



Australian Government
National Capital Authority

Inquiry into new Convention Centre for Canberra
A submission by the National Capital Authority

NCA Ref 316558

1. Introduction

The National Capital Authority (NCA) is pleased to make a submission to the above Inquiry in relation to matters pertaining to the role and functions of the (NCA), in particular, its statutory responsibility for the planning and development of the National Capital.

The project known as the new National Convention Centre (or more recently the Australia Forum), has been the subject of various planning investigations to assess the merits of different siting and design options. The NCA was consulted in relation to those earlier studies where the proposed sites were within its planning jurisdiction.

The site currently proposed for a new National Convention Centre is located in the City Hill precinct bounded by London Circuit and is therefore within the NCA's planning control.

In 2016 the NCA was invited by the Land Development Agency (LDA) to participate as design panelist in an Expression of Interest process for the selection of a concept for the nominated Australia Forum site at City Hill. This process resulted in the appointment by the LDA of the Fuksas/GMB architectural design consortium. This proposal has not been the subject of any detailed planning assessment.

2. Submission

The NCA submits that:

- The proposed (and reserved) site on City Hill bounded by London Circuit, Commonwealth Avenue and Constitution Avenue is considered an ideal site for a new National Convention Centre. It is located at one of the apices of the National Triangle and is within the defined Central National Area.

A new National Convention Centre should be a prominent, public building befitting such a location. The site is highly accessible by major roads, being 8 minutes from Canberra International Airport. It is also easily accessible by the city's wider public transport, including future light rail, and by the City Centre's public space network.

- A new National Convention Centre and its associated activities would make a major contribution to the economic and social revitalisation of Constitution Avenue and reinforce its status as one of the three significant urban boulevards in the national capital.
- The development of a new National Convention Centre on the proposed City Hill site is consistent with the provisions of the *National Capital Plan* which was gazetted in 2016. This Plan is administered by the NCA.
- Development of a new National Convention Centre would 'free up' the opportunity to redevelop the existing Canberra Convention Centre site and directly support the planning and urban design objectives for the City to the Lake strategy. Importantly, it would also act as significant public

infrastructure 'catalyst' to stimulate new private sector investment in the City Centre particularly in new commercial accommodation and retail uses.

- The proposed Funksas/GMB concept reflects the high standard of architectural design which the NCA would seek for the nominated site. The building's design should make a strong and memorable visual 'statement' which would distinguish it globally as a structure with a signature form and function. Unlike other convention centres which are often introverted and internalised, the selected design must contribute its urban context and to the quality of the public realm around the site.
- Any future planning and design studies for a new National Convention Centre should be undertaken as an integral part of the City to the Lake and City Centre Revitalisation strategies which already been examined by the ACT Government, not in isolation of these plans.

The NCA appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry. Any further questions or clarification on this submission should be directed to Mr Andrew Smith, Chief Planner, at: andrew.smith@natcap.gov.au.

Malcolm Snow
Chief Executive
8 May 2017