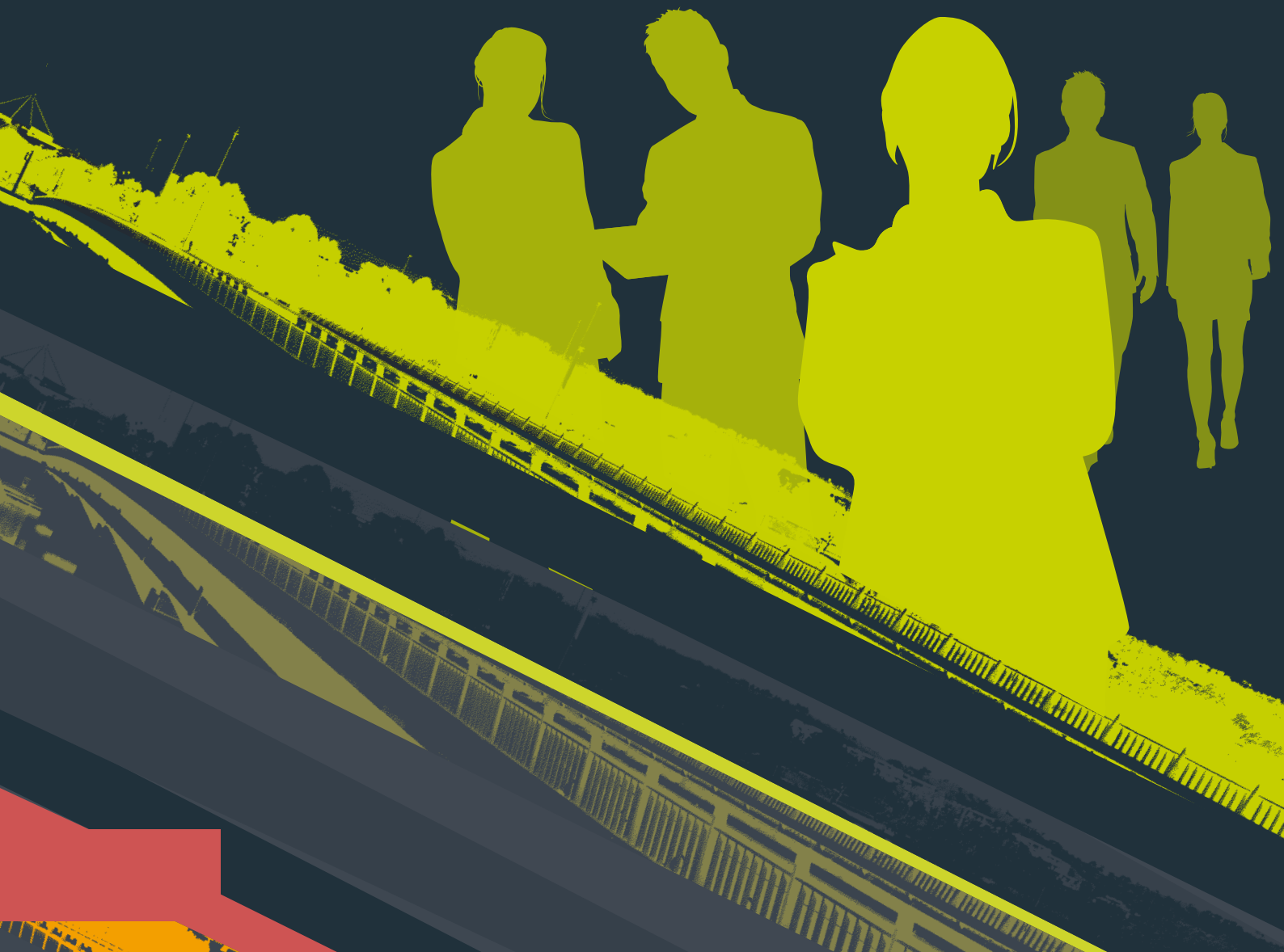




Australian Government  
National Capital Authority

# COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

JULY 2010



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National Capital Authority  
July 2010

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At its February 2010 meeting, the Board of the National Capital Authority reaffirmed its strong commitment to engaging with the community as part of its decision making. The inaugural Public Forum held on 26 November 2009 provided a strong platform, but the Board recognises that more needs to be done to enable greater inclusion and engagement - particularly at the early and formative stages of projects and proposals.

The National Capital Authority (NCA) is established under the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 (the Act). The NCA is responsible for the Australian Government's commitment to the planning and development of Canberra as the National Capital. The National Capital belongs to all Australians.

The NCA believes meaningful community engagement and opportunity for third party contribution is essential for prudent decision-making.

This Commitment to Community Engagement serves three purposes:

- » it expresses the NCA's commitment to better connections with the people of Canberra and the nation;
- » it provides an action plan for community engagement programs and activities; and
- » it formalises consultation requirements, the NCA service charter for planning and development approvals, and feedback and complaint handling procedures in one document.

The NCA Commitment to Community Engagement comprises four parts. Each part can operate as a stand-alone document. The commitment is intended to be an evolving statement about the way the NCA communicates with, and relates to, people and organisations with an interest in the National Capital. The Commitment to Community Engagement will be reviewed and updated every two years, or whenever there is a material change to the planning arrangements within the Act.



» Prof. Don Aitkin AO, Chairman



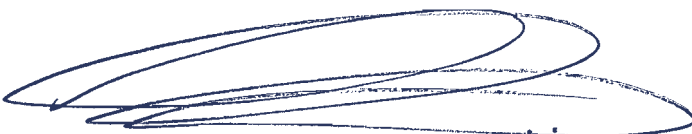
» Mr Gary Rake, Chief Executive



» Ms Shelley Penn, Member



» Mr Peter Core, Member



» Ms Christine Storry, Member



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# 1 PUBLIC INFORMATION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Canberra, the National Capital, belongs to all Australians. It has immeasurable symbolic importance to the nation. Therefore, the city and its environs must be nurtured, protected and developed in the national interest.

The role and responsibilities of the National Capital Authority (NCA) and its board are important to maintaining and enhancing Canberra as Australia's capital city. The work of the NCA must be widely accessible so that any interested Australian can gain information about, and make contributions to, the future of 'their capital city'.

