It should be noted that the Australian Labor Party (ALP) members of that committee, Tony Zappia MP (Deputy Chair) and David Smith MP, provided a dissenting report. The dissenting report stated that while the ALP supports the intent behind the AWM development, the Government should consult further and consider alternative approaches that do not involve the



complete demolition of ANZAC Hall. The dissenting report also recommended that lower cost options that meet the purpose of the development should be considered.

I note that the NCA will be assessing the works against the National Capital Plan, including matters of planning and quality of design. It seems to me that issues raised in the dissenting report and by Canberrans go directly to these issues. Essentially, that the development is too big, and that the existing ANZAC Hall structure should be incorporated into the design. I note that the retention of ANZAC Hall is also supported by the Australian Institute of Architects with whom I have had an ongoing discussion with regarding the development.

The NCA will also assess whether this development contributes to Canberra as a city worthy of its status as a national capital. In my view, and that of Canberrans who have contacted me the development should create a space of memorial and reflection, not a showcase of large technology objects, if it is to contribute to Canberra as the national capital. Of course, it is difficult to assess which version of the AWM will be created by this development.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission on behalf of the Canberrans who have spoken to me about this development.

Sincerely,



Alicia Payne MP
Federal Member for Canberra