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AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

**REPORT OF THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL CAPITAL
AND EXTERNAL TERRITORIES**

INQUIRY INTO THE IMMIGRATION BRIDGE PROPOSAL

MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS

JANUARY 2010

Introduction

On 25 February 2009, the then Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon Bob Debus MP, requested the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories to inquire into and report on:

1. The process adopted by Immigration Bridge Australia (IBA) to settle the design for the Immigration Bridge (the Bridge) taking into account:
 - a. the heritage values of Lake Burley Griffin and its foreshore, and
 - b. the interests of users of the Lake.
2. The process that has been adopted by IBA to raise funds for the construction and ongoing maintenance of the Bridge.
3. The approval process required under the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* if an application for approval of the Bridge were received by the National Capital Authority.

The Committee tabled its report on 29 May 2009.

Government Response

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that in the interest of improving its transparency and accountability Immigration Bridge Australia:

- clarify its refund policy in relation to the History Handrail program; and
- make its financial documents publicly available on its website.

The Government notes this recommendation.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that if the proposed IBA bridge is ceded to the Commonwealth, then the government should ensure that agreement to receive the bridge is met by increased funding to the NCA to manage its ongoing maintenance.

The Government notes this recommendation. If the IBA proposal proceeds and the Commonwealth Government were to agree to accept the proposed bridge as an asset gifted to the nation, any financial implications would be considered as part of the normal budget processes.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that Immigration Bridge Australia seeks to reconcile competing issues relating to Lake users, vista and heritage value of the Lake and its foreshores.

If IBA finds that this challenge cannot be met or its development application for the proposed bridge is unsuccessful then IBA should consider:

- changing the location of the proposed bridge; or
- proposing an alternative memorial to migration.

The Government notes this recommendation.