## 1.2 GENERAL APPROACH

The NCA makes information about its works and decisions publicly available wherever it can. Where a question arises about the appropriateness of releasing particular information, the NCA will apply a public-interest test.

The NCA must, however, withhold specific information from public view where it is exempt under Freedom of Information requirements.

## 1.3 ADOPTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

An E-Government strategy is emerging in Commonwealth and State Governments<sup>1</sup>. The NCA will continue to explore and embrace new means and technology to reach stakeholders and other interested parties. Collaborative online innovations offer an unprecedented opportunity to achieve more open, accountable and responsive service delivery.

While the NCA's website is rich in information, and is being continuously enhanced, it cannot deploy all of the most recent technologies to reach stakeholders. The NCA will, however, ensure it has a continually evolving capacity to extend its outreach using the most appropriate technologies and applications. The NCA has developed, and will maintain, an accessible information subscription service (RSS Feed) to ensure that interested and subscribed parties are informed of new or changed information available on the NCA website. This service enables wider and earlier dissemination of information about proposals for amendments to the National Capital Plan, the making or amending of a Development Control Plan, works approval applications and other matters.

Those interested can subscribe to the RSS Feed on the NCA website.

NCA engagement with the community may also be strengthened by blog content or use of other social networking platforms.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information on whole of government developments, see 'Engage. Getting on with Government 2.0' Report of the Government 2.0 Taskforce, December 2009.

The NCA will monitor communication technology innovations with a view to adopting those most appropriate to its need and to its stakeholder needs, and will seek general agreement on the role and nature of that adoption through the periodic review of this *Commitment to Community Engagement*.

<b>Action Item 1</b>	NCA to conduct a pilot exercise in online engagement through an online forum.
<b>Initial Deadline</b>	30 September 2010

## 1.4 PUBLIC FORUM

The NCA will host an annual Public Forum to provide opportunity for open engagement between itself, its stakeholders and the wider community. The Forum provides a framework to initiate discussion on matters relevant to the role of the NCA. The Public Forum will be timed for the April-June period each year to enable the NCA to include matters discussed in its following financial year business plan.

The NCA will endeavour to focus the agenda on strategic topics of interest to stakeholders and relevant to the future of the National Capital. The NCA will identify alternate mechanisms for stakeholders to raise individual issues.

## 1.5 PUBLIC RECORD OF AUTHORITY BOARD MEETINGS

The members of the board of the NCA are appointed to manage the Commonwealth's interest in Canberra as Australia's national capital on behalf of all Australians. The board seeks to discharge its responsibilities with transparency and accountability.

With this in mind, the board will publish a record of each meeting on the NCA website.

<b>Action Item 2</b>	NCA to prepare and release a public record of Authority board meeting proceedings.
<b>Cyclic Deadline</b>	Each public record of an Authority board meeting will be released within 10 working days of the ratification of the minutes at the next Authority meeting. For example, the minutes of the April 2010 meeting will be ratified at the June 2010 meeting. Release of the public record of the April 2010 meeting would be released within 10 working days of the June 2010 meeting.

## 1.6 KEY-ISSUE DIALOGUE

The NCA will identify a small number of key-issues, around the time of each annual Public Forum, that will be the subject of separate detailed consultations and help promote dialogue about the National Capital. Outcomes from these consultations will be presented at the following year's Public Forum.

The topics proposed for key-issue dialogue will be of a strategic nature, providing opportunities to analyse and debate emerging and/or challenging issues for the National Capital.

Key-issue dialogue will seek the broadest range of views. Formal assistance will be sought from representatives of key stakeholders – including residents, community and special interest groups, industry, professional bodies and the ACT Government – as well as the wider public. Key-issue dialogue will strive to increase collective knowledge and promote community debate to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The process for conducting key-issue dialogue will be tailored to the needs of the topic. An example of the process is at Figure 1.

<b>Action Item 3</b>	NCA will propose two topics for the initial key-issue dialogue during 2010-11.
<b>Cyclic Deadline</b>	Outcomes of the key-issue dialogues will be reported as agenda items at subsequent Public Forum(s).
<b>Reporting Deadline</b>	The NCA will propose at least one topic for key-issue dialogue in each future business year. The proposed topic/s will be identified prior each Public Forum.

## 1.7 LOCAL RESIDENT REPRESENTATION ON STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUPS

The NCA is committed to seeking the views of local residents on key projects and proposals. When seeking the views of key stakeholders, the NCA will ensure that a representative of local residents is included.

The inclusion of a resident representative is not intended to replace open consultation with residents, but to bring a resident's perspective to the advisory group on key projects such as a review of the National Capital Plan.

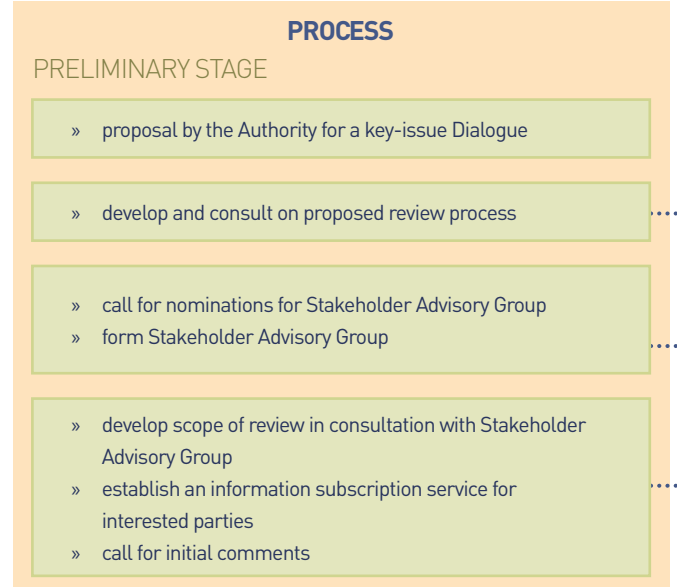
In this regard, it is not essential that the representatives be able to raise the whole range of views that residents might hold, but rather that they be able to identify those issues on which residents are likely to have views. The obligation would then fall back to the NCA to ensure that the broadest group of residents had a chance to express their views (eg: through open public consultation).

