

WA 20108 "CITY TO THE LAKE" - CONSTRUCTION OF THE WEST BASIN  
FORESHORE

**Submission**

**From:** Mike Lawson

**Sent:** Tuesday, 20 October 2015 12:36 AM

**To:** '[worksapproval@natcap.gov.au](mailto:worksapproval@natcap.gov.au)'

**Subject:** City to the Lake (Stage 1A) - West Basin Waterfront (Sections 33, 75, 89 95 Acton and part Section 44 Parkes)

Dear Sir or Madam,

I wish to make some general comments and then raise some more specific issues with regard to the City to the Lake Stage 1A works applications now before you.

These Works Applications are the first stage of the City to the Lake (CttL) development to create a waterfront precinct, mixed use buildings and dwellings for 20,000 people over ten years. The West Basin waterfront precinct is a once in a century opportunity to create a nationally significant landscape at the Lake's edge, so it is very disappointing for the public to be given just over two weeks to digest this massive but unfortunately still half-baked planning proposal to kick it off.

I believe the NCA should reject the works approval applications in their current form for the following reasons:

1. On planning grounds, West Basin redevelopment works planning should not proceed before the development of a West Basin Master Plan or precinct code, as is required by Draft Amendment 86 of the Territory Plan. This would allow more time for genuine public exposure of Stage 1A in the light of the full vision for development of West Basin, and not just the artists impressions and draft planning documents produced by the ACT Government to date.
2. If allowed, the ACT Government's proposed full West Basin development will do violence to the Griffins' original plan for Canberra. Knowledgeable public interest groups concerned with the national significance of the Central National Area (e.g. Walter Burley Griffin Society, Lake Burley Griffin Guardians) have expressed their reservations about CttL, West Basin urban development generally and presumably also these two works applications. Their concerns about the proposed abrogation of the Griffin Plan through a large scale urban development in West Basin appear not to have been addressed at all.
3. In case you missed it, the full West Basin development would alienate large areas currently used for access to national events. There appears to be no parking strategy for CttL or West Basin, so we can expect a repeat of the parking nightmare that is a feature of the Kingston Foreshore and New Acton developments.
4. Despite all the hoopla from the ACT Government, the publicly-available information on the West Basin redevelopment is still too vague. In some cases it is so vague as to be potentially misleading. Many of the admittedly large quantity of documents released with the Works Applications are draft, incomplete, or contain stupid errors (Lake Burleigh Griffin in one, "needs a line of introduction here" throughout another). One important document, the *Built Form Guidelines* (Appendix H) is so heavily caveated ("outline only", "Draft" and "for illustrative purposes only") as to make it meaningless. The same document, under building heights, revealingly states: "Text to be coordinated with current intent for building height – i.e. design team v NCA".
5. There appears to be no plan for nationally significant structures in West

- Basin, other than the water gardens and apartments. The aquatic centre perhaps.
6. An opportunity to create a truly pedestrian/cyclist friendly precinct in West Basin has been missed, because trucks and cars will still be allowed to use the narrowed waterfront boulevard as well as the city streets of West Basin Estate. This is not an “Amsterdam-style” development.
  7. Despite the welcome separation of cyclists and pedestrians on the waterfront, there is still insufficient space given for the cycling highway that bounds West Basin and extends over Parkes Way to Marcus Clarke Street. A 3m wide segregated cycleway is not enough and neither is a 1m separation of cycleway and traffic in the waterfront boulevard area.
  8. Although the works applications have a phasing plan, they do not seem to include a schedule, so we cannot determine how long the construction phase of Stage 1A will preclude public access to the lake foreshore. Based on recent performance in the capital’s civil projects, it could be years.
  9. I could not find information about the quantity of landfill, its source and the number of truck movements that will be required for the reclamation of the lake frontage, or a dust/noise mitigation plan during the landfill stage.
  10. I could not see how the waterfront development will address the problem of additional runoff from the developed areas adversely affecting Lake Burley Griffin water quality (i.e. increased algal blooms) in West Basin.

I am disappointed to have dwelt on the negative aspects of this development proposal, because there are many good elements of Stage 1A (notably the concepts for water sensitive urban design, water rooms, landscape rooms, water play area, playgrounds and exercise areas, boardwalk etc.). Unfortunately, these are all overwhelmed by *lack* of detail about the whole West Basin project and my personal cynicism of the planning failures of the NCA and ACT Government (ASIO Building, Westside etc.). The reservoir of trust for the ACT planning process is so depleted that one simply cannot believe that these good things will ever be delivered.

The NCA must not approve the current proposal for West Basin 1A and should come up with a proper master plan / precinct code for the whole West Basin development before allowing the ACT Government to resubmit.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Mike Lawson