

ACT GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT  
QUARTERLY  
REPORT



**ACT**  
Government

DECEMBER 2018

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Director-General, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development  
Directorate, ACT Government, GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601.

**Telephone:** 13 22 81

**Website:** [www.planning.act.gov.au](http://www.planning.act.gov.au)

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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 in 2018

The ACT Government Architect participates and provides strategic advice across several committees and working groups for individual projects. Three on-going committees for 2018 include:

### Building Regulation Advisory Committee

The Government Architect is a member of this committee which provides industry input and recommendations on existing and proposed regulations affecting construction in the ACT. The committee assists ACT Government work collaboratively with businesses to make sure laws and regulations do not prevent innovation or business development.

The Government Architect provided advice to government on construction quality issues.

### Government Architects Network of Australia

The Government Architect is a member of the Government Architects Network of Australia (GANNA) which meets twice a year to discuss issues of common concern. Between meetings jurisdictions and individuals liaise as necessary.

Issues are focussed on the following topics:

- 1. THE VALUE OF GOOD DESIGN:** How can we ensure that high-quality urban design and place making outcomes are embedded in procurement, governance and decision-making processes?
- 2. CAPITAL CITY THINKING:** How can we play a role in the delivery of a coordinated vision for our respective capital cities that both inspires people to think about their own long-term aspirations and informs future capital and non-capital programs?
- 3. THE MISSING MIDDLE:** How can we propose new housing options that meet contemporary community, urban and environmental challenges?

### Planning and Construction Industry Chief Executive Reference Group

The Government Architect is a member of the Planning and Construction Industry Chief Executive Reference Group (PCICERG) which exists to share information on major projects. The Government Architect regularly provides advice to this group.



## Engagement

The Government Architect met with several community and industry groups throughout 2018 to discuss the role of the ACT Government Architect and provided the opportunity to openly discuss issues and seek feedback on key government initiatives.

The Government Architect also met with the University of Canberra to discuss opportunities for better linkages with the ACT Government, particularly regarding architecture and design.



# HIGHLIGHTS FOR JANUARY – MARCH 2018

In the period January to March 2018, the Government Architect undertook the following activities:

## Interim National Capital Design Review Panel

During the first quarter of the year four significant projects were scheduled for review by the interim National Capital Design Review Panel (NCDRP); two proposals located in the City centre, one proposal located in the inner south and one proposal located in the Woden town centre.

Independent and expert consultants in the field were engaged to provide input and advice for each proposal. The structure and processes of the NCDRP continued to be refined with each iteration of the panel with regular meetings being held by the NCDRP Secretariat, in addition to the design review panel sessions.

The Government Architect chaired the panel sessions, and co-chaired with the Chief Planner from the National Capital Planning Authority (NCA) where proposals were located on designated land.

## Demonstration Housing project

The Demonstration Housing initiative has arisen from investigations into Housing Choices in the ACT.

The process for the project was run in two stages, with the Government Architect committing time to the second stage to shortlist applicants and provide advice to government. The first stage, an Expression of Interest (EOI), closed in May 2018 and assessed the market interest, capability and experience of applicants. Applicants included architects, designers, planners, developers, community and social housing providers, builders, community organisations and individuals.

In early 2018, the Government Architect commenced working with the Demonstration Housing team to develop an approach to market for launch later 2018.





## Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)

Officers from EPSDD and the Government Architect visited the Office of the Victorian Government Architect to observe their design review panel in operation. Observing how this process was undertaken has assisted in the approach undertaken for the interim NCDRP.

The Government Architect held on-going engagement with staff within EPSDD, addressing subjects including heritage and climate responsive design.

## Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

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

## National Capital Authority (NCA)

The Government Architect continued liaison with the NCA regarding joint responsibilities for the NCDRP, including regular meetings with the NCDRP Secretariat and monthly design review panel sessions.

# HIGHLIGHTS FOR APRIL – JUNE 2018

In the period April to June 2018, the Government Architect undertook the following activities:

## Interim National Capital Design Review Panel

During the second quarter of the year three significant projects were scheduled for review by the Interim National Capital Design Review Panel (NCDRP). These projects were located in the City centre, inner south and the inner north.

Independent and expert consultants in the field were engaged to provide input and advice for each proposal. The structure and processes of the NCDRP continued to be refined with each iteration of the panel with regular meetings being held by the NCDRP Secretariat, in addition to the design review panel sessions.

The Government Architect chaired the panel sessions, and co-chaired with the Chief Planner from the National Capital Planning Authority (NCA) where proposals were located on designated land.

The Government Architect regularly met with the NCDRP Secretariat within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) to identify improvements and efficiencies in the interim NCDRP processes and the way in which advice is provided by panel members.

## Demonstration Housing project

The Demonstration Housing initiative has arisen from investigations into Housing Choices in the ACT.

The process for the project was run in two stages, with the Government Architect committing time to the second stage. The first stage, an Expression of Interest (EOI), closed in May 2018.