Appointing a resident representative provides an additional mechanism for residents to have a say, without replacing any other mechanism. To be credible, any resident representative on Stakeholder Advisory Groups need to be genuinely representative, and able to bring a range of widely held ideas forward.

There is merit in having such representatives nominated by the community and the NCA will assist the community in making such a nomination (eg: by convening a meeting of local residents' groups for the purposes of selecting someone to speak on their behalf).

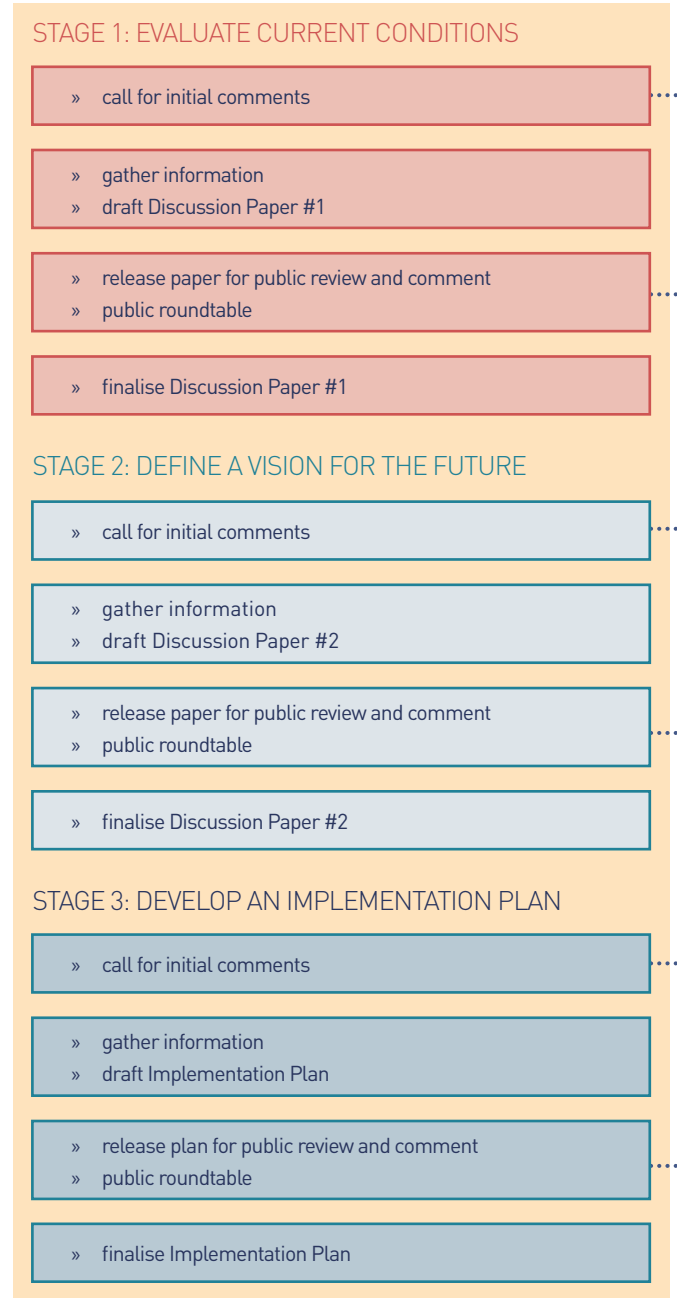
FIGURE 1  
 PROTOCOL FOR  
 KEY-ISSUE DIALOGUE

*The Preliminary Stage  
 is standard for all  
 key-issue dialogue*



*The detailed process  
 is developed during  
 the preliminary stage  
 of each individual  
 key-issue dialogue.*

*This process is an  
 example, and is the one  
 the NCA proposes to  
 use for the Review of  
 Building Heights and  
 the National Capital  
 Open Space System  
 during 2010–11*



### CONSULTATION / PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- » identified at annual Public Forum or via major communication campaign
- » seek and consider views from interested parties

- » preference will be given to stakeholders who represent the broadest interest base

- » subscribed interested parties will receive regular updates about progress of the dialogue

An example Stakeholder Advisory Group, convened and chaired by the NCA:

- » one representative of local residents
- » one representative of community interest groups eg heritage
- » one representative of business and industry
- » one representative of professional bodies
- » one representative of the ACT Government

- » seek and consider views from interested parties
- » Stakeholder Advisory Group members free to discuss proceedings with their constituencies
- » regular updates to subscribed interested parties

- » direct communication (eg email) to subscribed interested parties and known stakeholders
- » generate prominent print media article or place print advertisement
- » Initial views – 20 business day consultation period
- » draft Discussion Paper – 30 business day consultation period
- » public roundtable to occur in the first 10 days of draft discussion paper consultation period.

- » seek and consider views from interested parties
- » Stakeholder Steering Group members free to discuss proceedings with their constituencies
- » regular updates to subscribed interested parties

- » direct communication (eg email) to subscribed interested parties and known stakeholders
- » generate prominent print media article or place print advertisement
- » Initial views – 20 business day consultation period
- » draft Discussion Paper – 30 business day consultation period
- » public roundtable to occur in the first 10 days of draft discussion paper consultation period.

- » seek and consider views from interested parties
- » Stakeholder Advisory Group members free to discuss proceedings with their constituencies
- » regular updates to subscribed interested parties

- » direct communication (eg email) to subscribed interested parties and known stakeholders
- » generate prominent print media article or place print advertisement
- » initial views – 20 business day consultation period
- » draft Implementation Plan – 30 business day consultation period
- » public roundtable to occur in the first 10 days of draft discussion paper consultation period.

EXAMPLE PROCESS: REVIEW OF BUILDING HEIGHTS AND NATIONAL CAPITAL OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

## 2 CONSULTATION PROTOCOL

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Public consultation provides opportunity for the community to express ideas and share comment, knowledge and experience with the NCA. This consultation protocol expresses the NCA's commitment to:

- » inform the community and stakeholders;
- » listen to the community and stakeholders;
- » acknowledge submissions;
- » consider submissions; and
- » provide feedback on how submissions have contributed to decision-making.

### 2.2 CONSULTATION PROTOCOL

The purpose of the protocol is to formalise arrangements for when and how the NCA conducts consultation. The protocol aims to provide guidance for the community and stakeholders and to ensure consistency in the application of consultation as required by the Act and the National Capital Plan (the Plan).

