

The Institute of Foresters of Australia

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Comments on the Lindsay Pryor National Arboretum Draft Masterplan Report

Thank you for your email of 6 May 2010 regarding the National Arboretum masterplan. The comments of the Institute of Foresters and the Friends of the ACT Arboreta (FACTA) are provided below.

General Comments

Both concept plans contained within the masterplan contain features that will greatly enhance the Arboretum and its value as a national asset. We believe that both concept plans offer the scope to substantially address most of the key needs.

In particular we welcome the key features in the concept plans:

- improved access to the site for a range of users
- inclusion of the proposed geological garden
- improved boardwalks and viewing platforms
- the restoration and extension of the original arboretum plantings
- improved interpretation and signage.

Importantly the special feature of the site is that it is a working arboretum. We therefore agree with the central principle outlined in the Masterplan

'is that it is a working arboretum, a place for the domestication of tree species and provenances for use' (p11 of masterplan report)

We note that the physical features of the Arboreta, including the juxtaposition of mature trees and water, vistas and the relatively flat site provide a range of experiences for the community.

We also recognise that development of the site may take some years, with critical road infrastructure and other essential access features needed early in the implementation process.

Specific comments

The concept plans cannot necessarily address all issues and that there are key elements of both plans that need to be considered in the final design. We have highlighted key issues below.

Location of access point. Our preference is to:

- re-locate the vehicular entrance to the new intersection. Access at the existing intersection is not desirable as it is less convenient to visitors and not well placed to ensure easy and safe entry and exit.

Access within the site is critical. Our preference is to:

- incorporate the access arrangements in concept plan 2 as it provides greater vehicular access options and therefore offers more opportunities for a range of users to access the site
- we see the board walks as an important part of access arrangements, and an opportunity to enhance the juxtaposition of trees and water.

We would also note that the parking arrangement must allow for special events (including rowing) and suggest that design incorporate the loop road with bays for access to educational points.

Effective interpretation is a critical issue. Our preference is to:

- incorporate the interpretation walk from Concept Plan 1 as this provides for a more meaningful experience and understanding of the site features
- the loop road will be important, as discussed above
- we also believe that high quality interpretation is necessary, so special treatment of picnic and educational points is essential.

We see some limitations and opportunities to develop the provenance theme:

- there is an opportunity to demonstrate provenance/tree breeding differences (eg a Nelder wheel)
- and given the importance of tree improvement to species such as radiata pine and their significance to the ACT and national forestry activities we see this as a critical demonstration species.

We would also note that it is unlikely that radiata pine could be viewed as undesirable as the impact of escape into the Canberra nature park to the ACT is unlikely to be significant – and a more significant threat is from surrounding plantations.

We recognise that research options will be important, but need to be managed:

- the scope for research will need to be low key to avoid conflict with public use (vandalism, whether malicious, mischievous or negligent).

Entry issues are also important. Our preference would be to:

- ensure that there are significant tree planting at the entrance as this is in keeping with the central principle discussed above
- put the geology garden nearer the grasslands; which seems to be better than amongst new trees. There is scope to interpret the grasslands as well as trees and rocks.

Viewing vistas are a key feature and should take priority over the windbreak. Our preference would be to:

- place greater emphasis on creating vistas (these could be cut between existing trees)
- we would suggest that the windbreak may impact negatively on developing viewing vistas.

I would note that the Institute and FACTA are appreciative of the efforts of the National Capital Authority to engage stakeholders in site design. We welcome opportunities to bring the knowledge and organisations to assist implementation.

Yours sincerely,



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