The Government Architect continued to meet with the Demonstration Housing team to provide high level advice and discuss opportunities to refine the process for the second stage.

## Light rail

The Government Architect is a contributing member of the Capital Metro Design Advisory Panel (DAP) providing detailed advice on proposals to ensure that design of the line and attendant structures provide a high-quality urban design for Canberra. The final meeting of the DAP was held in this quarter.

Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)

The Government Architect continued regular liaison with EPSDD, attending and providing advice at meetings addressing heritage issues, urban design, construction quality and climate responsive design.



## Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

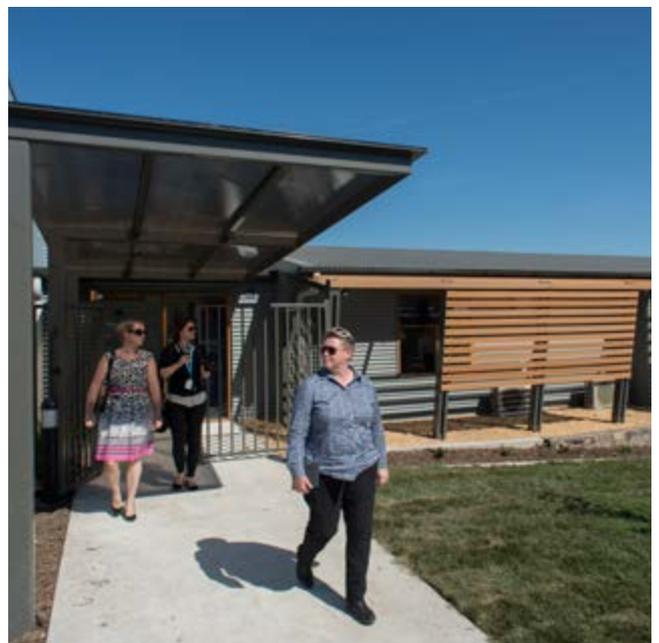
The Government Architect met with the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment to identify joint areas of interest for prioritisation.

## City Renewal Authority

The Government Architect continued liaison with CRA regarding areas of joint responsibility and interest.

## National Capital Authority

The Government Architect continued liaison with NCA regarding joint responsibilities for the NCDRP, including regular meetings with the NCDRP Secretariat and monthly design review panel sessions.



# HIGHLIGHTS FOR JULY – SEPTEMBER 2018

In the period July to September 2018, the Government Architect undertook the following activities:

## Interim National Capital Design Review Panel

During the third quarter of the year four significant projects were scheduled for review by the Interim National Capital Design Review Panel (NCDRP); three proposals for the CBD and one located in the inner south.

The Government Architect chaired the panel sessions, and co-chaired with the Chief Planner from the National Capital Planning Authority (NCA) where proposals were located on designated land.

The GA chaired panel sessions for proposals in town centres and the Northbourne corridor.

The Government Architect also contributed to design review of a significant new infrastructure proposal related to new urban development fringe areas.

The Government Architect continued to meet weekly with the NCDRP Secretariat within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) to identify improvements and efficiencies in the interim NCDRP processes.

## Demonstration Housing project

The Demonstration Housing initiative has arisen from investigations into Housing Choices in the ACT. The Government Architect continued to work with the Demonstration Housing team in launching and commencing the first and second stages of this initiative.

## Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

The Government Architect continued in-house and outreach meetings addressing subjects including climate responsive design, construction quality, development of apartment guidelines and the role and operation of NCDRP.



## Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

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

## City Renewal Authority

The Government Architect continued liaison with CRA regarding areas of joint responsibility and interest.



## National Capital Authority

The Government Architect continued liaison with NCA regarding joint responsibilities for the NCDRP, including regular meetings with the NCDRP Secretariat and monthly design review panel sessions.

# HIGHLIGHTS FOR OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2018

In the period October to December 2018, the Government Architect undertook the following activities:

## Government

Interim National Capital Design Review Panel (NCDRP)

During the final quarter of the year included three significant projects that were presented to the Interim National Capital Design Review Panel (NCDRP). The proposals were located in the City centre, central national area and Belconnen town centre.

The Government Architect chaired the panel sessions, and co-chaired with the Chief Planner from the National Capital Planning Authority (NCA) where proposals were located on designated land.

## Demonstration Housing project

The Government Architect continued to work with the Demonstration Housing team in launching the first stage of this initiative.

## Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

The Government Architect continued in-house and outreach meetings addressing subjects including climate responsive design, construction quality, development of apartment guidelines and the role and operation of Design Review Panels.

## Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment

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

## City Renewal Authority

The Government Architect continued liaison with CRA regarding areas of joint responsibility and interest.

## National Capital Authority

The Government Architect continued liaison with NCA regarding joint responsibilities for the NCDRP, including regular meetings with the NCDRP Secretariat and monthly design review panel sessions.