The protocol sets out minimum requirements only. Additional community engagement activities may be adopted for complex issues, and when these actions would demonstrably improve the effectiveness of community engagement and the potential outcome for the community.

### 2.3 CONSULTATION EXEMPTIONS

This protocol will be applied as a principle in all situations and exemptions will be kept to an absolute minimum.

The NCA will always consider the potential for *limited consultation* in preference to exemption from any form of consultation.

In situations where it provides a limited form of consultation or an exemption, the NCA will state the grounds on which this decision has been made. Examples include cases where consultation might compromise national security or undermine the Commonwealth's fulfillment of international treaty obligations, such as the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

### 2.4 REGISTER OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The NCA will establish, and maintain, a register of key stakeholders. Having a formal means of communicating with key stakeholders will allow the NCA to more efficiently and effectively seek a broad range of views on a particular topic or topics.

The NCA will contact groups and individuals known to have an interest or expertise in the work of the NCA and invite them to join the register. The NCA will also accept and encourage registration by new stakeholders and parties of interest as they emerge or are identified.

Engagement with key stakeholders is typically conducted in the early stage of a proposal and does not replace full and open community engagement at latter stages.

The NCA register of key stakeholders will be the primary point for early engagement on matters of interest, such as proposed changes to the planning framework, major NCA projects, or major development projects.

The register of key stakeholders will be transparent and published on the NCA website.

<b>Action Item 5</b>	NCA to establish a register of key stakeholders and to invite known interested groups to join the register. The register will be published on the NCA website
<b>Initial Deadline</b>	31 July 2010

## 2.5 REVIEWING THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN

Reviews of the National Capital Plan, whether in part or in total, will be treated in the same manner as key-issue dialogue (see item 1.6).

In proposing a review, the NCA will:

- » identify a topic or subject for the review;
- » propose a range of issues to be considered;
- » seek community views on the proposed process for the review; and
- » closely involve representatives of a broad range of key stakeholders.

## 2.6 AMENDING, OR ISSUING AN INSTRUMENT UNDER, THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN

The protocol for amending the National Capital Plan or issuing an instrument (such as a Development Control Plan) under the Plan is set out in Figure 3.

## 2.7 DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT (WORKS APPROVAL)

The NCA website will provide a public notification process for all works approval applications, irrespective of their proposed capital expenditure.

The public notification process will include information about the NCA's assessment of the potential for the work to be perceived to have a negative impact on environmental, heritage, social or landscape values. The likelihood and consequence of impact will each be rated low, medium or high, as assessed by the NCA. The combination of the likelihood and consequence will yield an overall perceived risk rating of low, medium or high.

Full public consultation for development applications will be required:

- » for any development where consultation is a mandatory requirement under the Plan;
- » for any development over \$6 million;
- » for any development within, or immediately adjacent to, a residential area;
- » for any development where the perceived risk of a negative impact on environmental, heritage or landscape values is other than 'low'; and
- » for a telecommunications facility, in relation to any new towers, masts or monopoles.

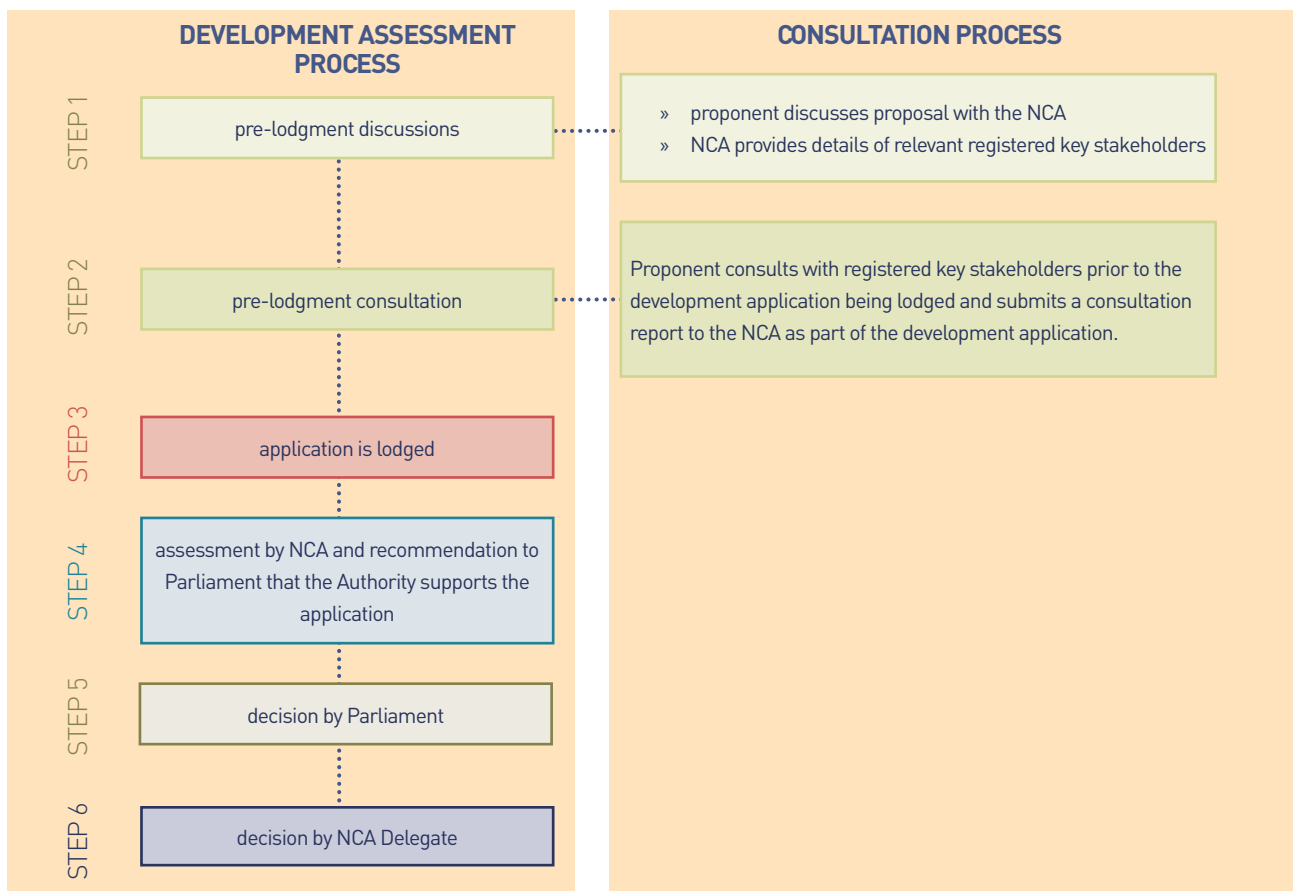
When a development application is lodged, and consultation is required, the applicant is required to consult with the community and stakeholders. The NCA may stipulate specific requirements for consultation and, for higher perceived risk proposals, may undertake the consultation process itself.

