

**From:** [Alegria, Stephen](#)  
**To:** [Kobus, Jonathan](#)  
**Subject:** Arboretum hotel  
**Date:** Monday, 3 August 2015 2:49:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)

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Hi Jonty,

I have asked to explore the possibilities of seeking a commercial partner/investor to progress a boutique hotel development here at the Arboretum. This is very much a blue sky idea but we do have a site reserved. I would like to understand how we could determine market interest and how much background/preparatory information we would require.

Happy to meet up and discuss if you like.

Regards

**Stephen Alegria | Executive Manager | National Arboretum Canberra**

**T 02 6207 9833** | M 0429 995 173

**Parks and Territory Services** | Territory and Municipal Services Directorate | **ACT Government**

National Arboretum Canberra, Forest Drive, off Tuggeranong Parkway, Weston Creek | GPO Box 158, Canberra  
ACT 2601

[www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au](http://www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au)



*"The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived, and dishonest—but the myth—persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic. Too often we hold fast to the clichés of our forebears." - John F. Kennedy*

**From:** [Alegria, Stephen](#)  
**To:** "Malcolm Snow"  
**Subject:** Arboretum hotel site  
**Date:** Friday, 4 September 2015 12:25:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)  
[Forest 69 EOI.doc](#)

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Dear Malcolm,

As you know the Arboretum's Master Plan identifies Forest 69 (south of Dairy Farmers Hill) as the site for a future hotel/conference centre. TAMS intends to commence a process to test the commercial market for developing this site. I have attached an overview of the proposed process which provides background information and context and which will form the basis of a more detailed scoping paper. This overview is for internal discussion purposes only.

This significant initiative is in the very early stages of consideration, and I would welcome National Capital Authority involvement in a working group which would oversee development of the scope. The working group would include representatives from the ACT Government's tourism and trade and investment areas as well as other key stakeholders. If NCA is able to be involved, please let me know the appropriate contact person.

Regards

**Stephen Alegria | Executive Manager | National Arboretum Canberra**

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## EOI for Forest 69, National Arboretum Canberra

### Background

An Expression of Interest process is proposed to seek the market's reaction to an offer by the ACT Government to facilitate the development of Forest 69.

Forest 69 is identified in the Arboretum Master Plan as the site for a future hotel/conference facility. It is a prime location for a tourism/visitor related facility to be located given its central location within the Arboretum, which is itself located close to the city and parliamentary zone. Its elevated position commands unsurpassed long distance views to the south east, east, north west and west. View to the south are limited by the radiata pine forest, while views to the north and north east take in the summit of Dairy Farmers Hill a short distance away.

The prime location is enhanced by the nearby presence of established, high quality built components of the Arboretum, including the award winning Village Centre, Margaret Whitlam Pavilion, Events Terrace and Ceremonial Valley. The site is adjacent to Forest Drive and easily accessible by road.

### Site Characteristics

Forest 69 is located immediately south of Dairy Farmers Hill, adjacent to the established radiata pine forest. It is in effect part of Dairy Farmers Hill, being located on a flat knoll around two thirds of the way up to the summit.

The site is approximately 1.7 hectares in size, excluding neighbouring allees that buffer the site from the three adjoining forests. A steeply sloping and unplanted area of approximately 0.5ha lies to the east of the main site adjacent to Forest 70. The site could conceivably be extended to integrate with the surrounding forest, particularly Forest 76, the 5ha established radiata pine forest to the south of the site. Forest 76 is on a very steep slope with a southerly aspect.

### Arboretum needs

Private sector interest in developing such a site is likely to be strong. The challenge is to ensure that a private development meets the long terms needs of the Arboretum and is sustainable in every sense.

