

1. West Basin is under serious threat of “urbanisation by stealth” on the part of the ACT Government, whose aim is to justify re-zoning for medium to high density residential development and sale of land in the foreshore area in order to meet its budget imperatives.
 - *“City-to-Lake” designation is spurious because it contradicts the **propinquity** that is fundamental to the character of the CBD.*
 - *Parkes Way is a critical **protective barrier** for the landscape environment that is the Lake Burley Griffin parklands.*
 - *West Basin was identified in the **Griffin Legacy** as suitable for the development of facilities that could support the recreational and community purposes of the foreshore areas, e.g. Swimming Pool, Convention Centre.*
 - *At a later stage, the ACT Government included **residential flat development**.*
 - ***Northbourne Avenue** needs to be tunnelled under City Hill eventually (Civic-Living City Report 2005) and is accordingly another complication vis-à-vis Parkes Way alterations.*
 - *Swimming Pool, Convention Centre and Parkes Way bridges seem to be unfeasible, **which raises the possible danger that only the residential development will proceed**, which could be achieved without any bridging work simply by adjustment of the existing West Basin internal street network (Lawson Cres, Barrine Drive, Albert Street) giving access to the CBD at both ends via Commonwealth Avenue and Edinburg Avenue.*

2. Kingston Foreshore Redevelopment is a dangerous precedent for West Basin. Originally, in response to expressed public concerns, the ACT Government held a master plan competition, which was won by architects Colin Stewart and Rodney Moss with a scheme that had a clever array of buildings, streets, plazas, parks that in various ways fostered feelings of safety, congregation and social interaction. Very quickly the Government abandoned the winning scheme and replaced it with a subdivision layout that maximised the amount of saleable land and reduced the level of recreation, public assembly and open space amenity. This reactionary plan was accompanied by a building code that specified a uniform maximum height of six stories and permitted the building envelope to extend out to the edge of the public footpath.
 - *The overwhelming effect is one of **walled streets**, few pedestrians, no front gardens and no visual connection between pedestrians and ground floor dwellers. In other words, an overall effect that is **a special kind of desolation**.*
 - *In the final stages now being played out, more than **a dozen very large apartment buildings on delibe[rately large (and more profitable) sites**, on Kingston Island and Boat Harbour East, are architecturally identical.*
 - *The view of them from the Kings Avenue bridge and northern shores of the Lake, looks like **a giant cluster of grey and black warehouse buildings**, reminiscent of 19th century Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham.*

- *The **street network is not a system of thoroughfares**. Instead it is a uniform pattern of indented kerbs and centre line parking in order to maximise all-day car parking, where pedestrian movements are few and street life is virtually non-existent, both being confined almost exclusively to the Canal and Boat Harbour boardwalk and restaurant area.*
 - *The **other two city centre lakes**, Lake Tuggeranong and Lake Ginninderra, have lost up to about one-third of their original parklands area since the advent of self-government by a process of ad hoc spot rezoning, mostly to enable high market value waterfront residential development.*
3. The alienation, re-zoning and development of public open space is happening everywhere, especially in the garden city suburbs of Inner North and South Canberra, basically as a consequence of the Government's 'urban intensification strategy' to boost budget income from land sales in the face of rising health and education costs and mounting infrastructure backlogs. The fundamental problem in this regard are the inadequacies of the Barr Government which, broadly speaking, is environmentally destructive, ignorant and devious, and prone to corruption of due process in the administration of land and property development.
- *The Territory's fiscal problems will not be resolved unless and until Andrew Barr as Chief Minister takes steps to address **the unbalanced ACT/Commonwealth fiscal arrangements** that were imposed unilaterally by the Hawke Government in 1988 as part of its provisions for self-government.*
 - *In the meantime, the Government's obsession with land sales at inflated prices has led to the **sidelining of ACTPLA and the total abandonment of garden city planning, to be replaced by the Land Development Agency**, which specialises in violations of the provisions of the Territory Plan, especially in relation to planning and redevelopment in the inner suburbs.*
 - ***Overall the long term prospects for Canberra are uncertain** in light of fundamental political and economic shifts that the ACT Government is blissfully unaware of:*
 - *An increasingly diversified political mix in the Federal Parliament is bound to focus on State infrastructure needs and funding that are a lot more critical and pressing than anything in the ACT, which **means a greater likelihood of reduced budget contributions to the Territory from the Commonwealth**.*
 - *The development of **the ill-considered National Arboretum** (hill top location, botanically restrictive cold dry climate, inadequate water supply, inaccessible planting layout, mounting tree losses) has cost over \$70 million in the last decade and looks to continue at the rate of \$3 million per annum for another decade or so, to the detriment of the upkeep of Canberra's metropolitan open space system, which is world class but declining.*
4. The solution to this depressing situation has to be some form of concerted political action from the local community, which is, unfortunately, the most politically apathetic in Australia. Political action is also hobbled by multi-member electorates

that cultivate party-political allegiances at the expense of community accountability on the part of Members of the Legislative Assembly. The National Capital Authority has struck the first blow by its variation of the National Capital Plan (T.9 West Basin) that (a) extends the city grid of streets and paths from Civic to West Basin, and (b) extends the urban structure of the city to the lake, however, because this variation was not based on a competent land use and transport planning investigation its implementation right at the start has run into significant financial and engineering difficulties.

5. For the Guardians, therefore, the next steps are to formulate a “West Basin Strategy” that will prevent a major destruction of the landscape centrepiece of the Griffin Plan, also mobilise support from other like-minded community associations that are trying to stop the mounting destruction of Canberra as a planned ‘garden city’. The key issues in both these respects may be summarised as follows:
 - *The Chief Minister, Andrew Barr, has proclaimed that the target population for Civic is **50,000 residents**, however, no planning scheme has been prepared to establish how such a large target could be accommodated. The uncomfortable fact is that **Civic currently has no public open space or outdoor recreation facilities, such as parks and so forth, and has no prospects for any in the future. Absolutely none. West Basin offers the only possibility for such facilities** that, in accordance with Territory Plan standards, would take up the whole of the foreshore area and then some.*
 - *The objectives of the “City-to-the-Lake” strategy would not be met by developing virtually the whole of West Basin foreshore with apartment buildings. It is not extending the road network that connects the CBD to the Lake, it is extending land use to accommodate complimentary activities. **Wall-to-wall flat development in West Basin would block the CBD from connecting to the Lake, not enable it. Putting this in another way, to do so would place the interests of a small number of West Basin flat dwellers above the interests of 50,000 Civic residents and hundreds of CBD businesses.***
 - *Important related issues are, as follows:*
 - *The **Indoor Olympic Swimming Pool** should be located on the site of the existing pool in a park setting fronting Constitution Avenue. The proposed football stadium would be a ‘dead bulk’ for five days a week and would not meet any of the needs of Civic residents and should be abandoned.*
 - *The **Convention Centre** should be demolished to enable the proposed Casino hotel and Glebe Park to be accorded a Constitution Avenue frontage.*
 - *The **Light Rail** in Civic should follow the whole of London Circuit so that it distributes passengers to a range of desirable drop-off points.*
6. Potentially support should be available from all of those interests that are suffering from the rundown and dilapidated state of the CBD, which the ACT Government seems either incapable or unwilling to do anything about. (AJP 27.7.16)