The protocol for development applications which require consultation under the Plan is set out in Figure 4.

The protocol for development applications for development over \$6m in the Parliamentary Zone is set out in Figure 2.

The requirement for notification and/or consultation on works approval apply equally to both formal and 'in principle' works approval.

FIGURE 2 PROTOCOL FOR DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS OVER \$6M IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ZONE



## 2.8 NATIONAL CAPITAL AUTHORITY PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS

The NCA Business Plan and Capital Works Program will be published and archived on the NCA website, providing public notification for all NCA projects and proposals.

The public notification process will include information about the NCA's assessment of the potential for the work to be perceived to have a negative impact on environmental, heritage or landscape values. The likelihood and consequence of impact will be rated as low, medium or high as assessed by the NCA. The combination of the likelihood and consequence will yield an overall perceived risk rating of low, medium or high.

In addition to any other requirement within this protocol, full public consultation will be required for any NCA project or proposal where the perceived risk of a negative impact on environmental, heritage or landscape values is other than 'low'. The consultation period for NCA projects and proposals will be 30 business days. Consultation will occur during the 'design' (or equivalent) phase.

The NCA will seek, wherever possible, to undertake public consultation about its proposed projects and proposals at regular, intervals during the year.

Public consultation on NCA projects and proposals will be notified on the NCA website, by notice in the principal daily newspaper circulating throughout the Territory and by direct notice to registered key stakeholders and subscribers to the relevant NCA information subscription service.

NCA projects which have been through a 30 business day consultation will be exempt from additional 15 day consultation process at the works approval stage unless there has been a material change to the project.

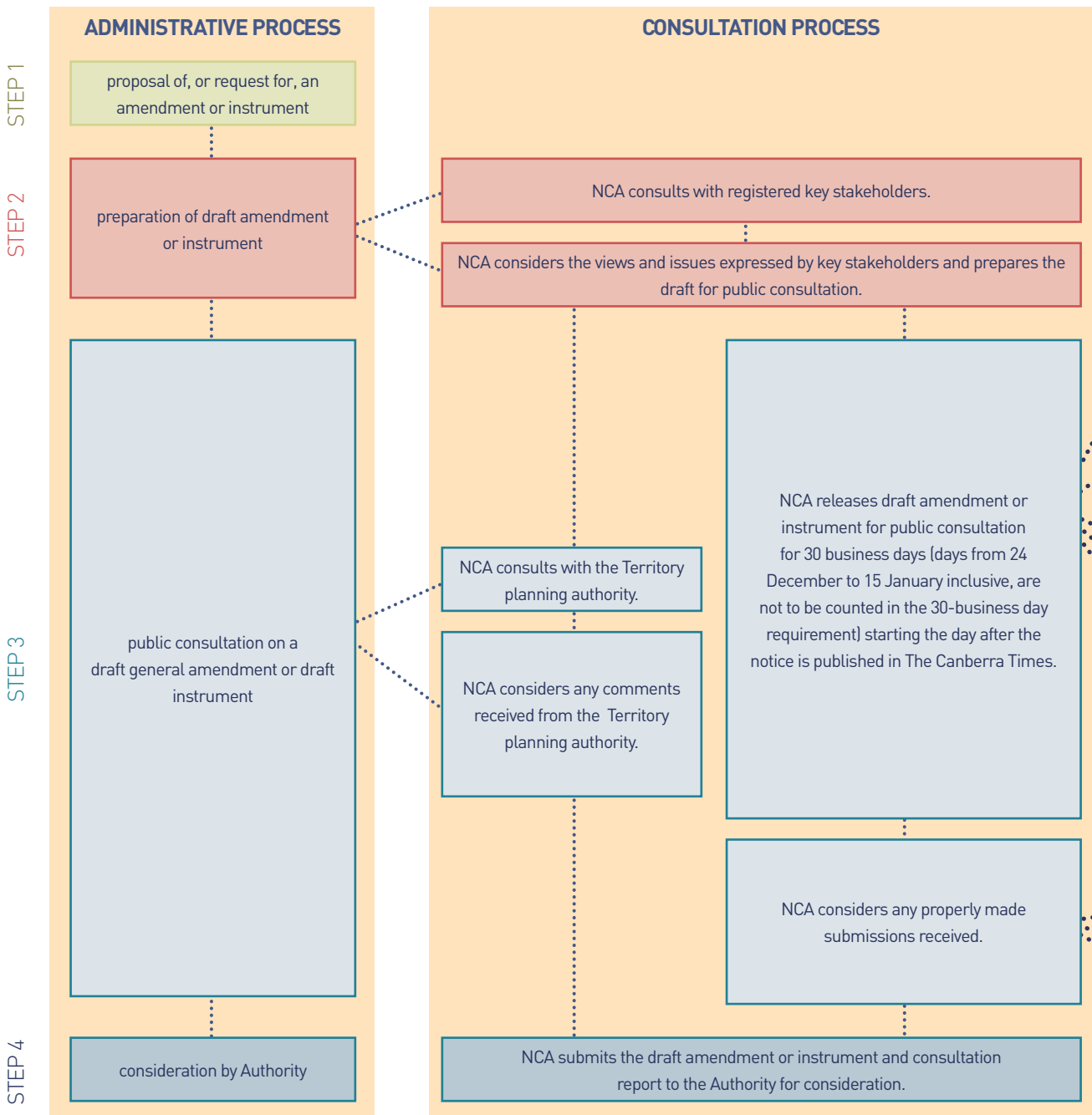
## 2.9 COMMEMORATIVE WORKS

'National Memorials', which have had their character and location approved by the Canberra National Memorials Committee, will be exempt from consultation on the grounds that such approval is granted under legislation for which the NCA is not responsible, and the national interest in such memorials will be considered inalienable.

