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MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

 A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE	
EXHIBIT	#
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INQUIRY	Inq. int. ecological carrying capacity of the ACT & region

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Inquiry into Ecological Carrying Capacity
of the ACT and Region



Ms Mary Porter AM MLA
Deputy Chair
Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and Water
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Porter *Mary*

Thank you for your letter of 27 July 2011 inviting me to meet with the Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and Water in relation to its inquiry into the ecological carrying capacity of the ACT and Region.

I would be pleased to meet with the Committee at the public hearing on 8 September 2011. My office has confirmed my attendance with the Committee Secretary as you have requested.

The Government Submission provided to the Committee in late 2010 provides a broad overview of policies and programs relevant to the inquiry topic, including the regional context.

You have now indicated that the Committee is particularly interested in hearing about agreements which the ACT is a party regarding planning, development, sustainability and service delivery matters along the Canberra-Queanbeyan or other corridors of population growth in the ACT region. In particular you sought agreements of a cross-jurisdictional and whole-of-government nature which have been the responsibility of successive Chief Ministers.

The Regional Management Framework signed in March 2006 by the then ACT Chief Minister and NSW Premier is relevant to your inquiry. The framework's focus was on enhanced collaboration across a range of cross border issues and was to be used to resolve cross border matters and plan for better ways to provide Government services. The 'ACT-NSW Regional Management Framework', Attachment A, was supported by an 'ACT and NSW Cross Border Region Settlement Memorandum of Understanding', Attachment B, an 'ACT and NSW Cross Border Water Resources Memorandum of Understanding', Attachment C, and a 'Summary of Legislative Responsibilities Cross Border Water Supply' Attachment D.

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Committee should note that the 'ACT and NSW Cross Border Water Resources Memorandum of Understanding' and the 'Summary of Legislative Responsibilities Cross Border Water Supply' were tri-partite agreements including the Commonwealth and have since been replaced by the 'Queanbeyan Water Supply Agreement', Attachment E, executed by the same parties on 16 September 2008. This agreement is the responsibility of the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate.

The other Memorandum of Understanding which would be of interest in relation to the Committee's current line of inquiry, is the 'NSW and ACT Regional Climate Model (NARCLIM)', Attachment F. This agreement executed on 20 June 2011 is the responsibility of the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate.

The Cross Border Regional Settlement Strategy, an implementation project of the ACT and NSW Cross Border Region Settlement Memorandum of Understanding has never been finalised. The Cross Border Regional Settlement Strategy was to be in place by 2007 and sought to establish agreement on the planning merits of particular cross border development areas, including their sequencing. Despite considerable efforts by both governments over a number of years agreement was not reached. Both parties recognised that it was unlikely that agreement would be reached on the relative merits of each other's proposed developments, with the proposed Tralee residential development a clear case in point. An exchange of letters in mid to late 2009 between the then NSW Premier and ACT Chief Minister agreed to develop a new, up to date approach to collaborate and consult on issues that affect the region.

Given the passage of time since the ACT-NSW Regional Management Framework was put in place and the change of personnel in both Governments, it is timely to take a fresh look at this framework. On 8 July 2011 I wrote to the NSW Premier, the Hon Barry O'Farrell MP regarding the close relationship that the ACT and NSW enjoy and sought a meeting with him to discuss a range of cross border issues. In particular, I suggested that there was a need to strengthen and update the ACT-NSW Regional Management Framework. On 5 August 2011 Senior Officials from Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate met with their counterparts from the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet to commence this work.

For the information of the Committee I have also attached an overview of the regional engagement arrangements that the ACT has in place, Attachment G.

Thank you for the invitation and I look forward to meeting with the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Katy Gallagher MLA
Chief Minister

- 2 SEP 2011