



MEDIA RELEASE

A HOME FOR THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

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The results of a major scoping study into the proposed "Australia Forum", a world class meeting facility in the nation's capital, were announced today in Canberra by Professor Peter Shergold, AC, chairman of the Australia Forum Steering Committee.

An initiative of the Canberra Business Council, supported by a group of prominent Australians, the Australia Forum will be the first world class meeting facility in the national capital, of a standard comparable to those in other regional capitals, including Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong.

The complex would incorporate leading edge security features, state of the art multimedia communications, an international centre of dialogue, a plenary hall capable of holding 3,000 people and an on-site upscale hotel.

Professor Shergold said the proposed complex would be designed to cater for large gatherings of national significance. Its advanced security features would allow the hosting of international Heads of Government meetings, currently not possible in Canberra, such as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, AUSMIN, G20 meetings and the Pacific Leaders' Forum

"The Australia Forum is an idea whose time has come." Professor Shergold said. "In a world where our shared problems and challenges are becoming increasingly complex, people all over Australia are expressing a need to become more directly involved in exploring important issues and questions about our national life.

"The Australia Forum would provide a national focus in Canberra, the nation's capital, for meaningful national conversations in which all Australians can come together to engage in the big issues that really affect them".

The results of the Scoping Study show that international demand for "face to face" meetings and events has remained robust despite increasing competition from electronic media, threats arising from global terrorism and the Global Financial Crisis. From 1999 to 2009, the number of international association meetings held globally has increased around 6.5 per cent each year. Substantial unmet demand exists for national, regional and international meetings to be held in Canberra, were facilities of suitable scale, security, character and infrastructure available.

Australia Forum

A CENTRE FOR SIGNIFICANT EVENTS, MEETINGS AND DIALOGUE IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

A Steering Committee to examine the feasibility of establishing the Australia Forum was created in March 2010, chaired by Professor Peter Shergold, AC, formerly the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and now Macquarie Group Foundation Professor, Centre for Social Impact, UNSW. Other members of the Committee are: Dr Dawn Casey, Director, Powerhouse Museum and formerly Director, National Museum of Australia; Professor Ian Chubb, AC, recently retired Vice Chancellor, Australian National University; General Peter Cosgrove, AC, MC Chair of the Australia War Memorial Council; Ms Virginia Haussegger, ABC News presenter, journalist and writer and Mr Rupert Myer, AM, Chairman of the National Gallery of Australia.

The ACT Government has supported the preliminary work undertaken by the Canberra Business Council and the Australia Forum Steering Committee. The CBC entered into a Deed of Agreement with the ACT Government approximately 12 months ago to complete a Scoping Study for the Australia Forum. The Canberra Business Council has informed the ACT Chief Minister of the results of the study.

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