

# Our National Capital

## Coalition Election Statement

"The Coalition is committed to enhancing Canberra's role and reputation as Australia's National Capital, while supporting community efforts to diversify the economic base of the Australian Capital Territory and its region," ACT Senator Margaret Reid and Territories Minister Alex Somlyay said today.

"The Coalition is committed to supporting the maintenance and development of national institutions in the National Capital, such as the National Museum of Australia and the Australian War Memorial.

"The Coalition is committed to working with the ACT Carnell Liberal Government to diversify Canberra's economic base and enhance investment potential in the ACT and its region, by

- facilitating the development of the Very High Speed Train between Canberra and Sydney
- allowing the ACT Legislative Assembly to extend ACT leases from 99 years to 999 years.
- enhancing the economic potential of Canberra Airport; and
- upgrading Canberra's gateway – the Federal Highway."

**What the Coalition will do:**

- The Coalition will continue its Federation Fund commitment of \$151 million to the construction of the National Museum of Australia, and new permanent site for the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, on Acton Peninsula.
- The Coalition will continue the \$25 million programme of restoring, maintaining and improving National Capital Assets. The programme is focussing on improving the presentation of national assets within the Parliamentary triangle and on Anzac Parade and refurbishing significant memorials such as the Australian-American memorial at Russell.
- The Coalition will develop a Parliamentary Zone Master Plan, drawing on the skills of a panel of architectural, financial, artistic and marketing experts, supported by the National Capital Authority. This will ensure an appropriate planning framework is in place for future development in the heart of the National Capital.
- The Coalition will allocate \$5 million from the Federation Fund to start work on the National Centre for Christianity and Australian Culture in Barton.
- The Coalition will allocate \$5.5 million from the Federation Fund to establish the Australian Federation Centre at Old Parliament House, improving public access to information about our electoral system.
- The Coalition will continue its support of the Australian War Memorial, and commemoration of past meritorious service by Australia's Service Nurses and by those who served in the Korean War.
- The Coalition has pledged \$11.9 million from the Federation Fund to build ANZAC Hall – an extension to the Australian War Memorial.
- The Coalition will continue to restore Old Parliament House in recognition of its status as a significant national asset.

- Some candidates in this election have said that Canberra's planning needs streamlining. The Coalition and the Carnell Government acknowledged this two years ago, and a second-term Coalition Government will remove unnecessary duplication and red tape in its Review of ACT Planning, already underway, while preserving the important elements of Canberra as our National Capital.
- The Coalition will ensure that the National Capital Authority pursues vigorously its charter to foster the awareness of Canberra as the National Capital.

### **Labor's record:**

Labor's record in government in relation to the National Capital was one of neglect and deceit.

- Under Labor, a dead hand was placed on the development of the National Museum of Australia. Paul Keating promised the Museum but never delivered.
- Labor wasn't interested in measures to vitalise Canberra's economy, such as enhancing the economic potential of Canberra Airport.
- Labor did nothing to realise the ambition of a Very High Speed Train link between Canberra and Sydney.
- Labor was all words – no action.

### **Some of what the Coalition Government has achieved:**

#### National Capital Institutions

- After years of Labor inaction, the Coalition Government chose a site and design for the National Museum of Australia and a new permanent home for the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.
- National memorials for Australia's Service Nurses and for the

Korean War were established.

- The Coalition has maintained a programme of restoration works at Old Parliament House and made it a focus for a variety of important community and national activities.
- The Coalition established a new and permanent home for the National Archives of Australia in the historic East Block complex in the Parliamentary Triangle.
- The Coalition has refocused the activities of the National Capital Authority, given renewed attention to the role of the Authority in fostering awareness of Canberra as the National Capital.

### Economic Development Activities

- The Coalition actively supported private sector development of the Very High Speed Train proposal, to link Canberra and Sydney – a \$3.5 billion project delivering 15,000 jobs during construction and 2,000 long term jobs on completion. The potential boost to employment in the region is huge.
- The preferred proponent, Speedrail, has progressed to the proving up stage.
- The Coalition has committed \$195 million to upgrade the Federal Highway – Canberra's gateway.
- The Coalition enhanced the economic potential of Canberra Airport – by selling the airport lease to the locally owned Canberra Airports Group and upgrading the airport to international status.
- The Coalition has delivered commitments of Commonwealth construction projects in the ACT to the value of almost \$472 million up to 2000/01.
- The Coalition introduced legislation – opposed by Labor - to provide for 999 year residential leases in the ACT, and has

begun a comprehensive review of ACT planning.

- The Coalition has co-sponsored the development and launch of an ACT and region investment prospectus and participation by ACT and region businesses in the Northern Territory Expo 98. The Australian Capital Region Development Council has calculated that participation in the NT Expo has generated between \$1.7 million and \$2.6 million of business for ACT and region businesses.

Senator Reid and Mr Somlyay said that the Howard Government will continue to develop the economic potential of the ACT and its surrounding Region. Canberra has an exciting future as the seat of the Federal Government as well as a city with a vibrant and innovative business sector offering new employment opportunities.

"The Coalition will continue to work in partnership with the ACT Carnell Liberal Government, the Australian Capital Region Development Council and the business community to realise the economic potential of the region," Mr Somlyay said.

"In addition, the Coalition will continue to support the development of the National Capital as a regional transport hub for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, building on the foundations of the privatisation of Canberra Airport, the development of the Very High Speed Train and the improvements to the Federal Highway."

"The Australian Capital Region Development Council has calculated that the development of a transport hub based at the airport would provide 7,500 jobs and \$1.4 billion to the regional economy – a marvellous boost for Canberra."

"The Canberra Ministerial Forum, a Coalition initiative, will continue - providing a direct link between local business and community leaders with the Federal Government," Senator Reid said.

"The Coalition's *ACT Commercial Office Property Strategy* package will continue to stabilise and rejuvenate the ACT's

commercial office property market.

"The Coalition will pursue legislation introduced into the Parliament to allow the ACT Legislative Assembly to extend ACT leases from 99 years to 999 years.

"And the Coalition will continue to work with the ACT Government to refine the system of ACT governance, building on the work done by the joint Review initiated by the Howard and Carnell Governments in 1996," they said.

"Canberrans remember that most of the great institutions – the National Library, the High Court, Parliament House – were established by Coalition Governments, as was the planning structure for our beautiful capital. There can be no doubt that the current Howard Government has continued that commitment," Senator Reid said.

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