



Australian Institute of
Landscape Architects

To Malcolm Snow
Chief Executive
National Capital Authority
Malcolm.snow@natcap.gov.au

1 March 2017

Dear Mr Snow

Canberra's Capital Metro Project

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) ACT Chapter supports the ACT Government in introducing Capital Metro light rail as a necessary addition to the public transport mix for Canberra. We are also supportive of the urban design work done by Hassell, consultants for the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, that set the concepts for Northbourne Avenue as an urban boulevard as the city becomes more densely developed.

This avenue is one of Canberra's most significant national approach routes. The urban intensification of this corridor, including the light rail in the median and necessary redesign of the landscape, will result in a different character but not lessen the importance of the procession of spaces leading into the city. AILA ACT support the National Capital Authority (NCA) in upholding standards of quality and sustainability for our national capital and offer your agency our support to achieve the desired outcomes. As the NCA is responsible for granting works approval, this letter raises our concerns with you, outlined overleaf.

Major infrastructure projects such as this are transformational and last for many decades. Within this time Canberra will have a more extreme climate and the technological and social changes will make it a very different place to live and work. AILA ACT are concerned that the project is being undertaken with insufficient attention given to being fit-for-purpose in the foreseeable future or meeting the policy objectives of the present.

We understand the constraints of contracts and budgets and the limitations of the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (ISCA) rating tool being used, and suggest a 'without prejudice' meeting to share issues of concern between representatives of the contractor, the ACT Government agency and the NCA. Such a meeting may be able resolve a suitable way forward. Please contact us via email on act@aila.org.au if you wish AILA ACT to assist.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Keirnan
AILA ACT Chapter Presiden

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CAPITAL METRO PROJECT ISSUES

This project is part of the beginning of Canberra's 21st century transformation to have higher density, live work precincts in centres and transport corridors. Light rail in the Northbourne Avenue corridor is one of the catalyst projects that will completely transform our city. Climate change impacts are already being observed however the projects' detail design for the public realm (as much is able to be known) seems business-as-usual.

AILA ACT suggest the Capital Metro documentation should demonstrate at least the following to achieve works approval.

Water Sensitive Urban Design (WUSD)

The design and construction of the median is to use WSUD techniques to:

- Reduce risks from peak storm flow and flash flooding consistent with increased flood intensity and frequency
- Retain at least current levels of ground water recharge important for the catchment and to be capable of supporting a density of healthy trees to shade the avenue
- Improve the water quality entering the Sullivan's Creek catchment
- Maximise the retention of rainfall onsite and use of storm-water water to irrigate plants
- Minimise the use of potable water for establishment and emergency watering only.

Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect mitigation

The design and construction of the median is to actively counteract UHI effects to maintain or reduce day-time maximum and night-time minimum temperatures along the corridor to 2016 levels, by maximising:

- shade from trees over all pavements during summer, including the adjacent road carriageways (target 30% of area)
- permeable surfaces and watered grasses (target 30% of area)
- low thermal mass and high albedo effect materials in pavements and structures
- hydration of the soils and surface materials to enable evapotranspiration.

Liveability

To make the public realm places liveable year round, and both day and night, the design and construction of the stops, stations and associated pedestrian routes needs to:

- maximise thermal comfort for people through shelter and low wind speeds
- meet or exceed the standards set out in the NCA Outdoor lighting policy
- allow for vendors and public art.