The fundamental question is to define what the Arboretum needs at this site. While an accommodation and conference is proposed in the master plan, this is not necessarily a given. However, any development at the Arboretum must meet the following criteria:

1. Complement existing and planned built facilities- duplication of any of the existing venues/facilities would not be appropriate unless market demand was sufficiently robust to justify it;
2. Consider the site's physical constraints such as the absence of service connections, the visual prominence when viewed from the inner south, Civic and the future Molonglo area,, the single entry and exit point to and from the arboretum, the site's steep slopes and established forests that limit the potential footprint of the site;
3. Consider the sites social constraints such as the community perception of the Arboretum as a public space and the pre-eminence of the forests as the main purpose and drawcard of the Arboretum;



4. Meet Government policies for environmental sustainability especially in mitigating the impacts of climate change;
5. Meet Government objectives for financial sustainability including minimising capital costs, minimising recurrent asset maintenance costs and providing an ongoing revenue stream. This will be a key determinant of the model chosen to deliver a new facility (eg BOOT, PPP);
6. Consider opportunities for other infrastructure to be provided as part of the development to contribute to the Arboretum's progression and growth as an internationally significant institution;
7. Take into account the provisions of existing retail, catering and horticultural maintenance contracts;
8. Consider tourism and commercial opportunities including unfilled niches in the regional tourism market (such as luxury soft adventure accommodation advanced eco tourism and the likely future impacts of direct international flights to Canberra from Singapore and New Zealand);
9. Consider general trends in visitor demand such as health trends that are increasing the demand for family friendly outdoor activities;
10. Consider overcoming existing facility limitations at the Arboretum to meet latent demand for wedding receptions, intimate dining venue, medium sized functions and so on;
11. Consider how a new facility could support cultural and sporting events as well as enhance the visitor experience for all visitors, whether they are patrons of the new facility or not.;
12. Be of the highest quality bespoke design and craftsmanship.

Provided the above criteria are addressed, an EOI process would not be overly prescriptive but rather would seek to give the market as much flexibility as possible in order to encourage innovative responses of world class quality.

#### **Next steps**

- Establish a working group with relevant ACT Government directorates to steer the project.
- Consider engaging external assistance to maximise the benefits to the Arboretum's business development (for example, see [www.sandwalkpartners.com](http://www.sandwalkpartners.com) )
- Develop a detailed plan for Ministerial approval by December 2015
- Go to the market in autumn 2016.



**ACT**  
Government

Territory and Municipal Services



**BRIEF**

TRIM: B15/188

Date 16 September 2015

To Minister for Territory and Municipal Services

- Director-General *10/9/15*
- Director-General's Executive Officer
- Director, Finance
- A/g Executive Director, Parks and Territory Services [REDACTED] *8/10/15*

From Executive Manager, National Arboretum Canberra

Subject Expression of Interest for Hotel Site at Forest 69, National Arboretum

### Recommendation

That you note the proposed process to seek Expressions of Interest for the development of a facility at Forest 69, National Arboretum Canberra.

*Shane Rattenbury* MLA [REDACTED] *12/10/15*

**NOTED/PLEASE DISCUSS**

### Purpose

To update you on progress towards an Expression of Interest process for the Forest 69 site at National Arboretum Canberra.

### Background

The Arboretum Master Plan identifies Forest 69, south of Dairy Farmer's Hill, as the site for future development of a hotel and/or conference facility.

The National Capital Authority has been approached to join the working group that will set the parameters for an EOI process. Therefore any concerns that they have will be dealt with at the earliest stage.

## Issues

A small working group of key stakeholders is being formed to scope the project and prepare an attractive and well defined set of parameters and criteria that will encourage a range of innovative proposals from the market. These may include the need to:

1. complement existing and planned built facilities to avoid duplication of existing venues/facilities and meet latent demand for services and facilities that cannot currently be provided for (such as wedding receptions and an intimate dining venue);
2. consider the site's physical constraints such as the absence of service connections, the visual prominence when viewed from the inner south, Civic and the future Molonglo area, the single entry and exit point to and from the Arboretum, the site's steep slopes and established forests that limit the potential footprint of the site;
3. consider the site's social constraints such as the community perception of the Arboretum as a public space and the pre-eminence of the forests as the main purpose and drawcard of the Arboretum;
4. meet government policies for environmental sustainability especially in mitigating the impacts of climate change;
5. meet government objectives for financial sustainability including minimising capital costs, minimising recurrent asset maintenance costs and providing an ongoing revenue stream;
6. consider opportunities for other infrastructure to be provided as part of the development, to contribute to the Arboretum's progression and growth as an internationally significant institution;
7. take into account the provisions of existing retail, catering and horticultural maintenance contracts;
8. consider tourism and commercial opportunities including unfilled niches in the regional tourism market (such as luxury soft adventure accommodation, advanced eco-tourism and the opportunities presented by direct international flights to Canberra from Singapore and New Zealand);
9. consider general trends in visitor demand such as health trends that are increasing the demand for family friendly outdoor activities;
10. consider how a new facility could support cultural and sporting events as well as enhance the visitor experience for all visitors, whether they are patrons of the new facility or not; and

11. be of the highest quality bespoke design and craftsmanship.

