

CAPITheticAL

BIG IDEAS. BIG FUTURE.

A design ideas competition for a hypothetical Australian capital city.

Q&A



Australian Government



100
CANBERRA



Australian
Institute of
Architects

CAPITheticAL is a Centenary of Canberra project, proudly presented by the ACT Government.
Image courtesy of National Library of Australia.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

This document details the questions asked by CAPITheticAL registrants during the question lodging period, 6 May to 30 August 2011, and the answers supplied by the CAPITheticAL Administration team.

Q: A lot of provocations and questions have been put forward. However, is it the organiser's intent that entrants are to frame their own question and therefore response, which may be only one of the provocations/questions presented or a related topic of enquiry. For example, accepting the choice of the Yass area as the capital, and looking at the design implementation of Canberra where it is from a particular premise without questioning the location.

A: The provocations in the brief are intended to encourage participants to explore any and all aspects of city making and particularly capital cities. They are not intended to be exhaustive or complete but are included as a starting point for the thinking process that would come before the development of the ideas. Participants may respond directly to some or all of these provocations or develop and explore their own. This part of the brief is intended to encourage innovation and original thinking.

This is a competition that asks you to design a new (hypothetical) Australian capital city, given the current issues faced today, rather than those that led to Canberra's creation 100 years ago. The location of the hypothetical national capital is not limited to the Canberra site, and indeed can be positioned anywhere.

Q: (i) Is it possible to change the entry from a single person to a team later on in the competition if circumstances change? Just clarifying - say an entry was shortlisted in Stage 1 Submissions as an individual, would it be possible to change to a team when completing the Stage 2 Submissions if an email request was made?

(ii) If not, is it possible to re-enter your name on behalf of a team if you have already entered as a single entrant?

A: It is possible to change to a team - you just need to email your requested change and it will be made against your registration number.

Q: (i) Is the hypothetical city a future Canberra? ie. Does it have to be an Australian capital city, or can we design/plan/imagine a new capital city more generally?

(ii) With this last question, if it has to have an Australian link, character - does the context need to be Australian?

A: Yes, this is a design ideas competition for an Australian capital city.

.....

Q: Can it be built as part of an existing city or is it a completely new creation?

A: Yes, it could be either an expansion of an existing city or a new purpose designed city.

Q: Where will it be located? What is the topography? And what about the natural environment? Are we required to place at the site of Canberra (if so, can you please provide topographical maps or similar from which to work?)

A: In essence, this is a competition that asks you to design a new (hypothetical) Australian capital city, given the current issues faced today, rather than those that led to Canberra's creation 100 years ago. The location of the hypothetical national capital is not limited to the Canberra site and, indeed, can be positioned anywhere. No additional maps or resources are provided; however, we would encourage you to consider the extensive reading lists and essays available [here](#) as well as [here](#).

In particular, 'The Ideal City' site found [here](#) identifies all you need to know about the 1912 competition to design Canberra.

Q: Can this future capital exist on a tabula rasa? On a completely new, created topography and environment?

A: Yes, both scenarios are possible.

Q: (i) Are you expecting entrants to respond to all of the provocations listed in the competition brief?

(ii) Is it possible for an entry to focus on a central provocation that is outside of those listed in the brief? If an entrant chooses to focus outside of the listed provocations, how will this be judged?

A: No, the provocations are intended to encourage the broadest possible thinking and innovative responses. Thus the ideas that emerge may explore any or all of the provocations, or the design processes may lead to the development of other unstated provocations. Where new provocations are used as the basis of the hypothetical design, these should be explained in the submission. The design ideas that are submitted will be judged on the strength of the ideas and the clarity of the presentation.

Q: (i) We are to imagine that the planning and realisation of Canberra never took place?

(ii) If participants wished to, could they impose a plan on the existing Canberra site?

A: Participants are expected to understand the forces that came together 100 years ago that resulted in the creation of Canberra, therefore it is unrealistic to try to imagine that Canberra did not happen and also very difficult to do so having studied the history.

Yes, the hypothetical city could well be on the existing Canberra site as if Canberra had not been created.

Q: (i) The brief is quite open to interpretation - when referring to the 're-imaging' of Canberra is the hypothetical design to incorporate the existing Canberra site (as it stands today), another unoccupied site or the site as it was before Canberra was realised?

