



File No: 19/62

9 July 2021

Mr Andrew Smith
Chief Planner
National Capital Authority
GPO Box 373
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Smith

I write to provide a formal submission to the *Seaplanes on Lake Burley Griffin - Discussion Paper*, May 2021.

In principle, the National Museum of Australia (the Museum) supports this initiative as it has the potential to enhance tourism opportunities in Canberra with a unique visitor experience.

There are several matters of interest and concern that the Museum has due to the close proximity of the seaplane operations to the Museum site. However, further detailed analysis and in-depth consultation with the Museum, as one of the principal stakeholders affected, will enable these issues to be resolved with a combination of design considerations, regulation, partnerships and communication protocols.

Heritage Impact

The Museum cares for and operates the historic vessel, Paddle Steamer *Enterprise*, which is moored at the jetty selected for the seaplane operations, and steams within the vicinity of the seaplane landing and take-off zone.

There are concerns that the additional level and frequency of wake generated by landing and take-off of the seaplane, may increase friction between the vessel, jetty and moorings causing an elevated level of deterioration. This may require changes to the jetty and moorings, to mitigate damage.

Operational Impacts

The Museum is moving towards increasing the frequency of Paddle Steamer *Enterprise* operations which occur during the steaming season between September to May each year. Currently steaming activities are generally programmed to occur each weekend and occasionally on weekdays for special occasions. The seaplane operations could impact with steaming activities. However, this can be managed by establishing agreed operational schedules and with appropriate stakeholder communication and notification protocols.

Part of the Paddle Steamer *Enterprise* operations includes maintaining a volunteer crew, who have undertaken this work for the last forty years. This involves weekly training and practice sessions which take place on the jetty where the vessel is moored and on the lake during steaming activities. These activities have the potential to be impacted by seaplane passengers embarking and disembarking from the jetty. Such impacts could be mitigated with proper planning and design of the infrastructure and passenger management to allow for multiple uses of the area.

Noise Impact

The proposed landing and take-off times would occur outside of café peak dining periods. These arrangements, and combined with the current noise evaluation reports, suggest that there is a limited impact on noise levels during peak café visitation.

The Museum regularly hosts:

- Commercial events across its numerous event spaces, therefore, changes to flight schedules would need to be communicated with the Museum team in advance to ensure commercial clients/partners and consequent commercial revenues, are not negatively impacted with flight time changes.
- Similarly, regular public programs – talks, concerts, speeches, openings, school holiday programs and other activations – across its event spaces and Atrium, which would require a clear understanding of flight schedules and mitigation procedures for noise impacts.

Infrastructure

Jetty Modifications

It is noted that modifications will be required to the jetty where the Paddle Steamer *Enterprise* is currently moored. The Museum requests that planning and design for this work be done in close consultation with the Museum and that modifications do not impede with the capacity for our vessel to depart and return to dock.

Parking

Parking at the Museum often exceeds capacity and additional services and activities in the area may exacerbate this issue. It is recommended that that NCA work with the Museum to implement increasing parking provisions at Acton.

Refueling

It is noted that a risk and safety policy would be required to address refueling activities. The Museum requests that it be consulted with regards to associated infrastructure, including fire-fighting equipment, spill response procedures, placement, aesthetics and any risks associated with visitor safety and amenity.

Visual Impact

The Museum is housed in a visually striking and award winning architecturally designed building in which the design and layout is inextricably linked to its location and relationship with its natural and urban surrounds. Any additional infrastructure must consider and be sensitive to the aesthetic and architectural values of the building and overall location.

NMA Master Plan

As part of the Museum's 2030 Master Plan, it has proposed a significant redevelopment of the jetty area designed by the Museum's original architects, Ashton Raggatt McDougal. The concept is for an Enterprise and Technology Centre in the vicinity which will be themed around technology, from steam power to renewables, and serve as the jetty for the Paddle Steamer *Enterprise*. This facility could work effectively in supporting the seaplane initiative, drawing visitation to Canberra and activating the Peninsula.

It is important that any modifications proposed for the jetty to facilitate seaplane operations, not impede with current and future Museum activities.

An overview of the Museum's Master Plan can be viewed in more detail from its website https://www.nma.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/598903/NMA-master-plan_FA-181226-optimised.pdf

Tourism

The Museum is very active and engaged with driving tourism into the Canberra region and is excited by the prospect of being the "gateway" for this new tourism opportunity into the region. There is significant scope to position the Canberra region for both the high value leisure traveler and business traveler, with connections directly into Sydney, Rose Bay and the South Coast. The Museum would be very willing to work with both operators in establishing tourism product packaging and activations across its networks including Tourism Australia's Signature Series, Cultural Attractions of Australia.

A level of investment would be required to ensure that the needs of both Seaplane users and general visitors of the Museum were equally catered for, with potential way finding signage and check in counters and related infrastructure, that do not detract from the current aesthetic or withdraw from the general visitor's experience. However, the Museum is confident that suitable solutions could be provided through consultation with the operators and NCA.

We congratulate the NCA on facilitating the exploration of unique opportunities to enhance Canberra's appeal as a premier tourism destination.

Yours sincerely



Dr Mathew Trinca AM
Director