Commemorative works within the Parliamentary Zone will be subject to the usual consultation and planning requirements for proposed works in the Parliamentary Zone.

All other commemorative works will be subject to the standard works approval consultation provisions. Where a proposed commemorative work carries a level of risk which triggers consultation, the board of the NCA will issue a statement with the consultation material stating that it has considered the commemorative intent of the proposal and indicating whether or not the NCA has approved the commemorative intent.

FIGURE 3 PROTOCOL FOR AMENDING, OR ISSUING AN INSTRUMENT\* UNDER THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN



\* INSTRUMENTS INCLUDE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLANS

ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER CONSIDERATION BY THE AUTHORITY

**Amendment to the Plan**

- » Submitted to the Minister with a copy of the Consultation report.
- » If approved by the Minister:
  - » a copy of the amendment is lodged with the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments (FRLI) [www.comlaw.gov.au](http://www.comlaw.gov.au);
  - » a copy of the amendment and consultation report is made available at NCA offices and on the NCA website; and
  - » the NCA notifies each party who made a submission of the decision and provides a copy of the consultation report.
- » The amendment is subject of Parliamentary scrutiny until the expiration of the disallowance period.

An advertisement is published in *The Australian* stating 'Changes to your national capital - Visit [www.nationalcapital.gov.au](http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au)'.

Notice is published in the *Commonwealth Gazette*, *The Canberra Times*, NCA website and information subscription service (including notice to registered key stakeholders) stating:

- a. that a draft amendment to, or instrument under, the Plan has been prepared;
- b. the name of the draft amendment or instrument;
- c. if the draft amendment or instrument relates to an area, the area affected (including a map);
- d. a brief description of the draft amendment or instrument;
- e. the places, time and period a copy of the draft amendment or instrument may be inspected;
- f. the place and time a public information session is to be held;
- g. invite properly made submissions to be made to the NCA;
- h. the period to make properly made submissions;
- i. where properly made submissions may be forwarded within the consultation period specified in the notice; and
- j. all submissions, including names and addresses, in relation to this draft amendment or instrument will be made publicly available at the NCA office and on the NCA website, unless specifically not authorised by the submitter.

A media release is issued.

A copy of the draft amendment or instrument and any supporting information is made available throughout the consultation period, for public inspection at the NCA office, and the National Capital Exhibition, in hard copy and on CD. The same information is made available on the NCA website in electronic form.

At least one public information session is held in the first 10 business days of the consultation period.

A copy of every submission is made publicly available at the NCA office and on the NCA website until an action is made by the Minister.

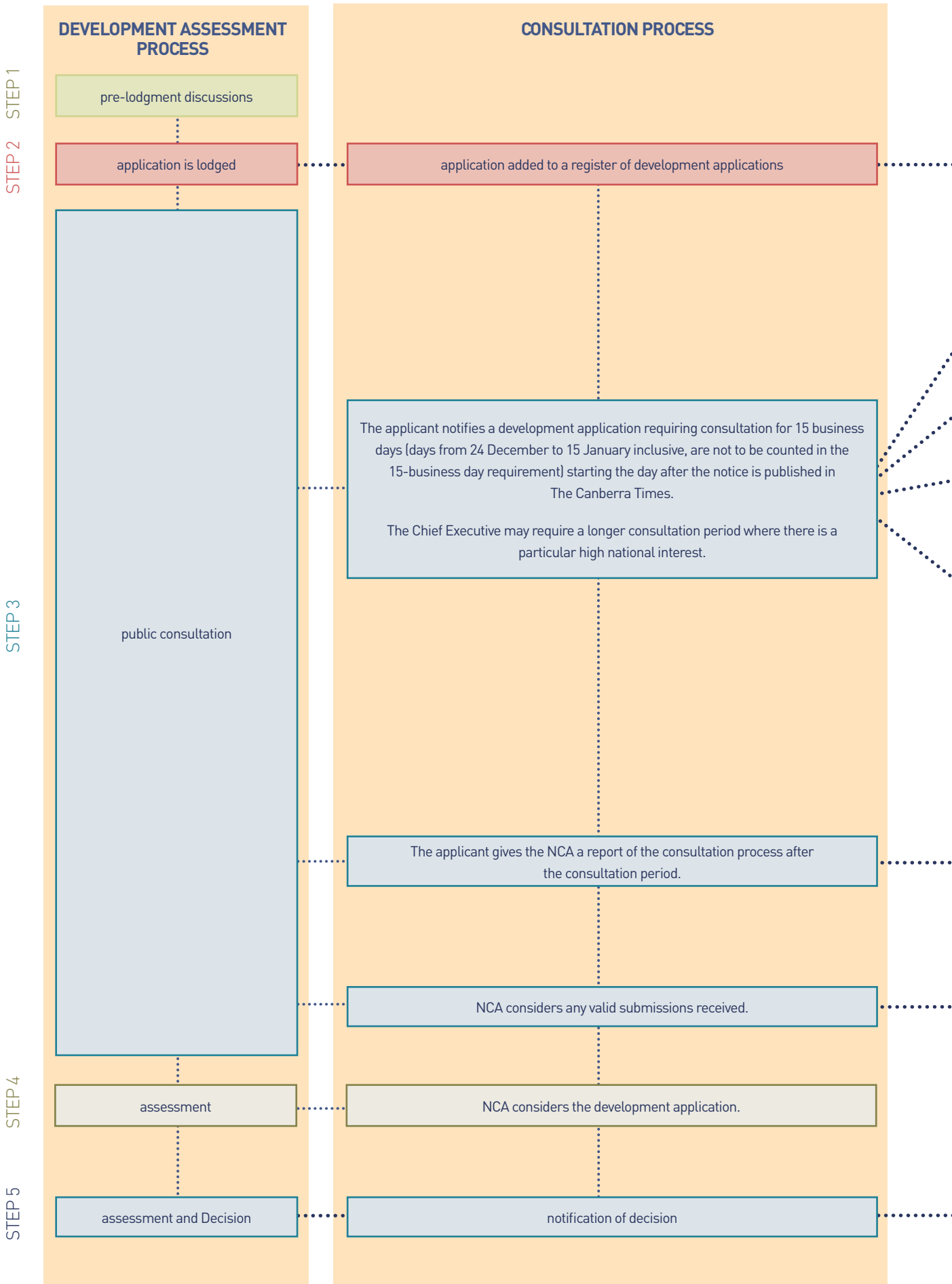
An acknowledgement notice is given to each submitter within 5 business days of receipt by the NCA.

