



11 Alexander Avenue
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NSW

May 22, 2003

The Secretary
Joint Committee on National
Capital and External Territories

I write in response to the invitation to make submissions regarding the inquiry into the role of the National Capital Authority.

1. My name is Ian Meikle and I am Managing Director of Pacific Publications, Australia's second-largest magazine publisher and a wholly owned subsidiary of the Seven television network. I write in a private capacity.
2. I was Managing Director of The Federal Capital Press of Australia Pty. Limited, publisher of *The Canberra Times*, between 1988 and 1999.
3. I was actively involved in many community, charity and arts organisations over that period and I continue to own property in the Territory. I have an intimate knowledge of living and working in the city.
4. It is my belief that the National Capital Authority (NCA) plays an essential role in vigilantly maintaining the national interest and investment in Canberra.
5. The national capital belongs to all Australians and the NCA is the manifest presence of the Federal Government's obligation to ensure the highest possible standards of planning and maintenance are applied to the nationally significant spaces, monuments, land and building assets.
6. To abdicate or diminish this responsibility would place an undue and arguably unsustainable burden on the ratepayers of Canberra and conceivably lead to a deterioration of the nation's showplace city.
7. The NCA's historical role in overseeing the design and development of Canberra should not be nobbled and limited only to the parliamentary triangle.
8. As a statutory agency, the NCA provides the correct "arm's length" approach to this kind of sensitive decision making.

9. Given the unwavering commitment of the NCA and its predecessors to Canberra over the decades, I have enormous confidence in its ability to monitor and progress the National Capital Plan.

10. Canberra, Canberrans and the nation have been well served by the NCA and I believe the nation would be, in the longer-term, all the poorer by having its authority diminished.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Meikle AM