(ii) Are we to encompass the entire Canberra metropolitan region or just a small portion of it?

A: In essence, this is a competition that asks you to design a new (hypothetical) Australian capital city, given the current issues faced today, rather than those that led to Canberra's creation 100 years ago. The location of the hypothetical national capital is not limited to the Canberra site, and indeed can be positioned anywhere. The scale of the proposal is not defined or limited but clearly the hypothetical design should encompass all of the elements that are necessary for an Australian capital city in the 21st century.

Q: Does the proposal have to be based in the Canberra region or can the proposed new city be on any site?

A: In essence, this is a competition that asks you to design a new (hypothetical) Australian capital city, given the current issues faced today, rather than those that led to Canberra's creation 100 years ago. The location of the hypothetical national capital is not limited to the Canberra site, and indeed can be positioned anywhere.

Q: When is the date that the competition needs to be submitted by?

A: 31 January 2012

Q: With regards to the overall scope of the project, are we limited to a redesign of Canberra, or can this competition include other physical spaces?

A: In essence, this is a competition that asks you to design a new (hypothetical) Australian capital city, given the current issues faced today, rather than those that led to Canberra's creation 100 years ago. The location of the hypothetical national capital is not limited to the Canberra site, and indeed can be positioned anywhere and may include other physical spaces relevant to an Australian capital city.

Q: I am a MA student of landscape architecture from Iran. How can I find the maps and graphical information of Canberra ?

A: In essence, this is a competition that asks you to design a new (hypothetical) Australian capital city, given the current issues faced today, rather than those that led to Canberra's creation 100 years ago. The location of the hypothetical national capital is not limited to the Canberra site, and indeed can be positioned anywhere and the site may be an imagined site with imagined topography.

No additional maps or resources are provided, however we would encourage you to consider the extensive reading lists and essays available [here](#) as well as [here](#).

In particular, 'The Ideal City' site found [here](#) identifies all you need to know about the 1912 competition to design Canberra.

If maps are what you require, it may be worth contacting the [National Library of Australia](#) or the [National Archives of Australia](#).

Q: I have finished the documents of this competition. It is files of WORDS. Can I send them to this address? My ID is xxxxxx.

A: The online entry system will be available and open for you to use on 30 September 2011.

We are not accepting entries before this date.

Please submit your entry online - through the online entry system available at www.capithetical.com.au

Q: Are there any online resources or CAD surveys (dwg files / pdfs) that can be accessed to aid in the schematic process?

A: In essence, this is a competition that asks you to design a new (hypothetical) Australian capital city, given the current issues faced today, rather than those that led to Canberra's creation 100 years ago. The location of the hypothetical national capital is not limited to the Canberra site.

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Q: Can the location of the new capital city be positioned anywhere in Australia that best suits the concepts and rationale being proposed?

A: In essence, this is a competition that asks you to design a new (hypothetical) Australian capital city, given the current issues faced today, rather than those that led to Canberra's creation 100 years ago. The location of the hypothetical national capital is not limited to the Canberra site, and indeed can be located anywhere.

Q: Re: Activating Your Account once Registered, if 'Email Validation' states that the "requested key and email was not found", what is to be done? I have an ID number so I assume my Registration was successful.

A: If you have indeed received the competition brief via email (PDF), then your registration was successful.

Q: I am architect from Egypt look to participate in your architectural competition would you please tell me the conditions to register in the competition

A: Registration is free and can be done online at www.capithetical.com.au

Upon registration, you will be emailed the full competition brief.

There are no 'conditions' or special requirements; entry to the competition is open to all.

Q: Concerning the competition I'd like to ask about the submitted format, will it be a hardcopy or softcopy files uploaded online?

A: The online entry system will be available for you as of 30 September 2011 via www.capithetical.com.au

You can choose to send in your entry via the normal post (that is, a hard copy submission, or other form if you are choosing a format that is not electronic, such as an artwork or a 3 dimensional model), or an electronic submission (soft copy files) which can be submitted via the online entry system (as mentioned above).

Details of this are outlined in the competition brief on pages 7-9.

