



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

OCCASIONAL LECTURE SERIES

Canberra and the Parliament: an increasingly uncomfortable marriage

Jack Waterford

Theatre, Parliament House

Friday 24 May 12.15pm to 1.15pm

The new parliament house is 25 years old. Many have remarked on differences between the new and old parliament, in terms of the intimacy of members, staffers and the press and how the architecture affects power balances, relationships, and politics. But the period has also seen a change in the relationship between the Parliament—as an institution rather than a building—and the city of Canberra.

In this lecture Jack Waterford, an observer of the relationship between city and parliament for more than 40 years, discusses an increasingly uncomfortable marriage. The new house is more of a fortress and in certain respects more of a factory. Traffic arrangements and security requirements make it more difficult for public servants and the public to access. Public servants also find access to ministers and decision making remote as well.

Those who live and work in the house—all 2000 or so—seem detached from the city itself. The propensity of outsiders to use “Canberra” as a form of shorthand for the doings of executive government probably increases the mutual alienation.

Jack Waterford has been a journalist for 33 years, mainly for the *Canberra Times*, where he started as a copyboy in 1972. He was appointed Deputy Editor in 1987, Editor in 1995 and Editor-in-Chief in 2002. He currently writes about law, politics and public administration.



Admission free—bookings not required

Enquiries to Senate Procedure Office

Phone: (02) 6277 3072

Email: research.sen@aph.gov.au

<http://www.aph.gov.au>