



CANBERRA

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND
TOMORROW

YESTERDAY...



The view over City Centre in 1958, six years before the filling of Lake Burley Griffin

Canberra, Australia's National Capital, came into being as the result of an arrangement between the six States when they agreed to federate in 1900.

It was not until 1908 that the Commonwealth Parliament determined that the Capital would be in the Yass-Canberra district, contain an area of not less than 900 square miles and have access to the sea.

Following a topographic survey, a N.S.W. Government surveyor, Charles Robert Scrivener, reported in 1909 that Canberra was the best site and N.S.W. surrendered its interests in 910 square miles of undeveloped farming and grazing lands to the Commonwealth on 1 January, 1911. The Commonwealth, of course, still had to acquire for its use a large part of the area held in "freehold" by private owners.

Following an international competition for the city's design, Walter Burley Griffin, a Chicago architect, was awarded first prize in 1912. Official criticisms of the design however brought about the acceptance of a revised design by a Departmental Board.

On 20 February, 1913, the first peg marking the main axis of the revised design was driven into place, the selection of the name "Canberra" was announced in a ceremony on Capital Hill on 12 March, 1913 and the foundation stone, which today, is a feature of Capital Hill, was laid.

The revised plan was cancelled however following a change of government. Griffin was invited to come to Australia in mid-1913 and appointed Federal Director of Design and Construction to implement his original design, covering about 12 square miles of hill and plain country around the Molonglo River.

His appointment, marked by years of stormy argument, came to an end in 1920. Griffin's plan envisaged a City of 25,000 people with a possible population limit of 75,000.

After many years of necessarily slow progress the National Capital Development Commission was established and began full operations in 1958 with a charter to plan, develop and construct Canberra as Australia's National Capital. The population in 1958 was 39,000. By 1964 it had passed the 75,000 mark envisaged as being the "maximum" in the original design competition conditions and went on from there to 100,000 three years later.

TODAY...



The view over City Centre today, showing mainly private enterprise development

Canberra today is a young vigorous city, clearly accepted by Australians as their National Capital.

It already contains some of the national buildings which befit its National Capital function and more of these will be added in the decades ahead.

Coupled with this is the emergence of a modern city where the fields of government, commerce, learning and tourism predominate. It is also a city which is now attracting more than \$60 million a year from private enterprise development of offices, shops, houses, motels, clubs, etc.

Canberra is also taking on a new role of metropolitan centre for south-eastern New South Wales providing large city retail, medical and educational facilities and services to a region with a population of about 150,000 persons.

Two main streams of endeavour emerge in developing the City. They are:

- The provision of the features necessary to Canberra's identity as a National Capital.
- The development of metropolitan facilities at a rate appropriate to a city whose growth rate has been some 9 per cent a year.

To achieve these goals calls for integration of planning, engineering, architectural, landscaping, social and economic considerations.

In carrying out its functions, the National Capital Development Commission is assisted by the fact that Canberra is unique in Australia in that most of the A.C.T. land and all of the city area is now owned by the Crown and the city has a leasehold system of tenure.

This system allows land use control to be exercised positively through lease conditions, rather than through zoning controls used in other Australian cities.

Through planning and subsequent programming of works, the Commission is able to match population growth with development economically because of the nature of its multi-discipline organisation which enables it to bring together economically all those many activities which in other cities must be the responsibility of a variety of organisations and authorities.

TOMORROW



A sketch illustrating typical office area for the future City Centre

Canberra is fast becoming recognised on the world scene as a City which is putting into bricks and mortar, plans to cater for the growth of tomorrow without the real problems that growth brings—the so-called "urban sprawl" along with the associated peak-hour traffic congestion, into the city in the morning and out of it in the afternoon.

Canberra has set out to reverse these world-wide trends by decentralising the city's work force so as to create a pleasant, safe and convenient environment.

The population is expected to be more than 250,000 by 1980 and go from there to at least half a million before the turn of the century.

On the assumption that Canberra would continue to grow to 500,000 and beyond, the Commission had studies undertaken in 1966 to establish the structure for metropolitan growth within the Australian Capital Territory.

These suggested that the most efficient framework would provide for the extension of Canberra in new towns of 100,000 or more residents, separated from inner Canberra by hills, ridges and areas of open country, having the characteristics of cities each with its individual character but each an integral and essential part of the national metropolis.

It is believed that this general plan concept, assuming that adequate funds are available when required, could cope with continuous growth and change, traffic congestion would be minimised, business districts would be viable and the central area should be protected from unmanageable traffic use.

The pattern of sub-centralised employment also means that few people will be forced to travel long distances to work, allowing workers to have more time for leisure than their counterparts in other cities.

Not least important is that the linear growth pattern also offers the opportunity of ready access to the surrounding open country.

In addition to the area of "Inner Canberra" itself which is almost fully developed, Canberra already has two of these new towns being settled, catering between them for some 200,000 people with another new town due to take the first of its ultimate 170,000 residents in 1974.

Development of the first of the new towns, Woden, approximately six miles south-west of Canberra's City Centre, was begun in 1962 to cater ultimately for about

90,000 people. Woden's development is continuing in an adjoining valley known as Weston Creek which will be largely residential.

Development of the second town, Belconnen, six miles north-west of City Centre, was begun in 1966 to cater for 120,000 people, while the planning of the third town, Tuggeranong, south of Woden is in an advanced stage in order to take its first residents by 1974. An area for a fourth town, north of inner Canberra, is being considered for future development.

The focal point of each new town is the town centre which is designed to provide convenient and attractive commercial, industrial, shopping and recreational facilities for its residents, although City Centre will naturally, be Canberra's most important commercial centre.

It is expected that at full development, these town centres should offer up to approximately 50 per cent job opportunity for the total town work force, thereby minimising the peak hour traffic problems which plague the older cities and cause costly delays.

In the future, peripheral freeways will skirt the developed areas and cater for trips longer than those between adjacent towns while a spinal rapid transit system linking all the centres to each other and to City Centres will also come into operation.

For the City Centre itself, the Commission has produced a Development Plan setting out proposals for the next decade which envisages developments to add to the vitality, compactness and functional efficiency of the City. Other Commission publications give more detail on this.

Canberra is a city, which through planning and through the will of the Australian people, offers not only a pleasant city in which to live today but an attractive reality for tomorrow.

