

## Submission to the Inquiry into the proposed Immigration Bridge

26 March 2009

The Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital  
Parliament House

Sir,

**Submission to the Inquiry into the proposed Immigration Bridge**

1.1 The IBA has made a claim that the Bridge is an appropriate memorial for honouring the contributions that migrants have made to Australia, taking into account:

- a. the heritage values of Lake Burley Griffin and its foreshore, and
- b. the interests of users of the Lake.

1.2 The process adopted by the IBA is seriously flawed because the IBA has not freely presented any independent public examination of and conclusions about:

- the desirability of such a monument
- the most appropriate form of such a monument
- the effect on contemporary heritage values of Lake Burley Griffin and its foreshore
- the effect on the interests of users of the Lake.

2.1 The IBA appear to operate under the entity described as a not-for-profit organisation. The process that the IBA has adopted to raise funds for the construction is a matter for the IBA to resolve privately, requiring only that it meet the regulations of the State or Territory in which the entity is registered. To what extent have these responsibilities have been met? I suggest that the Inquiry must demand answers to the question because this is a project of high public significance.

2.2 The IBA states that it intends to hand over a completed Bridge as a “gift to the nation”. There is an assumption therefore that some entity other than the IBA will be responsible for the bridge thereafter. This is quite unacceptable. A memorial of any description will require ongoing maintenance and it is irresponsible and unacceptable to leave this aspect of a memorial unaddressed.

3.1 The IBA makes the claim “The project has the broad support the National Capital Authority (NCA), representing the immediate past and current Commonwealth Governments, and the ACT Government. The land at the southern landing has been pledged as an in-kind contribution by the ACT government to the project, so one planning authority (the NCA) would be involved in the building approvals process.” This tends to imply that some sort of approvals process is in place. The actuality of a plan approval process is however in doubt. I think the Inquiry must determine that an independent public approval process is necessary because this is a project of high public significance. The Inquiry must publish exactly what the approval process is to consist of.

3.2 I am concerned that the terms of reference quote the “*Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*” which by implication is an Act some twenty years old. I expect the Inquiry to specify that contemporary plan approval processes are adopted for any proposed memorial. It is absolutely vital that a plan approval process be seen to have relevance to life in Canberra today, have a strong regard for the future and pay due regard to existing heritage values.

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3.3 On the matter of heritage values, the IBA makes the claim that “This Bridge will fulfil the recreational plans of the original designer of Canberra, Walter Burley Griffin in joining Acton Peninsula, home of the National Museum of Australia, with the Parliamentary Triangle.” The Inquiry must ensure that any plan approval process take due account of the actual foreshore of the Lake. This was defined when the Lake was filled with water. The recreational plans of the designers of Canberra were created long before and may no longer be entirely appropriate.

3.4 On the matter of recreational aspirations, I use the Lake and its foreshore for sailing, rowing & canoeing, walking, cycling & picnicking. Its value for these purposes is priceless in a city located so far from the sea. For me, most of the lake's value lies in its expanse of open water with remarkably un-built horizons. The attractive foreshore is a mixture of natural foreshore with extensive areas of parkland in the immediate vicinity with built water's edge constructed only where necessary. I see that considerable numbers of people of all ages, enjoy recreation in this zone year round and I have no doubt of its considerable value for recreation now. The Inquiry must act to protect these qualities for the future.

3.5 I feel that the proposed Bridge will have strong negative impacts on the scenic value of the foreshore for everybody. From every point around the shore from which it will be visible it will impose the strong negative impact of a built structure on a horizon which currently is graced by natural foliage. There is no need from a traffic point of view, to impose a substantial artificial structure on the proposed site. There are other, more appropriate, ways to provide a memorial as desired.

3.6 My personal reason for rejecting the proposed Bridge concerns the considerable restriction it will inevitably place on the area currently available for safe navigation. The only bridge that would be acceptable from this aspect is a bridge which could span that area without requiring any supports in the water or near the water's edge. Furthermore it would have to be at a sufficient height to enable the passage of current and likely future sailing craft. Any such bridge would, because of its height, impact the visual horizon to an even worse degree than that of the proposed Bridge.

3.7 I hope that the Inquiry will determine that a contemporary plan approval process is necessary for this project. I expect the Inquiry to state that criteria used by a plan approval process must be heavily weighted to:

- protect and enhance the amenities that the site delivers now for existing recreational users and
- ensure that the visual impact of any proposal for the site does not restrict/encroach on the extent of the views of the present horizon.

Yours Sincerely,

Guy Anderson