The working group membership will include representatives from the National Capital Authority, the Economic Development Directorate (Trade and Invest Canberra and VisitCBR) and the Friends of the Arboretum. Other stakeholders may be invited to contribute as the process evolves. *- Board.*

The broad timeframe is to have the parameters of the Expression of Interest prepared by the end of the 2015 calendar year, along with a communications and promotions plan. This will be launched in early 2016 after the holiday period, with a generous timeframe for responses.

### **Consultation**

Consultation is ongoing with key stakeholders through the Working Group.

### **Financial**

Modest cash costs may be incurred in developing promotional collateral. These will be met by the Arboretum's recurrent budget.

### **Media**

Media materials will be developed as part of the EOI project.



Stephen Alegria  
Phone: x79833

**From:** [Alegria, Stephen](#)  
**To:** "Malcolm Snow"  
**Subject:** RE: TRIM: Arboretum hotel site [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Friday, 18 September 2015 2:22:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)

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Hi Malcolm,

We are in the process of establishing the working group and I was wondering if you have a recommendation for an NCA rep? If at all possible, I would love to have you involved, at least in the first instance as we set the parameters and direction- your experience at the Arboretum will be a valuable resource for the group to draw on. The plan is to circulate some directions documents for discussion at the first meeting, with a view to engaging an external consultant to assist in developing the necessary material.

Regards

**Stephen Alegria | Executive Manager | National Arboretum Canberra**

**T 02 6207 9833** | M 0429 995 173

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**From:** Malcolm Snow [mailto:Malcolm.Snow@natcap.gov.au]  
**Sent:** Friday, 4 September 2015 1:43 PM  
**To:** Alegria, Stephen  
**Subject:** RE: TRIM: Arboretum hotel site [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

**Security: Unofficial**

Stephen

Thanks for your email and request for NCA involvement in the above proposal. I will discuss it with Andy Smith and advise who the NCA rep on the Working Group should be.

Regards, Malcolm

---

**From:** Alegria, Stephen [mailto:Stephen.Alegria@act.gov.au]  
**Sent:** Friday, 4 September 2015 12:26 PM  
**To:** Malcolm Snow  
**Subject:** TRIM: Arboretum hotel site



Dear Malcolm,

As you know the Arboretum's Master Plan identifies Forest 69 (south of Dairy Farmers Hill) as the site for a future hotel/conference centre. TAMS intends to commence a process to test the commercial market for developing this site. I have attached an overview of the proposed process which provides background information and context and which will form the basis of a more detailed scoping paper. This overview is for internal discussion purposes only.

This significant initiative is in the very early stages of consideration, and I would welcome National Capital Authority involvement in a working group which would oversee development of the scope. The working group would include representatives from the ACT Government's tourism and trade and investment areas as well as other key stakeholders. If NCA is able to be involved, please let me know the appropriate contact person.

Regards

**Stephen Alegria | Executive Manager | National Arboretum Canberra**

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**From:** [Alegria, Stephen](#)  
**To:** [Natalie Broughton](#); [Kobus, Jonathan](#); [Josifovski, Kiki](#)  
**Subject:** Forest 69- Draft record of discussions  
**Date:** Thursday, 3 December 2015 2:35:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)  
[Forest 69 Working Group Meeting 3\\_dec 2015.doc](#)

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All,

Thanks for your time today, please let me know if you wish to amend anything in the attached.