Q: In chapter "Competition Requirements", from the briefing sent by e-mail, is well explained what should be delivered by the 31st January, the Stage 1. But what should be delivered for Stage 2, by the 30th November?

A: A small number of entries will be shortlisted to proceed to Stage 2. The criteria and details about this Stage 2 is yet to be decided and will be formed after the entries are received in January.

In general, the Stage 2 entries will be given a further opportunity to develop their ideas and refine / enhance their presentation to a level compatible with exhibition standards.

The Jury will be involved in establishing the brief for Stage 2.

Q: Hi, I am interested to participate the competition and I am just wondering is there anyway I can get a DWG base map of the Canberra?

A: In essence, this is a competition that asks you to design a new (hypothetical) Australian capital city, given the current issues faced today, rather than those that led to Canberra's creation 100 years ago. The location of the hypothetical national capital is not limited to the Canberra site.

No additional maps or resources are provided, however we would encourage you to consider the extensive reading lists and essays available [here](#) as well as [here](#).

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Q: In terms of the two stage submission competition, at what level should Stage 1 be in?

1. A conceptual stage, more expressive rather than planned?

2. Or a developed stage, that is more logical and practical?

A: The Jury will determine the best and most interesting submissions, and those submissions with the most potential (with reference to the competition criteria as mentioned in the Brief). They will be shortlisted to Stage 2, which gives those entrants the chance to develop their proposal to a further degree of development.

It would be advisable to make your Stage 1 submission the best possible representation of your ideas, and not restrict your submission to a conceptual stage for the sake of Stage 1 submission. There are no guarantees that your submission will be shortlisted to Stage 2, so making a purposeful decision to not develop your submission at this stage may inhibit your submission's ability to attract the Jury to its quality and depth.

Q: In terms of the submission components, the two page document that should provide the rationale for the accompanying hypothetical city design, is this in any particular format? Or do we simply integrate this into our chosen form of submission?

Also, my multi-media presentation will consist of A1 presentation drawings (Power Point), and a 1 minute animation. Is this possible for the two to be screened during the exhibition, since they will be in different formats and are integral in expressing my hypothetical design?

A: The rationale document (or 2 page document) could take almost any form and theoretically it could be integrated into the overall presentation. However on 30 September 2011, the online entry system will be available and this system will require the uploading of the 2 competition requirements (separately). As we are currently developing this I cannot prescribe the exact form in which it will be. However the original intention is that the 2 page document indeed be separate and can take any form, written or graphic or a combination of presentation media.

As for the exhibition question, I can see no reason why this request cannot be met although this depends on the equipment available at the exhibition, and whether your submission is chosen to be exhibited. Not all submissions will automatically be exhibited. The exhibition content will be determined by a Curator who will shape the exhibition for display and ensure that the appropriate equipment necessary to effectively display the entry will be available. It is intended that the exhibition include the shortlisted and finalist entries, and could include a number of entries which were not shortlisted to Stage 2.

Entrants should provide details of how their submission should be presented or shown, and in your case you have already thought this through.

Q: I am extremely passionate about urban planning and the current implosion of major cities as populations explode, not to mention the consequential cloud of pollution surrounding the issue. I have been deeply passionate about design from an early age and have been exploring aspects of design for a few years now. However, I am currently only one semester in to my current avenue of Design at University and am not sure that my entry would be of the standard expected by the jury of this competition. Would it be illogical for me to enter so early in my career?

A: The competition is open to all who have the passion. It does not cost money to enter and your entry, if indicated you are a student, will be judged alongside other student entries. The competition positively encourages students to enter.

The competition is not an annual event and is to mark the Centenary of Canberra in 2013, so it is an opportunity. We would be happy if you were to recognise this as an opportunity, you have nothing to lose. However the decision to enter is entirely up to you. You can choose to enter as a team or as an individual.

Q: In terms of submission electronically, what would be the best format to produce the work in, so that the jury and exhibition visitors can get the most out of my presentation work? Electronic submission would be best since I am situated in New Zealand.

A: I am afraid we cannot advise a preference in this regard – whatever format you believe best communicates your ideas...noting that the culmination of the ideas is an exhibition. The exhibition will have the necessary digital equipment available to present the submission therefore the format of the submission should use a generally available software format.

