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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE

REPORT ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE  
NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE PROJECT

Membership of the Committee

(Thirty-fourth Parliament)

Joint Chairmen

Senator the Hon. D. McClelland  
President of the Senate

Hon. Dr E.A. Jenkins, MP  
Speaker of the House of Representatives (until 11 February 1986)

Hon. J Child, MP  
Speaker of the House of Representatives (from 11 February 1986)

Members

Hon. G.G.D. Scholes. MP  
Minister for Territories

Senator M.A. Colston

Senator D.J. MacGibbon

Senator M.E. Reid

Senator M. Reynolds

Senator K.W. Sibraa

Senator the Rt Hon. R.G. Withers

Hon. J.D.M. Dobie. MP

Mr S.C. Dubois. MP

Mr M.J. Lee. MP

Mr B. Lloyd. MP

Mr L.B. McLeay. MP

Mrs K.J. Sullivan. MP

Secretary to the Committee

Mr D.M. Piper

REPORT ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE  
NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE PROJECT

The Role of the Joint Standing Committee

1. The resolution of appointment establishing the Joint Standing Committee on the New Parliament House provides inter alia:

That a joint standing committee be appointed to act for and represent the Parliament, as the client for the new Parliament House, in all matters concerned with the planning, design and construction of the new Parliament House and all matters incidental thereto.

That the committee consider and approve the developed design for the building, which, in conjunction with the revised brief for Parliament House, dated August 1980, shall be used as the basis for the design and construction of the new Parliament House, unless both Houses resolve to vary any section of the brief or have any section reconsidered by the committee.

That the committee determine user requirements for approved non-building items and consider other issues relevant to ensuring that the requirements of Parliament are fully met when transferring to the new building.

That the committee be authorised to provide, on behalf of the Parliament, all necessary information concerning the functional requirements for the new Parliament House and matters incidental thereto direct to the Parliament House Construction Authority as the authority responsible to Parliament to undertake or arrange for the planning, design and construction of the new Parliament House.

2. Since the commencement of the project the Committee has exercised its client role principally by approving the Design Brief and a range of user requirements statements and by endorsing various stages of the building design. A wide range of matters relevant to the building and Parliament's requirements have also been determined by the Committee. At all times the Committee's aim has been to ensure that the completed building will provide adequate and functionally efficient accommodation for the Parliament.
3. With the project within two years of programmed completion the matters being submitted to the Committee for consideration have changed from basic design issues to interior design, finishes, furniture and fittings.

4. In the context of dealing with the latter issues the Committee has had cause to question its role and more specifically its power to ensure that Parliament's requirements are properly met by the Parliament House Construction Authority as the agent established by Parliament to undertake and carry out the design and construction of the new Parliament House.
5. Section 7 of the Parliament House Construction Authority Act 1979 provides as follows:

The Authority shall, in the exercise of its powers or the performance of its functions under this Act -

- (a) have regard to any advice furnished to it by a relevant Joint Committee; and
- (b) comply with any resolution passed by both Houses of the Parliament,

with respect to any matter related to the design or construction of Parliament House.

6. In accordance with the Act a Declaration published in the Gazette defined the Joint Standing Committee on the New Parliament House as the relevant Joint Committee for the purposes of section 7.
7. The Committee recently provided advice to the Authority expressing its clear preference for the Authority to follow a particular course of action to meet the Parliament's requirements in the new Parliament House in respect of certain non-building items. The Authority has not seen fit to accept the Committee's advice.
8. The Committee expresses its concern and dissatisfaction with the decision taken by the Authority. In considering what further action it should take the Committee reached the conclusion that because of time constraints the issue was not one which it would seek to have resolved by submitting motions to both Houses of the Parliament. The Committee is however deeply concerned that short of taking such action it does not have power to direct the Authority to meet requirements as determined by the Committee in accordance with its resolution of appointment.
9. Parliament has established the Committee to act on its behalf as the client for the new Parliament House and to determine the Parliament's requirements. It is unsatisfactory that decisions taken by the Committee in respect of such requirements are not binding on the Authority.
10. The Committee regards this situation with extreme concern. Until the matter is resolved Parliament cannot be assured that decisions taken on its behalf by its properly established client committee will be put into effect.

