

SESSION PANEL SELECTION GUIDELINE

NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

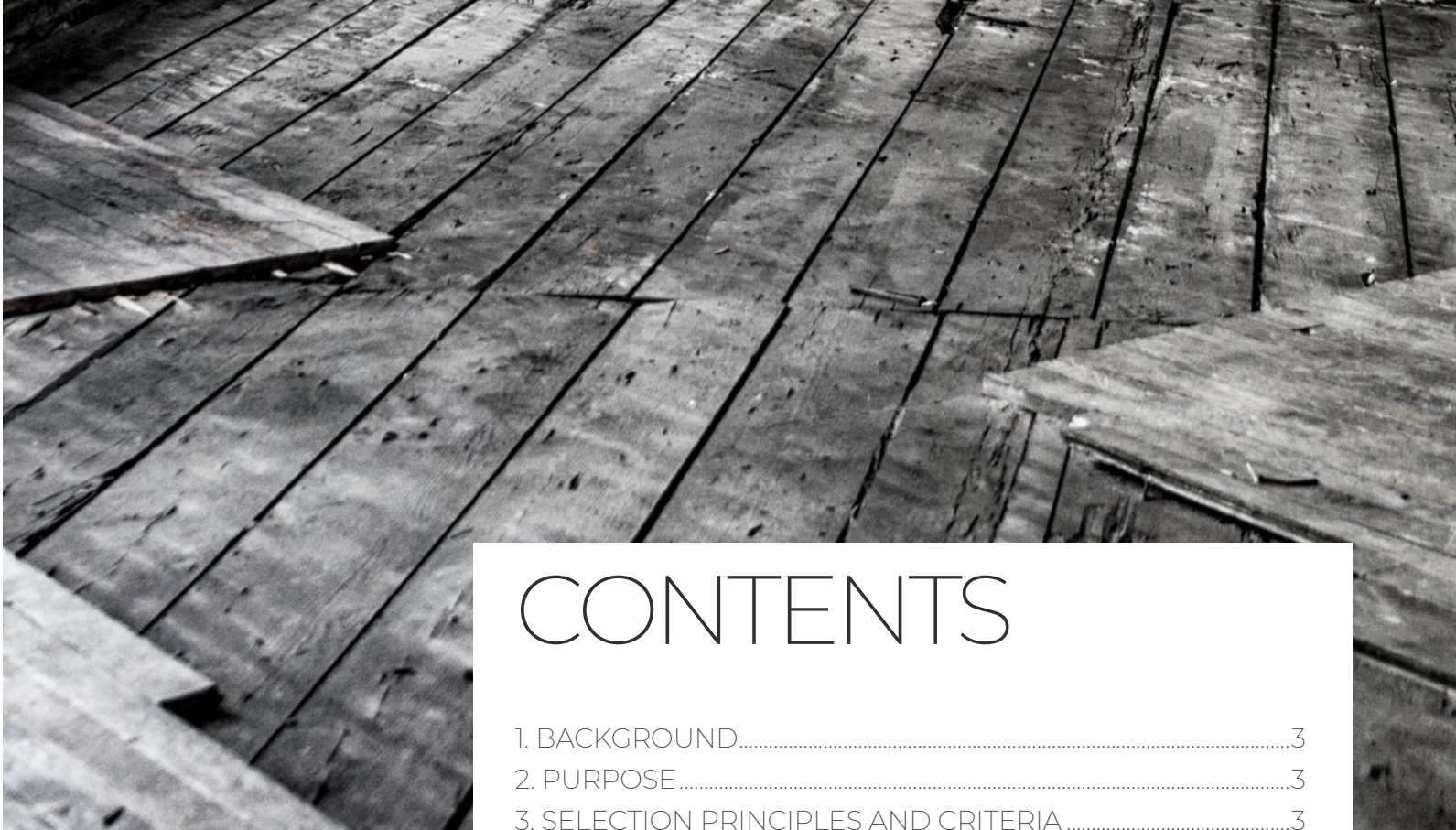
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We would like to acknowledge the Office for Design and Architecture South Australia (ODASA), Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA), Department of Planning and Environment NSW Government, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage Western Australia and Auckland Council.

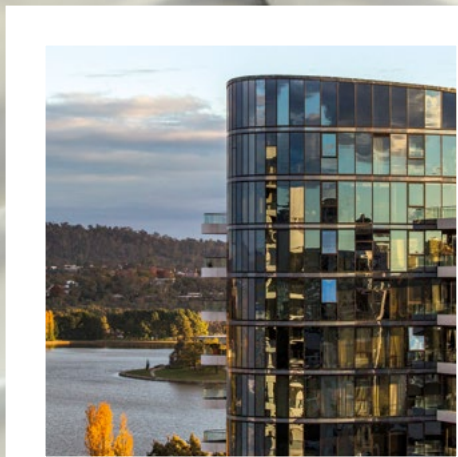
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BACKGROUND

The ACT Government, in partnership with National Capital Authority (NCA) and the ACT Government Architect have established a National Capital Design Review Panel (the Panel) as a consistent city-wide approach to improve the design quality of the built form built across Canberra. Establishing a city-wide design review panel in the ACT will result in an efficient and consistent approach to delivering design advice and guidance to decision-makers, developers and designers.

The National Capital Design Review Panel (NCDRP) underwent a refresh in 2024–25, resulting in a pool of 68 appointed members, comprising both newly appointed and returning members whose ongoing contributions are highly valued. The panel's collective capability spans architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, urban design and a range of specialist fields, including (but not limited to) heritage, transport infrastructure, sustainability, civil engineering, master planning, health and education.

