

Neville Williams (the caretaker)

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Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
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29 March 2017

Dear Committee Secretary,

PROPOSAL TO EXTEND (STAGE ONE)
'CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE' PUBLIC WORKS
AT GARDEN ISLAND, SYDNEY

Firstly, may I thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission about the Department of Defence's proposed essential works at Garden Island, Sydney.

This submission does not challenge the need for remedial work to be carried out at Garden Island. If rusting piers need renewal and deeper dredging is necessary then so be it.

We are now facing changing and challenging times.

How we address the many different challenges facing us is also itself under challenge. We can stay with our blinkers firmly in place and remain fixed in our thinking about accepted processes and procedures for the way things are done. Alternatively we can adapt to those many and varied changes and challenges placed upon all of us.

The battlefield today too manifests in many changing locations. The internet for example is a newly emerging example. There is also too the battlefield of hearts and minds that needs critical maintenance. Perhaps, arguably, this is the most important theatre of war! WE NEED TO MAINTAIN IT AS A THEATRE OF PEACE.

The proposal here suggests the need for an extension to STAGE ONE of the proposed public works at Garden Island to include very necessary maintenance of the Nation's sense of self or 'National Identity' at a time when so much is distracting us from the main game.

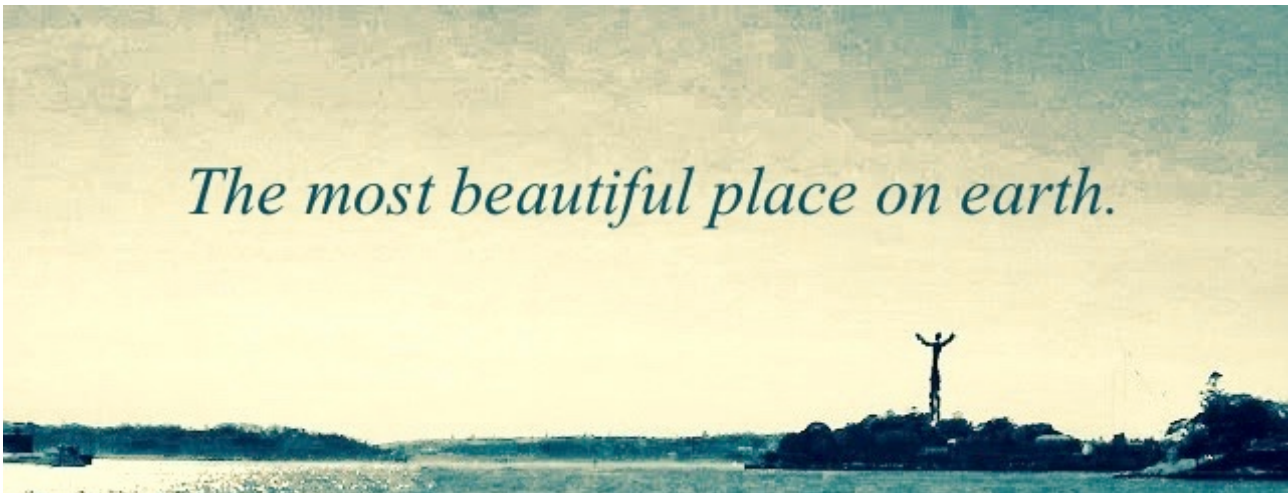
That is ensuring that we know who we are and where we are pointed as a Nation. We need to keep ourselves on a planned creative course forward. This proposal seeks to develop 'critical infrastructure' for our peoples national well being with the active participation and support of our very necessary Defence Forces.

Neville Williams (the caretaker)

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SUBMISSION PRESENTED TO:-
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An individual's submission
to the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Public Works (PWC)
Stage One of the Garden Island (East),
Critical Infrastructure Recovery Program, Sydney



GARDEN ISLAND NAVAL DOCKYARD, SYDNEY
"Sanctuary of Peace - The Spirit of Bennelong"
(2030)

Thank you

Firstly, may I thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission about the Department of Defence's proposed essential works at Garden Island, Sydney.

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DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Department of Defence has presented a submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Public Works (PWC) describing six scope elements in a “STAGE ONE” upgrading of GARDEN ISLAND, SYDNEY:

- Project Element 1: Demolition of Wharf Structures;
- Project Element 2: Construction of Wharf Structures;
- Project Element 3: Seabed Dredging;
- Project Element 4: Wharf Furniture;
- Project Element 5: Portal Crane; and
- Project Element 6: Shore Engineering Services.

The proposal here does not question the need or cost (\$213.4 million) for these elements but seeks an extension of development works proposed by the Department of Defence in Stage One of the Garden Island (East), Critical Infrastructure Recovery Program, Sydney.

