



Australian Government
National Capital Authority



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 5 June, 2013

GRAND VISION FOR NATIONAL CAPITAL COMES TO SA

Adelaide will get a taste of the celebrations marking the Centenary of Canberra with a national touring exhibition being opened tonight at the State Library by Robyn Archer AO.

The exhibition, titled 'Grand Visions – Centenary of the Plan', marks 100 years since the winning design was selected for Australia's National Capital. It features plans and renderings produced by the winning designers, Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin, as well as entries from the other finalists.

The State Library of South Australia is complementing the exhibition with a display of letters and maps about the plans for Adelaide, forming part of the William Light Collection, including some of rare historical significance.

Robyn Archer, Director of the Centenary for Canberra, said the exhibition shows the rich and evolving history of our National Capital.

'On 23 May 1912, the Minister for Home Affairs, King O'Malley announced Walter Burley Griffin as the winner of the international design competition for Canberra,' Ms Archer said.

'The Griffin Plan was contemporary and bold. It was a poetic vision with mountain vistas, wide tree-lined boulevards, community gardens, open spaces and a central lake.'

'You don't need to have visited Canberra to appreciate the beauty of the winning design for the National Capital by Walter and Marion Griffin. Other finalists are also displayed in the exhibition and provide a different vision for the capital from what we know today,' she said.

The touring exhibition was developed by the National Capital Authority (NCA) in partnership with the National Archives of Australia.

'On 12 March 1913, the foundation stones of the commencement column were laid and the name Canberra was first announced. This year, as a nation, we celebrate the centenary of our National Capital,' Ms Archer said.

MEDIA CONTACT:

State Library of South Australia | Loine Sweeney Phone: 0435 072 811 Twitter: @SLSA
National Capital Authority | Melanie Skinner Phone: 0417 713 863 Twitter: @NCA_Media



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Alan Smith, Director of the State Library of South Australia, said the Library was delighted to have the opportunity to display rare material of South Australia's first Surveyor-General alongside the plans for Canberra.

"Colonel William Light's designs for Adelaide are considered by many to be a prototype for an ideal city plan.

"His plan was featured in the influential book, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, by Ebenezer Howard (1902) which inspired a key movement in the development of modern town planning, and influenced urban designers including Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin."

Mr Smith said the material on display include an 1836 letter by Colonel Light to his friend, British artist, George Jones, which situated the colony of South Australia and detailed his vision for how it would develop.

"The letter, purchased at auction by the State Library in recent years, is made all the more valuable because so little of Light's papers survived a fire that destroyed his house in 1839."

Canberra historian, Dr David Headon will talk about the competition for our National Capital at the State Library on Wednesday 12 June from 6.15pm. Dr Headon is the History and Heritage Adviser in the Centenary of Canberra unit in the ACT Government. Last year, he rediscovered one of the original drawings that formed part of the winning entry for Canberra.

Grand Visions - Centenary of the Capital Plan is on display at the State Library of South Australia from 6 June to 28 July 2013. Visit <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au> for opening hours. Entry is free.

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