A consultation report is prepared and published on the NCA website, including a detailed analysis of issues raised in submissions and what, if any, changes have been made.

### Instruments under the Plan

- » The NCA will publish a notice on the NCA website and via the NCA information subscription service stating:
  - » when the instrument was approved or not approved;
  - » how the approved instrument can be inspected or obtained; and
  - » how the consultation report can be inspected or obtained.
- » The NCA will then:
  - » publish the consultation report on its website;
  - » notify each party who made a submission of the decision and provide a copy of the consultation report; and
  - » insure that all approved instruments will be accessible on the National Capital Authority website.

FIGURE 4 PROTOCOL FOR DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS WHICH REQUIRE CONSULTATION UNDER THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN



A list of all development applications is available for public inspection on the NCA website.

Notice is published in *The Canberra Times*, on the NCA website and via the NCA information subscription service (including notice to registered key stakeholders).

**For developments other than telecommunications facilities**, throughout the entire consultation period a notice on a sign is:

- a. placed on all road frontages of the site;
- b. positioned so that it is clearly visible from a public place; and
- c. displayed on a signpost or board.

Notice is given to the lessees of all adjoining land (where adjoining land has been strata-titled a copy of the notice is to be given to the body corporate).

**For telecommunications facilities**, a letterbox drop is undertaken in the immediate vicinity (to a minimum of 400 metres radius) of the proposed facility/s.

All notices will state:

- a. the address, and block and section details (including a map);
- b. the name of the applicant;
- c. what is proposed;
- d. the places, time and period the application may be inspected and where information may be obtained;
- e. invite properly made submissions to be made to the NCA;
- f. the period to make valid submissions;
- g. where valid submissions may be forwarded to within the consultation period specified in the notice; and
- h. all submissions, including names and addresses, in relation to this development application will be made publicly available at the NCA office and on the NCA website, subject to full approval by the submitter.

The report will include:

- » a summary of the consultation process that was carried out, including dates;
- » a copy of the notice published in *The Canberra Times*;
- » a photograph of the notice placed on the site, if applicable; and
- » a copy of the notice that went to the lessees of all adjoining land including each addresses or through the letterbox drop – as applicable.

The NCA will insure that:

- » a copy of every submission is made publicly available at the NCA office, and on the NCA website until a decision is made;
- » an acknowledgement notice is given to each submitter within 5 business days of receipt by the NCA; and
- » a consultation report is prepared.

The NCA will insure that:

- » the consultation report is made publicly available at the NCA office for 20 business days and on the NCA website;
- » the applicant and each submitter is notified of the decision, how submissions were considered and the availability of the consultation report; and
- » a list of all decisions is available on the NCA website for public inspection.

# 3 GENERAL SERVICE CHARTER

This Service Charter outlines the standards of service you can expect from us.

## 3.1 OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

We will:

- » observe the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct, which can be viewed at [www.apsc.gov.au/values](http://www.apsc.gov.au/values) and [www.apsc.gov.au/conduct](http://www.apsc.gov.au/conduct);
- » monitor and report on all feedback and take this into account when reviewing and improving our services;
- » answer telephone enquiries within one working day where such enquiries cannot be dealt with immediately;
- » respond to enquiries, feedback or complaints within 15 working days; complex matters may require longer. In such cases, you will be advised of the estimated time required for the response;
- » publish and make available information about our activities;
- » refer you to the relevant organisation if we are unable to provide the specific advice or service you request;
- » provide correspondence and publications in English;
- » upon request, endeavour to provide information in other formats for people with disabilities or arrange a suitable alternative;
- » upon request, provide an interpreter when meeting with us;
- » respond to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 1982.
- » deliver the business objectives of the Commonwealth Government to agreed performance measures and targets; and
- » commit to the Commonwealth's Fraud Control Policy through the NCA's own fraud prevention and control arrangements

## 3.2 YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a stakeholder you may:

- » access our services by telephone, online via the website, in writing, or in person;
- » be provided with information under the Freedom of Information Act 1982; and
- » comment on the quality of our service to you.

To facilitate a successful ongoing relationship between the National Capital Authority and our stakeholders, we request that you:

- » treat our staff with courtesy;
- » attend scheduled meetings punctually;
- » respond to requests for information by us in an accurate and timely manner; and
- » abide by any legal requirements and other obligations relating to the services provided by us to which you seek access. For example, if you seek approval to carry out certain activities on land managed by the NCA, you must abide by any terms and conditions of that approval.

### 3.3 FEEDBACK ON OUR PERFORMANCE

We welcome feedback to assist us to monitor and improve our services and comment on our performance against the Service Charter in our Annual Report. We would like to know if you:

- » have received outstanding service;
- » have ideas on how we can improve our services to you: or
- » feel we are not meeting our service commitments to you

If you would like any information relating to the functions of the NCA or if you have an enquiry, compliment, suggestion or complaint you can:

- » telephone our reception on 02 6271 2888 who will put you through to the relevant unit for handling by the appropriate person
- » send an email to [natcap@natcap.gov.au](mailto:natcap@natcap.gov.au)
- » write to us at  
National Capital Authority,  
GPO Box 373, Canberra, ACT, 2601
- » send a facsimile to 02 6273 4427

We will ensure you receive a response within 15 working days. If the matter is complex and we are unable to provide a response in 15 working days, we will advise you of the expected time of the response.

If you consider you have suffered detriment because of our unreasonable actions, omissions or decisions you may be able to receive assistance through the Australian Government's Scheme for Compensation for Detriment.