This Submission is highly relevant to the current proposal for practical upgrading of Australia’s Defence infrastructure as it provides the complementary holistic ‘critical infrastructure’ elements to help secure our future well being here in Australia. This proposal will help keep in check the enemy within (us all).

Encouragement is presented here for the acceptance of the need in parallel with the proposed works for infrastructure to an amount of 25% (\$53.35 million) of the budgetary estimate to be added for **development funds to evolve the parklands and some perimeter area of Garden Island into the concept of a “Sanctuary of Peace - The Spirit of Bennelong”**.

The proposal here seeks that a separate guiding and management body is established to be responsible for the evolution of this “Sanctuary of Peace - The Spirit of Bennelong” to be appointed by the (PWC) with some *initial* guidance from “the caretaker” of the proposal presented here.

The proposal here also seeks acceptance from the Department of Defence to take up the role of protector, supporter and guardian of this “Sanctuary of Peace”.

PREAMBLE

KEEP IT THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE ON EARTH

The Department of Defence is now in the process of presenting a 'Garden Island Critical Infrastructure Recovery Program (Stage One)' to the Federal Parliamentary Standing Committee for Public Works (PWC).

There has been talk for years about moving the Garden Island Naval Dockyard to a more strategic location. This proposal in the pipeline for a 'Stage One' will be followed by a 'Stage Two' for upgrading of other necessary infrastructure on Garden Island. While proposed expenditure of \$213.4 million for Stage One is small in an overall picture of public spending the follow up with a Stage Two proposal is enough to conclude that the Navy isn't going elsewhere soon.

The shadowy side of human nature dictates that we will need to defend ourselves against aggressors indeterminately into the future. If we are to live with a Naval presence on the front door to Australia then that presence can too take on a peaceful role as guardians of a “Sanctuary of Peace - The Spirit of Bennelong”.

Isn't it far better to lay out the welcoming mat to visitors to these shores than the sabre rattling presence of war ships in Sydney Harbour?

It is noted that Garden Island has on various occasions been used as an Overseas Passenger Shipping Terminal when White Bay and Circular Quay have proved inadequate to handle the size of the larger ships e.g. Queen Mary 2. Any idea of moving passenger ships to Botany Bay as some discussions have revealed is like showcasing, to coin a famous phrase, the 'arse end of the world' to our visitors.

We are seeing right now the downright stupidity of short term profit based thinking and a lack of adequate long term bridging planning with a very uncomfortable melt down occurring in our energy sector. We can regard that as a template for how we've allowed or programmed two dimensional thinking in our technologically speedy brains. Paying our way is a sensible path forward no question with that thinking. Going completely off the rails in a grab for every dollar is just ignorance. It's all about a balance.

When are we going to address a bigger picture and start planning in a far reaching way?

It is time to dig deeper past brains in overdrive and start thinking and feeling from somewhere deeper within ourselves.

Do we want a future that focusses on 'War' or is our future going to affirm 'Peace' as the way towards our own self enlightenment?

It is acknowledged that when you've established something like the Naval Dockyard at Garden Island it is cheaper and much easier to apply band aid up-gradings than a wholesale shifting of the infrastructure to a more strategic location. According to Malcolm Turnbull a moving of the facility would be in the vicinity of \$6 Billion - probably more. By natural course too the dislocation of readdressing those personnel in the Navy who have made the idyllic surrounds of Sydney Harbour their occupational home would not be comfortable and this is also acknowledged. But then nothing about war is comfortable and this choice of occupation must come with that knowledge.

Really isn't it time we started to plan together an overall picture at National, State, Local Government and Community levels for the overarching future we want for ourselves and our children? Real plans can be laid down now if we apply ourselves to the task.

If Malcolm Turnbull is looking for the right 'key' vision to point us forward then he couldn't do better than to start at the front door of Australia. Sydney Harbour is a pristine starting point and let's keep it that way with wise and sensible planning.

Neville Williams (the caretaker) 29/3/17

It is understood that it is a requirement to address at least one of the terms of reference contained within the Department of Defence report to the Public Works Committee when presenting a submission.

This submission addresses each of the "TERMS OF REFERENCE".
Public Works Committee Act 1969 17(3)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(3) In considering and reporting on a public work, the Committee shall have regard to:

- (a) the stated purpose of the work and its suitability for that purpose;
- (b) the necessity for, or the advisability of, carrying out the work;
- (c) the most effective use that can be made, in the carrying out of the work, of the moneys to be expended on the work;
- (d) where the work purports to be of a revenue-producing character, the amount of revenue that it may reasonably be expected to produce; and
- (e) the present and prospective public value of the work.

TERMS OF REFERENCE ANSWERED

(a) the stated purpose of the work and its suitability for that purpose;

DETERMINING THE CULTURAL DIRECTION
FOR OURSELVES IN AUSTRALIA.

