

ACT GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT QUARTERLY REPORT



ACT
Government

DECEMBER 2017



Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

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ABOUT THE ACT GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT

CATHERINE TOWNSEND was appointed to the position of ACT Government Architect in September 2016. The role is part time and this enables her ongoing mutually beneficial commitments to industry, education and practice:

- her position as ACT Government Architect enables a full overview of the field and activities within industry and government
- her long involvement in industry forums facilitates an airing of alternative views and the identification of unifying positions (Building Regulatory Advisory Committee, liaison with industry peak bodies, leadership positions within the Australian Institute of Architects)
- as Chair of the ACT Architects Registration Board she is knowledgeable about regulatory mechanisms; their administrative and enforcement operations and issues
- as President of the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) she is aware of international best practice in education, accreditation, professional competencies and professional registration
- Catherine's appointment as Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Design enables her input to and understanding of the education of next generation practitioners, and
- her position as co-Director of Townsend + Associates Architects forms a vital link in providing informed advice to government in a real understanding of how policy translates to the marketplace.

COMMITTEES AND ENGAGEMENT

Committees

Building Regulation Advisory Committee

The Government Architect is a member of the Building Regulation Advisory Committee which provides industry input and recommendations on existing and proposed regulations affecting construction in the ACT. The committee assists ACT Government to work collaboratively with businesses to ensure law and regulation does not hamper innovation or business development.

At these meetings, the Committee reviewed the role of Building Certifiers in the building regulation process, with an emphasis on how process can be improved, and how regulation can influence construction quality outcomes. The Committee also reviewed access issues in buildings, building investigations and complaints report, non-compliant building products and licencing in the construction industry.

The Government Architect recommended regulation around the design and documentation of multi-residential buildings.

Government Architects Network of Australia

The Government Architect is a member of the Government Architects Network of Australia (GANA) which meets twice a year to discuss issues of common concern.

At this meeting, Government Architects in other jurisdictions were consulted on recommendations for Design Review Panel process and shared experience from existing design review panels.

Planning and Construction Industry Chief Executive Reference Group

The Government Architect is a member of this group formed to share information on major projects. Matters reported on included updates on Building Policy, Territory Plan variations, water use for living infrastructure and Gungahlin planning.

Engagement

The Government Architect spoke to several public and industry groups about the role of the Government Architect and provided the opportunity to openly discuss issues and seek feedback.

TV program on leading architecture

The Government Architects of Australia took part in a TV series showcasing leading architecture in each state and territory. The ACT Government Architect presented exemplary projects in Canberra that address social housing, infill housing, residential re-use and traditional residential projects.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR JANUARY – MARCH 2017

In the period January to March 2017, the Government Architect undertook the following activities:

Design Review Panel

The Government Architect commenced development of a Design Review Panel (DRP) process for the ACT. Design Review Panels have been demonstrated to enable significant improvements in the quality of development proposals in other jurisdictions, and Planning Minister Mick Gentleman directed the development of a comparable process for the ACT under the Statement of Planning Intent (2015).

The initial stages of development involved assessing comparable models in other jurisdictions, of particular relevance are systems that have been in long term operation in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Auckland. Evaluation was made in relation to the relevance of each model to the size, governance arrangements and development issues experienced in the ACT.

Capital Metro

The Government Architect is a contributing member of the Capital Metro Design Advisory Panel (DAP), providing detailed comments on proponent proposals to ensure that design of the line and attendant structures provide high quality urban design for Canberra. The DAP continued to review light rail stop design proposals and related matters.

ACT Courts Project

The Government Architect is a member of the Design Review Panel for the new ACT Courts complex which has reached the stages of detailed materials selection and review.

National Capital Authority

The Government Architect met with National Capital Authority's Chief Executive Malcolm Snow to discuss new models of Design Review Panels and shared territory interests and concerns.



Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

The Government Architect met with the Strategic Planning section of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) to review the proposal for Urban Design Guidelines and Urban Villages in the Northbourne Avenue corridor as part of the City and Gateway Urban Renewal Strategy project. Further briefings were also held on the City and Gateway Urban Design Strategy.