For each NCDRP session, a minimum of two and a maximum of four panel members are selected based on individual expertise and the particulars of each proposal that is brought before the NCDRP for consideration. Additional specialist members may be engaged on an as needed basis.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this guideline is to provide a transparent, consistent and defensible process for the ongoing selection of panel members within the current term to participate in NCDRP sessions. It also clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the NCDRP Secretariat, Senior Officers, and Chair(s) in administering and supporting the design review process.

SELECTION PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

Selection of panellists for each NCDRP session must reflect the following key principles:

- Expertise alignment with proposal type and scale.
- Balanced disciplinary representation, ensuring the panel comprises an appropriate mix of skills and experience across relevant professional categories and avoids duplication of a particular discipline. For example, a panel may include one architect, one landscape architect, one urban designer and one civil engineer.
- Gender diversity, with representation from more than one gender, consistent with ACT Government inclusive practices.
- Jurisdictional diversity, ensuring the panel brings a balanced mix of local knowledge and external perspectives. This includes selecting members familiar with the ACT's climate, policy settings and urban and social character while also drawing on the breadth of experience across other jurisdictions to provide broader insight. For example, a panel may include one or more members from other jurisdictions.
- Promote continuity where required, for proposals returning to the NCDRP for subsequent design review, the same panel members should be selected wherever practicable to maintain continuity, ensure consistent perspective, to enable a clear tracking of how the design proposition has responded to earlier panel feedback. If this is not possible, a panel member from the same field may be selected.

- Opportunities for new or less-frequent members, ensuring equitable participation across the broader panel pool.
- Fair rotation based on participation frequency as documented in the register prepared by the NCDRP Secretariat, to support equity and prevent over-utilisation of individual members.
- Professional conduct, ensuring selected members demonstrate a high standard of preparedness and constructive participation in design review.
- Independence and conflict-of-interest management.
- Transparent, defensible decisions for the selection of panel members for each proposal seeking review.

OPERATIONAL SELECTION PROCESS

The following outlines the procedure for forming the panel for each proposal presented to the NCDRP for consideration:

- NCDRP Secretariat prepares a Proposal Overview (e.g. email), that includes project details such as summary of proposed uses, site location, scale, context, proponent and design team.
- In concert with the NCDRP Chair/s, NCDRP Secretariat issues the Proposal Overview including current Panel Pool Register to Chair/s for panel nominations and preferences.
- Chair/s nominates 3–4 panellists across relevant and balanced expertise areas, and 3–4 alternative nominations as a backup. Nominations are based on the selection principles and criteria listed above.
- NCDRP Secretariat confirms Chair’s nomination with the Senior Officer to ensure alignment with principles of fairness, balance and governance integrity.
- NCDRP Secretariat finalises and documents the panel composition, confirms availability of nominated panellists, updates the Panel Pool Register and records the rationale and confirmations for governance purposes.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Concerns raised by panel members regarding participation frequency, perceived inequity, or other matters related to panel selection are to be managed through the following process:

- Initial submission of concern
- The panel member raises their concern in writing to the NCDRP Secretariat or Chair/s, outlining the nature of the issue.
- Preliminary review by the Secretariat
- The NCDRP Secretariat will review the matter by:
 - checking the Panel Pool Register for participation history and rotation data;
 - reviewing any relevant conflicts of interest; and
 - assessing whether the concern intersects with established selection principles and criteria.

Consideration with the Chair/s

The Secretariat discusses the concern with the Chair/s, who consider whether selection decisions have been consistent with principles of fairness, balance, expertise alignment and governance integrity.

Determination and communication

A written response is provided to the panel member outlining the decision, rationale and any actions to be taken (e.g. adjustments to future rotation if appropriate).

Escalation pathway

If the panel member is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter may be escalated to an independent Executive (not involved in the session selection process) for review.

The Executive will make a final determination and communicate the outcome directly to the panel member.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role Title	Responsibility
NCDRP Secretariat - Design Review Coordinator	→ Prepare Proposal Overview → Provide the Chair with the Proposal Overview, current Panel Pool Register. → Request Panel nominations. → Maintain the Panel Pool Register up to date → Maintain the Conflict of Interest register → Implement confirmed nominations by managing invitations and updating records.
Senior Officer/Director	→ Review and agree with the Chair’s nominated panellists to ensure alignment with principles of fairness, balance and governance integrity.
Chair/s - ACT Government Architect / National Capital Authority Chief Planner	→ Review the Proposal Overview and the Panel Pool Register → Nominate panellists



SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

NCDRP Panel Pool Register

A comprehensive register that records each panel member's organisation, current role, qualifications, areas of expertise (including typology expertise), contact information, location, known conflicts of interest and participation history in NCDRP sessions.

Proposal Overview

The NCDRP Secretariat prepares and issues to the Chair a Proposal Overview email including a summary of proposed uses, site location, scale, context, proponent and design team, to inform the selection process. This overview is compiled from the online application form submitted by the Proponent.

NCDRP Standard Operating Procedures

The NCDRP Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) provides detailed guidance for the NCDRP Secretariat team to clarify roles, responsibilities, and procedures for administering and coordinating the design review process and program.

NCDRP Conflicts of Interest Register

Any perceived, potential or actual Conflicts of Interest (COI) relating to Chair(s), panel members or members of the NCDRP Secretariat participating in design review requires a COI form to be completed and cleared by a Senior Officer/Executive. A comprehensive COI Register is maintained by the NCDRP Secretariat for known COIs and management strategies.

