

Dear Inquiry Members

As a former ACT Tourism Commissioner (1994-2000) I would like to appear before the Inquiry into a new convention centre for Canberra.

I have chaired the ACT's Tourism Industry Advisory Council since 2003, under the auspices of the Canberra Business Council and now the Canberra Business Chamber.

I have been involved in discussions on the building of a new convention centre since 1999, and wrote the original brief on the Australia Forum concept, highlighting the importance of the building being of 'Kennedy Centre' status, and a building reflecting the significance as a national meeting place, and the most secure facility in the country. It should also reflect 'Australia', represented through art, architecture, and design, the six states and the Northern Territory.

I recommended the building should garner the support of the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Defence Force and ASIO, to ensure it meets the specifications of safety and security for world leaders and dignitaries, in an age where such measures are sadly essential. This component of the building should be funded by the Commonwealth Government.

I have also just established the Tourism Leaders Forum, representing the leaders in the tourism, sports and arts sectors, and the National Capital Authority.

I also established, with my wife Linda Henschke, Conference Coordinators in 1995, a company that has run conventions and exhibitions in all capital city convention centres in Australia, and in some provincial areas.

I seek to appear before the Inquiry to explain the impact on Canberra of not having a modern, well-appointed facility.

I will draw on the submissions publicly available and prepared by the Business Council and Business Chamber over a number of years, and through my own experience assisting in the running of conferences in centres across the country.

I would appreciate the opportunity of appearing before the hearing and presenting a 'conference organiser's' viewpoint, and that of an experienced tourism practitioner, on the impact of not having a modern, technologically advanced, and contemporary facility that can host a number of coinciding meetings and events.

I am also interested in exploring the way forward so the construction of this vital piece of infrastructure can be fast tracked, and the economic benefits can commence to flow to the ACT economy.

Could you please advise if this email is sufficient to allow the inquiry members to consider my appearance appropriate, or do I need to provide more elaborate documentation in support of my appearance.

Kind Regards

Dr David Marshall AM
Chair ACT Tourism Industry Advisory Council
Chair Tourism Leaders Forum