Regards

**Stephen Alegria | Executive Manager | National Arboretum Canberra**

**T 02 6207 9833** | M 0429 995 173

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*What does he plant who plants a tree. He plants a friend of sun and sky.*

*He plants a flag of breezes free. A shaft of beauty towering high.*

*Henry Brunner*





### **Forest 69 Working Group Meeting**

Present: Natalie Broughton (NCA), Jonathon Kobus (EDD), Stephen Alegria (Arboretum), Kiki Josifovski (Arboretum)

Apology: Ian Hill, VisitCBR

#### **Summary of discussions**

A letter was provided from NCA to CMD in 2005 noting that any future hotel development as shown in the concept plan for the Arboretum would require an amendment to the NatCap plan.

Amendment to NatCap Plan will be required as Hills Ridges and Buffers land use does not allow for a hotel. Noted that existing Village Centre and Pavilion did not require amendment as the buildings were considered as supportive and integral to the overall Arboretum concept and no accommodation was proposed.

Amendment process involves:

- Formal request from ACT Government including a feasibility report/business case
- Consideration and agreement from National Capital Authority (Board);
- Public consultation process
- Formal approval from Minister Fletcher

Feasibility report/business case would need to provide design principles and concepts and address environment and heritage issues but would not need to be specific in terms of a design. (The eventual Works Approval process is the appropriate mechanism to consider detailed and specific design, siting and other issues). Other useful information could include the identity of potential or targeted investors/operators and examples of the type of facility proposed.

Noted that the NCA Board meets every 6 weeks and is scheduled to meet in February. Chair is Terry Webber.

Following amendment to NatCap plan, the main work of attracting an investor and planning and designing a facility would be undertaken. NCA works approval would be required for the proposed design.

Noted that EDD can access assistance from Austrade and Tourism Australia to help scope and implement the planning and design process.

Noted that the Board of Tourism Australia were very supportive of the concept and saw the opportunity to meet an unfiled and expanding niche for an ecologically sustainable, integrated and boutique facility of this type in the ACT.

**Next steps:**

- Stephen to brief TAMS Minister on progress including revised timeframe
- Jonathan to advise parameters of a development to meet known tourism/visitor demand
- Stephen/Kiki to draft first cut of a feasibility study
- Stephen to facilitate early engagement with NCA Board prior to formal consideration

**From:** [Alegria, Stephen](#)  
**To:** [Kobus, Jonathan](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Enquiry about Arboretum  
**Date:** Friday, 4 December 2015 3:57:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)

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FYI

**Stephen Alegria | Executive Manager | National Arboretum Canberra**

**T 02 6207 9833** | M 0429 995 173

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Henry Brunner*



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**From:** Perram, Phillip  
**Sent:** Friday, 4 December 2015 3:40 PM  
**To:** Ponton, Ben  
**Cc:** Mileski, Rachael; Lopa, Liz; Alegria, Stephen  
**Subject:** Enquiry about Arboretum

Thanks Ben

Sounds like a good meeting.

I would be very interested in a member of your team being part of Stephen's key players group that are doing the initial investigation.

Kind regards

Phillip

Phillip Perram

Executive Director Parks and Territory Services

Phone 6207 2333 | Mobile 0435 659 263 | Fax 02 6207 6034

Territory and Municipal Services | ACT Government

Macarthur House 12 Wattle Street Lyneham

GPO Box 158 Canberra City ACT 2601

[ACT NOWaste](#) | [City Services](#) | [Libraries ACT](#) | [National Arboretum Canberra](#) | [Parks and Conservation](#) | [Yarralumla Nursery](#)

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**From:** Ponton, Ben

**Sent:** Friday, 4 December 2015 2:05 PM  
**To:** Perram, Phillip  
**Cc:** Mileski, Rachael; Lopa, Liz  
**Subject:** RE: Enquiry about Arboretum

Hi Phillip – Malcolm was just wanting to make sure I was aware of the proposal and I was able to say that I was, so thank you again for the advice.

Malcolm was keen for my team to be involved as the matters progresses. We have built a good relationship with Malcolm and his team over the last little while on a few projects and I think that is why he called, so we would be more than happy to assist you where we can. Let me know.

In particular, we run a Design Review Panel that includes the ACT Government Architect, so you may want to think about how to engage with that as I suspect for that location design will be a key consideration for the NCA.