Information on the scheme can be found at <http://www.finance.gov.au/publications/finance-circulars/2009/09.html>

# 4 SERVICE CHARTER FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Planning and development approval services provided by the National Capital Authority encourage development in Canberra while ensuring that any development is in accordance with the Capital's national significance. These services include:

- » reviewing the National Capital Plan, and proposing amendments to the Plan;
- » providing advice on planning, urban design and development approval in accordance with the Plan;
- » assessing works applications for buildings and structures, demolition, tree felling, landscaping or excavation in areas which are designated as having the special characteristics of the national capital;
- » co-ordinating parliamentary approvals for works proposed within the parliamentary area;
- » preparing lease and development conditions for sites in areas which are designated as having the special characteristics of the national capital; and
- » preparing Development Control Plans for areas which have special requirements applying under the National Capital Plan.

## 4.2 GENERAL

The NCA will:

- » respond to written requests for advice within 15 working days;
- » advise if it is unable to respond to a written request within the NCA's target time-frames;
- » answer phone inquiries within one working day where such inquiries cannot be dealt with immediately; and
- » maintain a register of feedback and complaints.

## 4.3 ACCESSIBILITY

The NCA will strive to provide planning and development information in accessible formats.

## 4.4 NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN

The NCA will:

- » maintain a current copy of the National Capital Plan for public review on its website and at its offices;
- » provide advice on the policies of the National Capital Plan; and
- » provide clear and detailed information about the statutory processes involved in amending the National Capital Plan.

## 4.5 WORKS APPROVAL

The NCA will provide applicants with:

- » information about how to lodge applications and the processes involved in consideration of applications;

- » advice on relevant planning requirements;
- » an opportunity to discuss applications before they are formally submitted for approval;
- » a register of applications and confirmation of receipt, in writing, within three working days of lodging;
- » the name and contact details of the person assessing the application;
- » prompt advice of the result of an application, most frequently within 15 working days of lodging (stop-clock provisions apply); and
- » notification if a proposal must be or has been referred to an external agency, or where circumstances outside the NCA's control may cause delay.

## 4.6 PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL

The NCA will provide applicants with:

- » information about the procedures involved in seeking Parliamentary approval of works;
- » advice as to the likely timeframe for approval; and
- » prompt advice as to the result of such approval when it is received.

## 4.7 LEASE AND DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS

The NCA will advise applicants:

- » of the procedures involved with the preparation of lease and development conditions, and aim to finalise preparation of lease and development conditions within 40 working days of receipt;
- » about the relevant provisions of the National Capital Plan that will apply; and
- » if the NCA has to refer draft lease and development conditions to any external agency, or where circumstances outside its control might cause delay.

## 4.8 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN

The NCA will advise applicants:

- » of the procedures involved with the preparation and approval of Development Control Plans, and
  - » estimate the time required to finalise the preparation and approval of a Development Control Plan; and
  - » hold a copy of the approved Development Control Plan on its website, with hard copies available to any party making such a request
- » about the relevant provisions of the National Capital Plan and Territory Plan that will apply; and
- » if the NCA has to refer the draft Development Control Plan to any external agency or where circumstances outside our control might cause delay.

The NCA will maintain copies of all approved Development Control Plans on its website.

## 4.9 REVIEW OF SERVICE CHARTER

The NCA will review the Service Charter within six (6) months of the commencement of any new consultation requirements to ensure target service standards allow time for community engagement.

# 5 FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINT HANDLING

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The NCA believes a clear and fair process for receiving and responding to feedback and complaints is essential.

## 5.2 WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, a particular action, or a lack of action by the National Capital Authority, its staff or its contractors.

Complaints are not requests for services, requests for information or explanations or objections to matters which are, or were, the subject of formal consultation process.

## 5.3 FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINT HANDLING PRINCIPLES

- » The NCA willingly receives feedback about the way it discharges its statutory responsibilities, and is receptive to complaints.
- » Complaints will be received in good faith, and dealt with in a timely and respectful manner.
- » Responses to complaints must be accurate, comprehensive and deal with all the issues raised within the complaint.
- » NCA officers accept responsibility for addressing complaints. This does not necessarily mean that the officer who first receives a complaint becomes the action officer for responding to it, but it does mean this person is responsible for ensuring the complaint enters the formal complaint handling process.
- » Complaints will be handled in a manner that enables serious, or unresolved matters to be quickly considered by senior officers of the NCA.

## 5.4 FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

- » All officers of the NCA will act within their powers to resolve complaints at first contact wherever possible.
- » All formal feedback and complaints will be acknowledged and registered in the NCA record-keeping system.
- » The feedback and complaint register will record:
  - » details about the nature of the feedback or complaint;
  - » the date on which the feedback or complaint was received;
  - » how the feedback or complaint was received (e.g. in person/telephone/facsimile/email/letter);
  - » details of the person, group or organisation providing the feedback or making the complaint (this is optional);
  - » the name and title of the first contact officer;
  - » the name and title of the action officer;
  - » the outcome of the complaint;

- » details of when the complainant was advised of the outcome of the complaint (if the complainant provided his or her name and contact details); and
  - » details of any escalation or review of the complaint.
- 
- » If a complaint cannot be resolved at first contact, the complaint will be referred to an action officer. The complainant will be advised of the name of the action officer, and that a response should come within 15 working days.
  - » For complex complaints, the NCA will estimate the time required to assess the complaint and will advise the complainant. Further updates will be provided during the assessment of the complaint.
  - » If, at any time, complainants are dissatisfied, they may ask for the complaint to be brought to the attention of a senior officer (normally an Executive Director).
  - » After assessing a complaint, the NCA will provide a written statement to the complainant explaining how the complaint was assessed and the outcome.
  - » When complainants are unsatisfied by the outcome of a complaint, they may seek a review by a more senior officer of the NCA, the Chief Executive or one of the Authority Board Members.
  - » A review of a complaint outcome will usually be completed within 15 working days. Complex reviews may take longer. In such cases, the complainant will be advised of the estimated time required for the review.
  - » If a complainant remains unsatisfied after the completion of a review, the NCA will advise the complainant about options (if any) for external review.

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An aerial photograph of a large stadium with a distinctive curved, ribbed roof structure. The stadium is viewed from an elevated angle, showing the seating bowl and the surrounding landscape. The image is overlaid with a large, diagonal graphic consisting of a yellow band at the top, a red band in the middle, and a dark blue band at the bottom. The website address 'WWW.NATIONALCAPITALGOV.AU' is printed in white, uppercase letters across the yellow band.