The emergence of a story, narrative, concept or vision is yet to be seen that points us forward in an overall positive, creative direction in Australia. This has not been forthcoming by our politicians, not by our cultural institutions, not by business, not by media, not by our sporting bodies, not by our religious community, not even by Community generally. There are those who are looking after various fragmented elements of cultural expression but an overall direction cannot be seen.

Who is meant to be taking responsibility for such a movement? Aren't we all? Presently there is too much blinkered thinking or territorial tribal beliefs being held onto with white knuckle fear. (This fear and ignorance too often manifests in our world as 'self righteousness'.)

This proposal seeks to set a course for the nation towards maturity and a knowing that where we are heading is in a positive direction for the betterment of our collective future.

*"We have yearned for a guiding story
that would help us make sense
of what is happening to us, and to our society.
But no such story has emerged." — ★ Hugh Mackay (2001)*

The placing of a monumental sculpture of “The Spirit of Bennelong” at this node point, the very heart of the front door to Australia, presents a high profile focus on our ‘humanity’ as being the top priority in our values system.

The foundation injustice in the formation of modern Australia was the dispossession of our own First Nations peoples valued sense of self. This needs a high profile pointer for redress - recognition and reconciliation. The ‘Spirit’ of Bennelong* embodies in figurative form an aspiration to achieve the highest connection or foundation within ourselves, both for our Aboriginal peoples and also for the wider spectrum of our Australian peoples.

Isn't this a suitable and worthy path for us all to walk?

**There are numerous identifiable Aboriginal figures from Australia's early history. Bennelong is probably the most well known particularly concerning this nucleus area of Sydney.*

(b) the necessity for, or the advisability of, carrying out the work;

Picture for a moment the ocean liner Queen Mary 2 floating in open waters with a full complement of passengers. The crew is busily working away and supplies are well stocked but the liner's navigation, steering and radar, the sense of priorities and values is all over the place. In fact there are so many who have or are seeking to have their hands on the steering wheel that the great liner is going around in circles. Most are blissfully unaware of this situation. The party on the high seas continues.

The expectation is that someone is steering the ship. The Captain though is flat out trying to solve problems that others should be taking in hand at lower levels. There are mounting storms off in the distance and also too on board behind the scenes. But the crew have learned to put on a public face - all smiles no problem. Eventually the supplies start to dwindle. The maintenance of the ship begins to be neglected (someone else should be looking after all of that anyway, shouldn't they?).

One day the passengers wake up and there is no food on board, the fresh water has run out, the power doesn't work. The fuel has gone and a great tsunami of change is upon what people believed to be the unsinkable.

End of party. All lost at sea.

People who don't know who they are or where they are going lean towards self destruct. There are any number of nation states in our world where that is now evident. Don't think it can't happen here.

Prevention is a far better planned and navigated course than cure.

(c) the most effective use that can be made, in the carrying out of the work, of the moneys to be expended on the work;

We talk about constitutions, bills of rights, treaties, documents of reconciliation.

This location might enshrine 'a document of the values to be an Australian'. This project intends to proclaim the priority of a values system in this Nation.

It seeks to establish a 'symbol of hope' and a foundation for our future in the manifest form of a monumental sculpture of "The Spirit of Bennelong" and its immediate surrounds. This sculpture takes us back to the foundations of human existence on this continent and places this constant reminder of our valued humanity at the front door to Australia. It would be a publicly accessible location for Australians and visitors to these shores. It is intended to be a sanctuary for the dignity and respect of our humanity no matter what our background. It is or can be made into (with the contribution of many) "a pointer" towards our future.

With the right input from the right people and the right budget there is no reason why "The Spirit of Bennelong" (52m height feet to head) cannot attain a comparable standing as America's - Statue of Liberty (33m height feet to head) or Rio's - Christ the Redeemer (30m feet to head). Though the enterprise outlined here is considered to be unique to our Australian sensibility.

While increasingly we are living in a world that needs and wants to rationalise the value of everything into figures the value of the human spirit will continuously evade this desire. In the end all we are searching for is happiness and 'Happiness' is not an attribute of matter.

What would this symbol do for forgiving, reconciliation, reconnection and the self valuing of our First Nations people? Our First Nations peoples leaders might like to provide insight into this question.

Disconnection it must be said is not unique to our Aboriginal people. Our world is in meltdown presently experiencing not dissimilar removal of the life people know leading to confusions from which many of our Australian indigenous people are now emerging with the hindsight of much lived experience of healing the loss and grief. The processes of the value of 'forgiving' and 'reconnection' need a voice. "The Spirit of Bennelong" can be a conduit for that voice.