Land Development Agency

The Government Architect attended a meeting of the Land Development Agency Design Review Panel to review proposals for the greenfield suburb of Jacka and for activation of Haig Park. The panel identified particular environmental issues in Jacka and recommended a number of further planning considerations.

Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

The Government Architect met with the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment to identify joint areas of interest for prioritisation in ongoing sustainability and environment projects.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR APRIL – JUNE 2017

In the period April to June 2017, the Government Architect undertook the following activities:

Design Review Panel

The Government Architect commenced development of a Design Review Panel (DRP) process for the ACT. Design Review Panels have been demonstrated to enable significant improvements in the quality of development proposals in other jurisdictions, and Planning Minister Mick Gentleman directed the development of a comparable process for the ACT under the Statement of Planning Intent (2015). Work continued with support from the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate on ongoing development of a DRP process for the ACT.

Capital Metro

The Government Architect is a contributing member of the Capital Metro Design Advisory Panel (DAP), providing detailed comments on proponent proposals to ensure that design of the line and attendant structures provide high quality urban design for Canberra. The DAP continued review focussing on Alinga Street terminus.

ACT Courts Project

The Government Architect is a member of the Design Review Panel for the new ACT Courts complex which has reached the stages of detailed materials selection and review.

National Capital Authority

The Government Architect met with National Capital Authority's Chief Executive Malcolm Snow to discuss new models of Design Review Panels and shared territory interests and concerns.



Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

The Government Architect met with EPSDD policy and regulatory staff to identify possible solutions to issues identified around regulation of the construction industry.

Land Development Agency

The Government Architect attended a meeting of the LDA Design Review Panel to review proposals for East Lake and Ginninderry Estate.

Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

The Government Architect prepared an article for the Commissioner on climate change and the built environment in the ACT.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR JULY – SEPTEMBER 2017

In the period July to September 2017, the Government Architect undertook the following activities:

Design Review Panel

The Government Architect commenced development of a Design Review Panel (DRP) process for the ACT. Design Review Panels have been demonstrated to enable significant improvements in the quality of development proposals in other jurisdictions, and Planning Minister Mick Gentleman directed the development of a comparable process for the ACT under the Statement of Planning Intent (2015).

With support from the Strategic Planning unit in EPSDD, the Government Architect continued development of panel structure, definitions, criteria, operations and management. This included meetings with Auckland Council to gain a greater understanding of their DRP process, which has been running successfully for over a decade. Council advised that their success has been measured in terms of improved outcomes for the city and community and increasing popularity of the process with proponents.

Capital Metro

The Government Architect is a contributing member of the Capital Metro Design Advisory Panel (DAP) providing detailed comments on proponent proposals to ensure that design of the line and attendant structures provide high quality urban design for Canberra. The DAP continued to review the Alinga Street terminus.

National Capital Authority

The Government Architect continued liaison with the NCA regarding joint responsibilities for the National Capital Design Review Panel.



Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

The Directorate commenced Community Panels addressing complex planning issues in Curtin, Kippax and Red Hill. The Government Architect attended briefings and a number of public meetings.

The Government Architect assisted the launch and promotion of the Housing Choices consultation document. The document is timely as the community is vocal in the need for improvements in the types of housing available in the territory.

Transport Canberra and City Services

Waste ACT: The Government Architect was invited to comment on the results of a residential waste management study to address current non compliances.

Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

The Government Architect met with the Commissioner to identify joint areas of interest for prioritisation.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2017

In the period October to December 2017, the Government Architect undertook the following activities:

Design Review Panel

The first sessions of the Interim Design Review Panel were convened to consider several advanced projects. Independent and expert consultants in the field were engaged to provide input. The structure and processes of the DRP were able to be refined with each iteration of the panel.

The Government Architect co-chaired panel sessions with the NCA Chief Executive. The Government Architect chaired panel sessions for proposals in town centres and the Northbourne corridor.

Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

The Directorate continued Community Panels addressing complex planning issues in Curtin, Kippax and Red Hill. The Government Architect attended briefings and a number of public meetings.

Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

The Government Architect met with the Commissioner to identify joint areas of interest for prioritisation.

National Capital Authority

The Government Architect continued liaison with NCA regarding joint responsibilities for the National Capital Design Review Panel.