Cheers,

B

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Ben Ponton | Coordinator-General, Urban Renewal  
Deputy Chief Executive, Land Development Agency  
Deputy Director-General, Land Development  
**Phone 02 6205 7346**  
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate | **ACT Government**  
Level 6 TransACT House, Dickson | GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601 |  
[www.economicdevelopment.act.gov.au](http://www.economicdevelopment.act.gov.au)

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**From:** Ponton, Ben  
**Sent:** Thursday, 3 December 2015 8:28 PM  
**To:** Perram, Phillip  
**Cc:** Mileski, Rachael; Lopa, Liz  
**Subject:** Re: Enquiry about Arboretum

Thank you Phillip - that is very helpful. I'll let you know the outcome of my discussion with Malcolm.

Cheers,

B

---

Ben Ponton | Coordinator-General, Urban Renewal  
Deputy Chief Executive, Land Development Agency  
Deputy Director-General, Land Development  
**Phone 02 6205 7346**  
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate | **ACT Government**  
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On 3 Dec 2015, at 8:14 PM, Perram, Phillip <[Phillip.Perram@act.gov.au](mailto:Phillip.Perram@act.gov.au)> wrote:

Ben

TAMS has commenced investigation of the development of the motel site at the Arboretum.

The site is on the knoll to the south of the Diary Farmers Hill and as proposed in the adopted Masterplan.

Stephen Alegria has had very preliminary discussions with the NCA and has invited key players to discuss the way forward. This includes EDD representatives.

NCA approval will be required given the location.

Please advise if you require any additional information

Regards

Phillip

Phillip Perram  
Executive Director Parks and Territory Services  
Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

On 3 Dec 2015, at 7:21 pm, Ponton, Ben <[Ben.Ponton@act.gov.au](mailto:Ben.Ponton@act.gov.au)> wrote:

Hi Phillip – I have received a message asking that I call Malcolm Snow from the NCA about *“the LDA’s involvement with a hotel proposal at the National Arboretum”*. Do you know anything about this one? Or do you think Malcolm could be referring to the Stromlo Park? I’d appreciate any insight you may have before I call Mr Snow. Thanks.

Cheers,

B

---

Ben Ponton | Coordinator-General, Urban Renewal  
Deputy Chief Executive, Land Development Agency  
Deputy Director-General, Land Development  
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**From:** [Alegria, Stephen](#)  
**To:** [Natalie Broughton](#)  
**Cc:** [Stankevicius, Adam](#)  
**Subject:** RE: April Authority Meeting - hotel site [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Wednesday, 16 March 2016 10:49:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.jpg](#)  
[image003.jpg](#)

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Hi Natalie,

As discussed, we do not have a concrete proposal at this stage so it's best to delay the presentation for now.

Thanks for following up.

Regards

**Stephen Alegria | Executive Manager | National Arboretum Canberra**

**T 02 6207 9833** | M 0429 995 173

Arts, Business, Events, Sport and Tourism

Economic Development | Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

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**Inline images 2**



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**From:** Natalie Broughton [mailto:Natalie.Broughton@natcap.gov.au]

**Sent:** Tuesday, 15 March 2016 2:08 PM

**To:** Alegria, Stephen

**Subject:** April Authority Meeting - hotel site [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

**Security: Unofficial**

Hi Stephen,

The NCA board meeting is to be held on Thursday 14 April 2016. You had previously mentioned that you would like time for a presentation/site inspection in relation to a proposal to request an amendment to the National Capital Plan to allow for a hotel at the Arboretum.

Unfortunately, the board does not have sufficient time for a site inspection, however, a presentation is most welcome. Usually a presentation time of approximately 15 minutes is



provided plus time for questions by the board.

Should you wish to proceed with a presentation could you please advise me of the following:



1. What will be presented?
2. Who will be presenting/attending?
3. What is the progress on a business/planning case.

Please contact me if you have any questions on this.

Regards

Natalie

**Natalie Broughton** | Director Development Assessment and Heritage  
National Capital Authority

 (02) 6271 2867 |  6273 4427

**National Capital Authority** | Treasury Building, King Edward Terrace, PARKES ACT 2600  
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