



The West Basin Charter
prepared by Lake Burley Griffin Guardians'
12 August 2016

The following principles are recommended for the conservation, protection and low-level recreation development of West Basin, its landscape and lake waters.

- 1** West Basin's landscape is an integral component of the parkland character surrounding Lake Burley Griffin that must be kept. The parkland belongs to the Australian people. It is a major feature of national significance that contributes to the critical setting of the lake that is the heart of the nation. It is an inter-generational responsibility to the Nation that this parkland be conserved.
- 2** Vistas across West Basin to the mountain ranges beyond from City Hill and the glimpse vistas from Commonwealth Avenue are highly valued by the community and visitors and should be retained and enhanced. The Water Axis vista experienced from the western area of the basin is a major original Griffin design feature to and from Black Mountain (believed to be known at one time as the nature vista) that should be protected and enhanced.
- 3** West Basin should remain mostly traffic free but more accessible from Civic by walkers and cyclists. The lakeshore is not a convenient traffic route to anywhere - it is virtually a remnant in its natural state and a logical extension of Commonwealth Park.
- 4** West Basin's great value and potential is to provide outdoor recreation space to Civic where there is very little available. This value should not be destroyed by an apartment building estate.
- 5** West Basin's land area should receive remedial landscape treatment to restore its natural, restful character and connect the green canopy of Commonwealth Park on the other side of Commonwealth Avenue to the National Museum and on its western side link to the vegetation of Black Mountain.
- 6** Although respecting the inherent and fundamental importance of Griffin's 3 lake basins, their edge configuration was modified from the Griffin plan due to technical, topographic and hydrological reasons. West Basin's water edge and lake-bed configuration should remain as constructed in the 1960s with the naturalistic landscape style of that era.
- 7** Low-key developments to encourage the arts such as ad hoc theatres and performance areas should be encouraged. No developments higher than 2 storeys should be allowed and developments reliant on large parking areas are not appropriate. Recreation or fun features for young people should be encouraged such as the pop up village that should have high design parameters and not turn their back on the lake.
- 8** Any building structures including small picnic pavilions should be of a high quality that will carry them well into the future.
- 9** All land in the area must remain as government owned and not be parcelled out to commercial interests.
- 10** West Basin landscape can assist in the amelioration of global warming with large canopy trees and grasslands. It provides a predominantly natural environmental respite. The

installation of a 50% photovoltaic canopy over Parkes Way should be considered to minimise its visual 'concrete' dominance, reduce the heat absorption, create shade, reduce the noise, and extend the visual walking linkage between Civic and the northern lake shoreline.

- 9 Community involvement in planning such as a comprehensive public participation procedure for decision-making on West Basin should be convened.
- 10 Encourage the Commonwealth and ACT Governments to undertake a design competition for a master plan for Acton Park, West Basin to cover:
 - .1 The conservation of vistas that is a concern strongly expressed by the public. A vista analysis is required to identify and protect vistas particularly; from City Hill and parts of Commonwealth Avenue across to the mountain ranges and along the *water axis*.
 - .2 An aesthetic analysis to understand aspects of beauty that may include light, sounds, smells, shades and shadows, water edge details, wildlife, natural patterns.
 - .3 A heritage analysis (that would include the 2 points above) covering Identification of heritage features in the basin, including how the basin and parklands contribute to the national significance of the greater lake environment and Canberra's urban form. Heritage features and other character features that are considered important in the analyses should be protected.
 - .4 A site analysis that identifies key character features of the basin as appreciated by users and the public that should be protected and enhanced. Key features include the sense of place that West Basin offers; a place to be away from the hurly burly of the city, an essential asset for any city and; the environmental aspects, particularly ameliorating heat build up needed in modern cities with a dominance of high rise buildings and concrete.
 - .5 The desired use and future use for the park should be identified and defined including new features/amenities needed such as a café, a children's park, a gathering area for young people, perhaps a skate board park, for whom the amenities are intended and their design parameters. All new features should be of high quality design and respect the identified heritage values and other important qualities identified.
 - .6 Identification of low-key recreation and fun features that are needed and for whom they are intended.
 - .7 A survey of the existing tree character, in what form should it continue and consideration of how much grass and meadow areas are desirable.
 - .8 A survey of the existing wildlife and their needs should be considered and enhanced.
 - .9 An analysis of the circulation through the park to Commonwealth Park, to the National Museum, to Civic and the needs of pedestrians, joggers, cyclist, electric people movers etc. and recommendations for improvement.
 - .10 Recommendation for improved accessibility of the West Basin and consideration of a new pedestrian bridging of Parkes Way —particularly of a stylish design to attract people.
 - .11 Recommendation for some parking to suit use and needs.
 - .12 Identification of space areas for markets, art exhibitions, art performances and other events.
 - .13 Consideration of appropriate and minimal cultural buildings with strict design parameters on scale, form and material.
 - .14 identification of basic upgrading and ongoing maintenance required particularly for water runoff.