

A CAPITAL COMPETITION

Activity

Setting the scene

The Australian Government declared the new capital of Australia would be the finest capital city in the world and an international competition for the design of the capital was announced on 30 April 1911. A total of 137 entries from fifteen countries were submitted and, on 23 May 1912, it was declared that Walter Burley Griffin, a Chicago landscape architect, had won the competition. The story of the design competition is an intriguing one, full of controversy, lively debate and eccentric characters. It is an important story, one often overlooked in the history of Australia.

What to do

- Investigate.
- Research.
- Report.

Submit a 1,000 word report on the international competition held to find a suitable design for Australia's National Capital.

Key points within your report should answer the following questions:

- Which events in Australian history led to the announcement of the competition to design Australia's National Capital?
- Why was there a public controversy when the competition was announced?
- Who won the design competition?
- Do you think the competition was judged fairly?
- Do you think it was fair that someone from outside Australia won the competition?
- Where are the winning designs located in Australia?

Be creative

If you were a judge in a competition for the design of an Australian National Capital in 2005, what would you look for in the winning entry? What would the overall design symbolise and which vital buildings and public places would be included?

AN IDEAL CITY CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Activity

Setting the scene

The location of Australia's National Capital had been decided. An international competition was held to find a design that would incorporate an ornamental lake, Parliament House, public buildings plus parks and gardens. An architect from Chicago, Walter Burley Griffin (and his wife and partner, Marion Mahony Griffin), won the competition with designs that incorporated the natural environment and were seen to represent democracy and modern ideals for a national capital.

The National Capital Authority, the National Archives and the National Library of Australia have collaborated to produce a website based on the 1911–1912 competition for the design of the National Capital.

www.idealcity.org.au

What to do

- Familiarise yourself with the above website.
- Submit a 1,000 word report that critically analyses this website.

Key points within your report should answer the following:

- Is the structure of the website easy to follow?
- Is the information easy to understand?
- Are the graphics suitable?
- Do you have a better understanding of the overall topic as a result of visiting this website?
- What age group do you think would benefit most from visiting this website?
- Choose a page that you find particularly interesting and state why you chose it.
- List five secondary sources recommended by the website and give a brief description of each.
- What would you improve as part of an upgrade to the website?
- List five fascinating facts that you discovered when analysing this website.

Be creative

Present your five fascinating facts to the classroom in an informative and entertaining way. This may take the form of an interactive presentation using computer based resources, a poem or role-play including other members of the class.