Q: Will there be a projector running for electronic submissions? How will the exhibition digitally convey submissions?

A: The details of the exhibition at this stage have not been developed. The exhibition plans and format will develop from the submissions received. A curator will be employed to oversee the exhibition and the content, however this will happen after the submissions have been received.

The necessary digital and AV equipment will be available for the exhibition and should those submissions chosen for the exhibition be in a format that requires such equipment.

Q: It is unclear whether the intent is for competitors to choose / suggest a site or whether the Canberra site is to be used. Can you expand on this?

A: The location is indeed unspecified and we are asking you to design a new hypothetical Australian capital city - its location is up to you and it would be beneficial to address the site selection you choose in your submission. It is not restricted to Canberra's location. It could be anywhere.

Q: It is unclear whether the Canberra site is to be used as constructed or as it originally was. Can you expand on this?

A: As the competition asks you to design a new capital city (hypothetically speaking) - and not re-designing Canberra, or limiting the site to the Canberra region, it is thought that no topographical maps or plans of Canberra need to be made available to entrants by the competition administrator. There is no expectation that the design ideas developed for this competition will explore how the existing city of Canberra will evolve in the future.

Q: Are there plans, topographic and architectural resources available or just the brief?

A: There are no plans, topographical or architectural resources available linked to the competition - however we would encourage you to consider the extensive reading lists and essays available [here](#) as well as [here](#).

In particular, 'The Ideal City' site found [here](#) identifies all you need to know about the 1912 competition to design Canberra.

We don't feel as though there is a need for this information as the competition is to design (hypothetically) a new Australian Capital city (anywhere) - site is not specified. The competition is not necessarily proposing a modern national capital in Canberra's current location.

Q: Are we designing a new national capital anywhere, or reproposing a modern national capital in Canberra's current location?

A: You are correct, the location is indeed unspecified and we are asking you to design a new hypothetical Australian capital city - its location is up to you and it would be beneficial to address the site selection you choose in your submission. It is not restricted to Canberra's location.

Q: Should the new proposal ignore non-natural existing landscape, such as Lake Burley Griffin?

A: Your proposal for your hypothetical new Australian capital city can be located anywhere and in your site selection for the new hypothetical capital, it would be assumed that you take into account the existing landscapes both natural and man made.

Q: Is it intended that the notion of a 'Capital' is rethought i.e

- it lives in cyberspace?
- it's not actually in Australia?
- it is in International Waters for tax purposes?

A: You are encouraged to explore the notion of a Capital City in today's world.

On 1 January 1901 the six Australian colonies formed a federation called the Commonwealth of Australia and a new capital for a new nation was required. A century later, CAPITheticAL provides an opportunity for the world's 'best thinkers and designers' to let their imaginations soar once again – to consider and present 21st century ideas addressing the kinds of challenges that would be faced if they were placed in that situation today.

As long as entrants can demonstrate knowledge of the original debates and issues that led to the design competition for a new capital and be informed by an understanding of the history and design of other planned capital cities, this is a hypothetical.

Q: As this is a theoretical competition do you want the zany, wacky “futuristic” (skyhooks, floating cities on diametrically opposing polarised electromagnets, city ‘mountains’, underground cities like Matrix or would the competition prefer at least a little realism?

A: The jury is comprised of mainly experts in the real fields of architecture, and planning, but there is one creative artist there too... If an entirely futuristic city model/concept came in and was so astounding on its own terms, it might rate alongside the more buildable entries. If the descriptors surrounding the zanier suggestions had a really interesting grounding in what a capital should be, and of what it should consist, then that would certainly strengthen its case.

Q: I would like to know what information you will be providing such as plans, cad files, 3d models, weather information and original proposal drawings.

A: In essence, this is a competition that asks you to design a hypothetical Australian capital city, given the current issues faced today, rather than those that led to Canberra's creation 100 years ago.

No additional maps or resources are provided, however we would encourage you to consider the extensive reading lists and essays available [here](#) as well as [here](#).

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Q: When do registrations close?

A: Registrations don't close until the submission date of 31 January 2012.

If someone chooses to register on the day prior to the submission deadline then we will still accept their registration. We do not wish to limit the number of entries by nominating a cut-off date for registrations. The ACT Government seeks widespread interest in this project.