

## **Objections to permitting seaplanes on Lake Burley Griffin**

**By Patrick De Deckker**

I have read the document which is available on the [nca.goc.au](http://nca.goc.au) web site that presents details for eventually allowing seaplanes to 'land on' and 'depart from' Lake Burley Griffin at a site opposite the National Museum. My arguments are as follows:

1. First of all, I am not convinced that allowing seaplane to come to Canberra is going to significantly increase the tourism industry in Canberra. If two planes come every day, this would mean 28 extra tourists per day. One single bus would bring well over that number for each trip, and there are buses scheduled every hour between Sydney and Canberra every day, plus the costing is much cheaper. Many tourists also come as organised groups and would not use those seaplane flights.
2. There is a clear risk of possible accidents of the seaplane with canoes/kayaks, as well as yachts that are common on the lake. It will be impossible to monitor traffic on the lake near where the seaplane is to 'land' and 'depart', especially when visibility is jeopardized. To force a no sailing zone near the National Museum would be unfair considering that only 28 coming by seaplane would force such restrictions.
3. Examination for the 'trajectory' of the seaplane shown on the document provided on the NCA web site are not accompanied by information on the short distance between the departure site and Commonwealth bridge. In addition, a proper study of wind velocity and dynamics close to the lake's water, and with possible difficulty of air drawn down at the time of airlift ought to be seriously considered, otherwise an accident could easily occur.
4. Not enough consideration is given to the presence of the aquatic birds that commonly occur on the lake and, in particular, near the National Museum. Personal observations are that at times there could be many birds that could fly in the path of a seaplane.

5. Comment is made about the large bat colonies inhabiting Commonwealth Park. The study in the NCA document provides assessment of the behaviour of the bats during the trials in the middle of the day. Any person knowing a bit about bat behaviour would know well that [as it the case in Canberra] in late afternoons, especially in summer, thousands of bats fly over the lake to gather food during the evenings. These amazingly large groups of bats cannot be controlled, especially the timing of the commencement of their flights in groups. This is clearly a potentially dangerous situation/
6. It is surprising to read that in case of fog and/or low visibility conditions, as stated in the NCA document, that an alternative landing and departure of the seaplanes would be through Canberra airport. Has that been discussed with the NCA and the Airport authorities? I assume this could be risky at times of busy air traffic. Does that mean that the seaplane would fly around Canberra for quite some time while waiting for permission to land at Canberra airport? Has that been considered?
7. I am surprised that the NCA document does not discuss the security aspect of small planes flying in the vicinity of Parliament House. This is a high security area, and I can imagine that malicious behaviour could be seen as potentially dangerous if a passenger was able to force the plane to fly over the Parliament site. Would security be conducted on passengers departing from Rose Bay and/or near the National Museum.
8. Has consideration been made about the costing involved the refuelling of the seaplanes at the National Museum site. This would involve an extra person to handle the vehicle carrying the fuel? Also where would this vehicle be stored and at what cost? Is that a potential fire/explosive hazard?

In summary, I believe that insufficient concerns and information have been tabled in the NCA document, These

relate to possible collision with people in small boats on the lake, collision with Commonwealth bridge and the Carillion, and also with large bat colonies as well as aquatic birds.

Seaplane traffic between Rose Bay and Lake Burley Griffin would clearly not increase tourist dollars to the Canberra region [at most 48 people per day], especially with frequent bus routes between the 2 cities that are definitely much cheaper and currently cheap flights at the nearby Canberra airport between Sydney and Canberra.

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