

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AND EXTERNAL TERRITORIES Inquiry  
into fostering and promoting the significance of Australia's National Capital**

**Public Hearing MONDAY, 21 AUGUST 2023 CANBERRA**

**YRA Opening Statement**

We thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this roundtable and to present the views of the various residents' associations and our peak body. We draw the committee's attention to what we perceive to be changes since self-government in the ACT which have presented challenges to funding the various components of keeping the national capital as a vibrant city, funding its maintenance, funding national institutions, and ensuring that it remains something that everyone can be proud of, and of national significance. The tenor of our individual submissions seeks to draw attention to the tensions in making sure that all these different aspects of the community of some 400,000-strong individuals in Canberra, the Parliamentary Triangle, the national institutions, and Canberra as a drawcard receive the same and appropriate amount of attention in so doing. Over the last several decades there has been a decline in the look and feel of Canberra; the feel of the 'sense of place'. More recently, changes to the planning system underway in the ACT bring some concerns for the residents and communities of the national capital in terms of preserving the iconic nature of Canberra, based on the city landscape, the garden principles, the importance of the Parliamentary Triangle, the national approach route to the Governor-General's place and so forth. The new planning system seeks to provide opportunities for higher quality residences and structures, but it also sets a target of 70 per cent infill in existing suburbs, much of which is likely to be medium density or high density. That is a concern regarding preserving the character of the national capital. There are tensions with the urban canopy target of 30 per cent retention, and so forth. The residents' associations feel that such changes can be done well, but there needs to be appropriate regulation. There is also a need to ensure that our national institutions are appropriately funded. The federal government has recently taken steps in that direction. There are major infrastructure and transport projects. The current ACT government has sought to improve the rail connection between Sydney and Canberra—which would cost a lot of money—as a drawcard, but where would the funding come from? There has been a decline in the maintenance of the national capital overall. Each of the organisations here can give examples to support that. So there are challenges, and each of our organisations seeks to work constructively with government to address them.

[National Capital and External Territories Joint Committee 2023\\_08\\_21.pdf;fileType=application/pdf \(aph.gov.au\)](#)