



Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

MEDIA RELEASE

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ETCHED IN STONE? NEW LAWS FOR NATIONAL MEMORIALS

The Parliament's National Capital and External Territories Committee has recommended a completely new process for approving National Memorials.

The Committee's report, *Etched in Stone?* into the administration of the *National Memorials Ordinance 1928* **recommends that the Ordinance be repealed and replaced with a Commemorative Works Act, similar to that operating in Washington DC.**

The principal features of the new legislation would be:

- A definition of 'commemorative work' encompassing both National Memorials and National Monuments.
- The establishment of a National Memorials Advisory Committee, a committee of historical, cultural and subject experts, to assess commemorative intent.
- The creation of new and binding 'criteria for commemorative works' to underpin the assessment process.
- The creation of a Memorials Master Plan to guide future development.
- The creation of a 'two-pass' approvals process for commemorative works.
- At the 'first pass' memorial proponents must meet commemorative intent and have a realistic budget.
- Proposals for commemorative intent are to be initiated by motions in both Houses of Parliament and approved on the recommendation of the National Capital and External Territories Committee.
- At the 'second pass', design and location to be finalised. Endorsement to proceed to be given by the National Capital and External Territories Committee subject to heritage and environment assessments, ability to finance the project and community consultation. This approval to be final and binding.

Committee chair Senator Louise Pratt said: 'National Memorials are a permanent representation of the nation's history and culture. We need a sound mechanism in place to ensure that National Memorials are rigorously assessed for their commemorative intent, design and location, *before* people commit money and resources to the final outcome.'

'The Committee believes that the National Memorials Ordinance is past its time and that the proposed Commemorative Works Act will provide a simple, modern and effective mechanism to take its place,' Senator Pratt said.

Transitional arrangements

While the new arrangements are being put in place the Committee recommended that:

- The two vacant positions for ACT residents on the Canberra National Memorials Committee be filled immediately.
- All existing approvals for National Memorials be allowed to stand for the life of their current site reservations, but that these site reservations **not be extended** beyond their current term.

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chair, Senator Louise Pratt, on (02) 6277 3127

Copies of the report can be obtained from the committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ncet/memorials/report.htm> or by contacting the secretariat on (02) 6277 4355, or by email at jscncet@aph.gov.au