

CAPITheticAL

BIG IDEAS. BIG FUTURE.

A design ideas competition for a hypothetical Australian capital city.

CAPITheticAL – Jury Citations

The winning entries for CAPITheticAL reflect the diversity of challenges and opportunities for a national capital in the 21st century. The themes include landscape, water, Indigenous culture, sustainable development, extreme weather and climate change. They also reflect that planning and design responses can be very different. The winning entries include a new northern national capital better connecting to the Asian region, a retreating national capital adapting to climate change, and a regional response to future urban growth with connected 'mega regions'. The Student Prize winner adopts a dynamic process based on an adaptive urban system for future proofing Canberra. All these entries are a very high standard and together form a narrative about the possibilities for a national capital. The richness and diversity of ideas demonstrates the talent, creativity and desire by many to celebrate Canberra, respect its history and embrace the global, national and local challenges of designing a new national capital for Australia.

FIRST PRIZE \$70 000

THE NORTHERN CAPITAL BY ECOSCAPE AUST PTY LTD (FREMANTLE)

The northern capital addresses one of the themes that a number of entrants have considered in the competition - the questioning and future relevance of Canberra's physical location within the Australian continent in the 21st century.

Unlike some other entries Northern Capital does not seek to relocate Australia's capital city but to establish a second capital that better addresses Australia's position in the Asian century.

This project has clarity of intention by retaining Canberra as the existing southern capital – surrounded by mountains and located on a river system - but adds a new northern capital on the shores of Lake Argyle – again surrounded by mountains and with a sustainable water supply from Lake Argyle.

The project locates its Centre for Asian Century Development, Ministry for Northern Development and Office of Cultural Development in the northern capital so that each is close to its client base. The northern capital directly addresses the current debate of Australia in the Asian Century and is sensitive to the integration of Aboriginal culture. By retaining Canberra as the southern capital the scheme acknowledges Australia's Anglo-European history and the reasons why the site of Canberra was originally selected.

The key administrative buildings are sited symbolically on the shore of Lake Argyle, and the scheme has been sensitive to integrate Aboriginal culture into the design by unifying the three main administrative buildings into a single motif that represents the paths between the waterholes of the people of the Western Desert. This network is played out on the landscaped roofs of central buildings and symbolises good governance for all cultures.

The project incorporates low key environmental initiatives through the use of water and landscape courtyards in buildings and the incorporation of gardens in the suburbs that supply sustainable food within residential areas.



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All in all, the scheme provides a city that would be a delight in which to live and work, addresses current political questions and paints a bright optimistic future for Australia akin to the optimism and confidence that Australia displayed in commissioning the original competition for Canberra.

The jury considered this scheme of high merit and an integral part of the overall narrative of the role of a capital city in the 21st Century.

SECOND PRIZE \$30 000

SEDIMENTARY CITY CANBERRA BY BRIT ANDRESEN AND MARA FRANCIS (BRISBANE)

Realised as a table top scroll, *Sedimentary City* unfurls back to a possible future. Imagined and real mappings of the site of Canberra have been laid one over another to create a 'sedimentation' that allows us to trace the past across the landscape.

Beginning with *First City* where the ancient markers of Ngunwal /Ngumbra country meet Dixon's 1829 map, through to *Griffins City* where the surveys of Hoddle and Scrivener meet the Griffin's 1912 'City and Environs' plan, to the *Now City* of Canberra, the *Business-As-Usual* devastated *Flood* and *Inferno* cities and finishing, finally, with *Capithetical City*, a small, sustainable city where all the elemental signs of the past cities and landscape seep back to the surface.

In projects that attempt to imagine future cities, one tends to expect science fiction- utopic leaps into worlds hinted at by technologies recently promise. The counter-tradition to this optimism is to imagine our demise as a species, to picture an aftermath.

Whether it is of religious or secular design every generation throughout civilization has attempted to give it form. For our generation, climate change has given rise to an urgent critical dimension to imagining our future. This future, the one that we are already living, haunts our daily lives. We are recording it.

In keeping with this counter-tradition, *Sedimentary City* describes a place altered irrevocably by monstrous change. Yet Sedimentary City is still a future city. It is not a future city we might have expected, with vertiginous towers and sprawling density. Rather it is a deeply poetic, visually sumptuous and strangely reasonable projection.

We hope collectively that *Sedimentary City* is not an invocation and remains simply an imagined, glass half full kind of place. But it remains just as important to consider, to imagine and be prepared for as any other.

COMMENDATION \$5000

MADE IN AUSTRALIA: THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIAN CITIES BY DR JULIAN BOLLETER AND PROFESSOR RICHARD WELLER of the AUSTRALIAN URBAN DESIGN RESEARCH CENTRE (PERTH)

The jury awarded a Commendation to the Australian Urban Design Research Centre (Perth), for an arrestingly graphic presentation on the impact of Australia's projected population growth in their



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submission, *Mega Regions*. It is acknowledged that the full team was responsible for Stage 1, and Stage 2 was developed by two members of the team, Dr Julian Bolleter and Professor Richard Weller.

Stage 1 drew attention to the projections of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), predicting an Australian population of 42 million by 2056 and 62 million by 2100, equivalent to building 59 Canberras over the next 4 decades. After a detailed analysis of Australia-wide opportunities and constraints, this entry recommended building a New City adjacent to Darwin, with a new Asian-oriented university, relocation of Darwin airport, and expansion of the port.

Stage 2 expanded the strategic concepts of Stage 1, by postulating the primary importance of high speed rail and high speed telecommunications in the development of three 'Megaregions' - East Coast, West Coast, and New North. Existing Canberra would remain a lynch pin in a linked system of 25 new high speed rail stops along the east and west coasts. Each rail stop would become the catalyst for a new city. The submission argued strongly that existing cities could not be expanded to accommodate growth past mid-century without losing their liveability.

It was noted that the average population of the world's 10 most liveable cities was 1.7 million; the biggest being Sydney with 4.6 million inhabitants.

The jury was struck by the scale of strategic thinking involved in stage 2 and in particular the impact of the submitted video, and saw fit to award this entry a Commendation.

STUDENT PRIZE \$3000

PROTO:CAPITAL BY KATE DICKINSON AND ANNABEL KOECK (SYDNEY)

This proposal argues that a capital city is an urban laboratory and an urban prototype for the nation it represents. A capital city is, therefore, fundamentally special and to deny its difference is to deny its very reason for being. As both experimental laboratory and prototype, a capital city should be dynamic and ever-changing rather than static and monumental, the authors say. They claim that the dynamic qualities so evident at Canberra's inception and essential to its role as capital have been ignored more recently and should be reclaimed. They explore what makes Australia's capital so special – its exceptional concentration of research, global knowledge and government and its spatial form, a unique combination of productive rural setting, of functioning natural systems and open space, of local suburbs and centres as well as national areas. They then propose a future that employs an interrelated system of experimental networks to link these more directly and demonstrate to the nation how very different urban forms and functions can co-exist more fruitfully if harnessed creatively. The jury appreciated the comprehensive approach of these students and their recognition not only of the assets particular to Canberra as Australia's capital and as a place (its role, its people, its space), but how to adapt these effectively for the future. By doing so, Canberra could and would, the authors believe, be 'future proofed' as an adaptive urban system recognised nationally and internationally for its creative and sustainable management. Under such a scenario, Canberra re-evaluates its position in the contemporary world and adapts for its second century, realising the original vision of the city as Australia's national capital in new ways.

