



An Estate for the Future

—A new strategy for allocating land to diplomatic missions—

The National Capital Committee has today presented its report on the allocation of land to diplomatic missions in the Australian Capital Territory. The report has made three recommendations focused upon finding better ways to organise the allocation of land to diplomatic missions.

The Committee has recommended better use of existing resources, including more rigorous application of existing lease conditions; medium- and high-density options for housing chanceries; subdivision of existing sites within the diplomatic estate; more extensive use of residential and commercial properties to house chanceries; and a steady evolution towards a more commercial approach.

The Committee has also recommended the development of a long term strategy for the allocation of land to diplomatic missions, to forecast demand and supply, and establish the various mechanisms by which these forecasts may be met. Alongside new property types, these include designating sites for future enclaves, establishing a role for the private market and managing impacts on local residents.

The Committee has further recommended that Draft Amendment 78 to the National Capital Plan, allocating land adjacent Stirling Ridge to the diplomatic estate, be withdrawn.

Committee Chair, Senator Louise Pratt, noted that embassies played an important role in the look and feel of Canberra as a city and a capital. “Canberra has evolved into a mature city. The needs of the diplomatic community and residents have changed over time. A new policy framework—a new strategy—needs to be put in place for allocating land to diplomatic missions, one that takes account of the scarcity of available land, modern approaches to urban planning, the diverse requirements of diplomatic missions, and the changing needs of the city and its people” she said.

Senator Pratt highlighted the approach taken in Washington DC, which involved incorporating diplomatic missions into broader city planning while allowing the open market to determine the size and location of individual missions. “The Committee was impressed with the Washington model. Its combination of integrated planning and market forces leads to more efficient outcomes and reduces pressure on the allocation of public land. It is a model that Canberra should look to for guidance” she stated.

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chair, Senator Louise Pratt, on (08) 9225 4411
Copies of the report can be obtained from the committee’s webpage at www.aph.gov.au/ncet
or by contacting the secretariat on (02) 6277 4355, or by email at jscncet@aph.gov.au