

Questions over NCA

Letters to the Editor May 3, 2015



The proposed emasculating of the powers of the NCA ("Cabinet agrees to curtail power of National Capital Authority in Canberra planning", canberratimes.com.au, April 30) raises more questions than it answers. At a time when the community has never been more suspicious of the integrity of the ACT planning system, we are being told that it should be expanded to cover vast swaths of the territory now subject to national control.

We learnt last July the NCA had been asked by the Territories Minister to investigate the feasibility of residential development west of Tuggeranong. That report has never been released. How, then, is Senator Seselja in a position to assure us development across the Murrumbidgee River is appropriate?

Further, Senator Seselja justifies his crusade on the basis the ACT government should have the ability to make decisions about the future growth of Canberra. Yet the ACT government was not even consulted about the need for the NCA investigation.

If our politicians are really interested in saving jobs and promoting the vitality of our town centres, they would be far better off focusing on the imminent loss of thousands of public service jobs from Belconnen and the atrophying of the Woden Town centre.

The inner south is struggling with a proposed ACT residential development at the Canberra Brickworks that has serious implications for national capital values and local amenity. Our fear is this precedent will be repeated again and again in currently pristine areas of the territory that have been safeguarded by the national planning authorities for more than a century. We have a beautiful and world-renowned national capital precisely because the Commonwealth has overseen its development from the beginning. The suggestion the short-term political and commercial interests that dominate ACT government planning in Canberra will be let loose across most of the rest of the ACT is truly frightening.

Gary Kent, chairman, Inner South Canberra Community Council