'The caretaker' here does not profess to be a fund raiser, neither a business person or a venture capitalist but in moral terms it does not seem to be unreasonable that the costs associated with the realisation of **this whole project*** might come 50% from Government and 50% from Community i.e. entrepreneurial business/private sector public contribution. That is if we want this proposed work to have value and meaning to us all. Surprising though as it may be to some we actually have to give something to get something in return.

A sense of value in the self is something that must be earned.

(d) where the work purports to be of a revenue-producing character, the amount of revenue that it may reasonably be expected to produce;

How much for example does the opera house encourage people to come and visit Australia? It must have some quantitative value of attractiveness for people! Shave off even a thin slice of the tourist dollar brought into Australia over the years and that building would handsomely have paid for itself time and again and again and again. Development of the "Sanctuary of Peace - The Spirit of Bennelong" is the same story only hopefully without similar levels of ignorance heaped on the creatives involved. Sorry I've got to say this here... *Vision costs on many levels. When we are prepared to pay on many levels we'll have not only visionary plans but visionary plans in action without all of the angst and ignorance.*

(e) the present and prospective public value of the work.

"The Spirit of Bennelong - A Sanctuary of Peace" provides the framework for a vision of hope and a clear pointer towards determining the cultural future (qualitative expression of life) for ourselves here in Australia.

FOOTNOTE: To really set our individuality as a Nation on the world stage there should also be a twin monumental sculpture of Bennelong's partner...

“The Spirit of Barangaroo” also located on the front door of Australia at the Barangaroo Headland Park or alternatively on the adjacent “Goat Island”.

* **That is two pointers to our future.** One (The Spirit of Bennelong) a public sector undertaking the other (The Spirit of Barangaroo) a private sector undertaking. This combination is truly iconically unique in the world. The whole venture contextualises and frames the bridge and opera house to reflect us Australians as a healthy, balanced and welcoming Nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS to the Parliamentary Standing Committee (PWC)

- 1) The (PWC) approves 25% (\$53.35 million) over and above the estimated budget of (\$213.4 million) for STAGE ONE of the Garden Island (East), Critical Infrastructure Recovery Program, Sydney for **DEVELOPMENT FUNDS to evolve political/business/community liaison, planning and management for the centrepiece monumental sculpture, surrounding parklands, all tourism infrastructure including public access utilising some perimeter area of Garden Island, Sydney into the concept of a “Sanctuary of Peace - The Spirit of Bennelong”.**

Any further stages of development of Garden Island Defence Infrastructure would be benchmarked to include an equally matching of funds towards construction of the *complete project of “Sanctuary of Peace - The Spirit of Bennelong”.

- 2) The proposal here seeks that a separate guiding, marketing and management body is established at Garden Island to be responsible for the evolution of this “Sanctuary of Peace - The Spirit of Bennelong” to be appointed by the (PWC) with some *initial* guidance from “the caretaker” of the proposal presented here.
- 3) The Department of Defence is invited and encouraged by the (PWC) to take up the role of protector, supporter and guardian of this “Sanctuary of Peace - The Spirit of Bennelong”.
- 4) The Governor General of Australia be recruited by invitation by the (PWC) to oversee active patronage and guidance of the Project proposed here.

His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, MC is someone who is resilient and compassionate, respected across the fullest spectrum of Australian Society. He is also positioned at the right authoritative level to make this vision reality.

SOME COMMENTS

Anthony Luna - Project Manager for Stage One of the Garden Island (East) Critical Infrastructure Recovery Program walked 'the caretaker' personally through the various steps for what is planned in regards the upgrading of Garden Island. This was at the Wednesday 22 March evening visual presentation presented by Defence Forces at the Juanita Neilsen Centre Woolloomooloo. Mr. Luna is a youthful Engineer with great interest, commitment, enthusiasm, pride and passion in what he is doing. If we could engender his level of passion for the creation of a "Sanctuary of Peace" at Garden Island we would be well served for a successful project.

It is noted here that large ships moored along the newly extended wharves may distract to some degree the presence of a monumental statue. Some large ships might create the impression of "The Spirit of Bennelong" emerging from the decks of warships to any viewers on the Garden Island wharf side of the harbour. This might though also present an interesting comparative dichotomy and a positive thought provoking dimension to any viewer.

Also on a previous visit to Garden Island the overwhelming fuel fumes rising from the island's large fuel tank to the very location where the statue is proposed (presently a harbour viewing deck) would currently prevent no more than a short visit by any visitor to this location.

"The caretaker" is available to come and speak in Canberra at any Parliamentary Standing Committee Public Hearings.

CONCLUSION

In summary the approach here may well be the most 'critical infrastructure' for moving our Nation forward creatively that might ever come before any Parliamentary Standing Committee.

Neville Williams (the caretaker)
29/3/17

POSTCARD FROM THE FUTURE



PIC: 'Australia for Everyone' with additions by 'the caretaker'