

## WALTER BURLEY GRIFFIN RESEARCH POSTER

### Activity

#### *Setting the scene*

The location of Australia's National Capital had been decided. A world competition was held to find a design that would incorporate an ornamental lake, Parliament House and all the necessary government buildings. An architect from Chicago called Walter Burley Griffin (and his wife and partner, Marion Mahony Griffin) won the competition with a design that incorporated the natural environment and scenic mountain views. Walter Burley Griffin moved to Canberra to oversee the construction process.

Of his design Griffin would write:

*I have planned a city not like any other city in the world. I planned it not in a way that I expected any government authorities in the world would accept. I have planned an ideal city – a city that meets my ideal of the city of the future.*

#### *What to do*

- Investigate.
- Research.
- Decorate.
- Display.

Investigate the architect Walter Burley Griffin and present your research in the form of a large research poster.

Key points within your report should answer the following questions:

- Why was the design submitted by Walter and Marion chosen as the winner of the 1912 competition?
- Were the Griffins admirers of the Australian environment?
- How did Walter Burley Griffin present his winning design?
- What did Marion Mahony Griffin do to help in the design process?
- Do you think Marion Mahony Griffin has been recognised appropriately for her contribution towards the competition design for the National Capital?
- How did Walter Burley Griffin use the contours of the land when designing the National Capital?
- Is there still evidence of Walter Burley Griffin's design in Canberra today?

#### *Be creative*

Present your poster using written information, photographic records (both past and present) and a design process similar to that used by Marion Mahony Griffin in the 1911–1912 competition.

## NATIONAL CAPITAL COMPARISON

### Activity

Use the NATIONAL CAPITAL COMPARISON Background Notes to complete the following research report.

#### *Setting the scene*

Located in the National Capital, Mount Ainslie affords beautiful scenic views across the city of Canberra towards Parliament House. It was a pivotal part of the design for Canberra, along with other nearby hills, and acts as an anchor which holds the design and the city together.

The two photographic views from Mount Ainslie show obvious similarities to Marion Mahony Griffin's competition drawings.

#### *What to do*

- Research and report on the evidence of change over a period of time in the National Capital.
- Compare photographic evidence between the panoramic views from Mount Ainslie in 1957 and 2004.
- Submit a 600 word report.

Key points within your report should answer the following:

- Environmental impact – does Canberra appear to be a greener place to live in?
- Ornamental waters – before Lake Burley Griffin was created in 1964 what purpose did the land and local river serve?
- Suburbia – have the suburbs of Canberra grown over the years?
- Compare streetscapes (street trees etc) and report on the evidence of change over time.
- Which major political building is not evident in the 1957 view from Mount Ainslie?
- What year was Anzac Parade created and what stood in its place prior to its creation?
- Is there a similarity between Walter Burley Griffin's original design for the National Capital and how it looks today?

#### *Be creative*

Report your personal opinions.

Do you think it is a good idea to plan a city?

Do you think the Griffin Plan is a suitable plan for Australia's National Capital?

Make sure you explain your reasons.

## A PLAN FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL Activity

### *Setting the scene*

Many architects of the time distorted the landscape to accommodate traditional design principles. Walter Burley Griffin actively recognised the importance of the surrounding hills, distant mountains and local river systems as valuable features that could be set within a modern and democratic city design. Marion Mahony Griffin reinforced this message in a radio address in 1938, following the death of Walter:

*City planning, as founded by Mr Griffin, was not a mechanical drafting board affair, imposing on the earth, destroying whatever got in the way... Such architecture does its share not towards keeping the earth alive, but toward killing it – this seems to be the only way in which human egos express themselves... In planning Canberra, every detail of the natural conditions were studied... to preserve them... so that the city could be a living healthy and growing thing.*

*The continent of Australia will do well to learn this lesson from its capital. Such reverence for the earth is acutely necessary now; for the rate of destruction is increasing rapidly, even in a century or two the Earth may not be capable of supporting life.*

**Use A PLAN FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL Background Notes and Map to complete the following research report.**

### *What to do*

- Compare map evidence of the National Capital at different times.
- Record your findings in a 600 word report.

Key points within your report should answer the following:

- Compare the ongoing development of Lake Burley Griffin and the bridges that cross it.
- Compare the changing surrounds of the Civic Centre.
- Identify changes in major roads and suburbs.
- Identify the inclusion or removal of recreational areas and parks.
- Explain why you think the name Federal Avenue was changed to Kings Avenue.
- Do buildings still flow from the city down to Lake Burley Griffin?

### *Be creative*

Select the *City and Environs 1918 Plan* and the *1925 Gazetted Plan*. Show the differences between Griffin's final Plan and the Government Gazetted Plan using colour pencils.

Create a colour chart that shows specific changes (example – blue to represent water, green to represent gardens and red to represent buildings).

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

### Activity

#### *Setting the scene*

Canberra is built on the foundations of Walter Burley Griffin's design for the National Capital. Important features that characterise the city today include Lake Burley Griffin, the inner hills that contain the city and the main avenues that provide transport corridors and vistas to the surrounding landscape and important city landmarks.

Over time, Canberra has been shaped by distinct phases of development. Some of this development has responded sympathetically to Griffin's plan and some have not, but each has responded to the unique circumstances and needs of the time, and each leaves a characteristic mark on the National Capital landscape.

**Use the URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL Background Notes and Map to complete the following research report.**

#### *What to do*

- Study and report on Canberra's urban design.
- Describe the changing patterns of urban development in the National Capital.
- Record your findings in a 500 word report.

Key points within your report should answer the following:

- List the benefits for designing a planned city.
- Has the city plan expanded? Provide possible reasons for this expansion.
- Why did Griffin's plan for the National Capital not allow for urban development on the surrounding hills? Do you think his reasons are still relevant today?
- Should Lake Burley Griffin be expanded to represent the original 1918 Griffin design? Explain your reasons.

#### *Be creative*

Find a map of your local district and indicate with colour pencils the sections dedicated to:

- Lakes and parks
- Public buildings
- Commercial businesses and shops

Answer these questions:

- Do you think there are enough recreation spaces for people living in the district?
- Are public buildings located appropriately for easy public identification and access?
- Is there a greater need for commercial businesses and shops?
- Should there be more urban development in the district?