The Impact of Reduced Expenditure on the New Parliament House

11. The Joint Standing Committee on the New Parliament House has recently agreed to a detailed report on the developed design for the new Parliament House. That report, which had been prepared during 1985 and early 1986, represents a statement of the design, planning and construction of the new Parliament House to meet the Brief for the building which had been approved in August 1980. The Developed Design Report takes account of Brief changes agreed to during the course of the project. In essence the Report aims to provide a comprehensive description of the completed building design.
12. This report of the Committee is supplementary to the Developed Design Report and is intended to record changes to the building which have arisen as a result of cost saving decisions taken during the latter part of 1986.
13. In the context of the Government's budget considerations in July 1986 the Parliament House Construction Authority was directed to reduce planned expenditure on the new Parliament House by \$43.3 m. Savings were to be achieved in both construction and non-building items.
14. The Joint Standing Committee and the Parliamentary Departments were not involved in the original discussions on cost savings nor were they represented on the inter-departmental committee which considered the issues. However, both the Committee and the Departments took an active role in reviewing the initial decisions and in examining a range of options with the Parliament House Construction Authority prior to reaching the decisions described in this report.
15. Throughout this process the Committee and the Presiding Officers were concerned to ensure that the cost savings should be achieved in a manner which did not impair the integrity of the design or the efficiency of the building. The Committee gave highest priority to the need to complete the building so that Parliament would have functional accommodation at the time of occupancy. It was regarded as unacceptable that any areas of the building, other than those which would be surplus to immediate requirements, should remain uncompleted or that deletions be made which could not be reversed if funds become available in the future.
16. Whilst the building is still two years from its programmed completion date the options for achieving cost savings at this stage are relatively limited. Contracts have already been let for all areas of the building except for the Parliamentary Library and the media. Parts of the landscaping are also committed to contract. Nevertheless it was possible for the PHCA and the Parliamentary Departments to identify a range of items for consideration as potential cost savings. Some of these items could be regarded as a reduction in quality or standard of finishes and fittings. Others involved the deletion of particular facilities, systems or user requirements.

17. At meetings on 3 and 26 September 1986 the Committee agreed to a range of cost saving measures which achieved the target which had been set by Government. These savings are set out in detail in Attachment A.

18. Areas where substantial savings were achieved are:

- non fitout of those Senators', Members' and Ministers' suites surplus to initial requirements
- deletion of certain built-in maintenance equipment and service facilities
- reductions in sound and vision facilities primarily through deletion of vision services
- provision on a lease basis of telecommunications equipment and facilities
- deletion of the bowling green and associated facilities
- reductions in the extent of water features
- reductions to the formal gardens on the eastern side of the site
- substantial reductions in the landscape
- reductions in the landscaping of all courtyards not yet committed to contract
- reductions in the overall quality of furniture and extensive re-use of existing furniture from the provisional Parliament House
- reductions in the provision of artworks.

19. Of particular concern to the Committee is the severe reduction in the landscape and the significant impact which this decision will have on the building and its surrounds. Integration of the building within the landscape is one of the most important aspects of the design of the new Parliament House and completion of the landscape design in future years is regarded by the Committee as essential. Faced with the alternatives of a partly completed building with full landscaping or a functional building with minimum landscaping, the Committee considered that the provision of adequate functional accommodation must take priority. Given this decision to complete the building without impairing essential services or deleting basic accommodation requirements, it is inevitable that the landscape design must bear the brunt of the reduced funding. The decision is regrettable but unavoidable.


20. The building surrounds will now be graded and grassed with minimal tree plantings. Most internal courtyards will be grassed only and planned water features will be deleted.

21. The Committee acknowledges that the reduced finishes in some courtyards will have a severe impact. In particular, the Ministerial Courtyard which will have a significant ceremonial function will now have a level of finish well below that which was designed. The President of the Senate's courtyard will also be subject to reduced finishes. As is the case with the external landscape generally, the Committee believes it essential that these courtyards be completed as a high priority. Because of severely restricted access to the President's Courtyard, it may not be possible to develop this courtyard to the approved design after construction is completed.
22. Other items such as the deletion of vision facilities and the elimination of certain built-in maintenance and service equipment are also of concern to the Committee, however it is recognised that the Parliament will still be able to function satisfactorily without these items. It will be possible for such items to be installed in future years as funding becomes available.
23. It should be recognised that many of the items now being deleted or deferred remain as user requirements. It is essential therefore that Parliament takes steps to assess fully the implications of the decisions and to plan an orderly approach to the reinstatement of those items which are still requirements. Priorities will need to be set and manageable funding programs will need to be developed.
24. This process must operate in harmony with the normal management and maintenance program which will be required for what is a large and complex building.
25. In considering the operations and maintenance requirements for the new Parliament House, it is useful to compare the building with a small town. The complex will accommodate 3,000 people in spaces ranging from purpose built offices, through newspaper and media bureaux to printeries, workshops and broadcasting control rooms. It has venues for large and small meetings in the Chambers and committee rooms, will provide comprehensive food services for a maximum of 8,000 meals per day, will handle up to one million visitors per year and will require effective maintenance, gardening, cleaning, public relations and security services.
26. Five main features stand out when considering operations and maintenance of the new Parliament House. These are:
  - . the scale of the new building
  - . the quality of the new facility and its designed life of 200 years
  - . the comprehensive services in the building
  - . the level of amenity and service required by occupants
  - . the number of occupants and visitors.

27. The combination of these features will place significant demands on building operation, management and maintenance. Experience in Australia and overseas indicates that a building of comparable size and complexity involves management, maintenance and operating costs in the range of 5-10% per annum of total capital cost.
28. The Committee stresses the need for Parliament to recognise that just as operating costs are important in the provisional Parliament House so this will be the case in the new building but on a larger scale. For example, proper allowance must be made for increased requirements for power, heating, airconditioning, maintenance of services and equipment and cleaning generally.
29. If it is accepted that the landscaping be developed progressively in accordance with the approved design and that the uncompleted Senators', Members' and Ministers' suites will need to be fitted out then the necessary expenditure should be programmed in addition to the funding required for operation of the building.
30. The Committee recognises that there will be many competing priorities for the available funds as is the case in the provisional House. Whilst the Presiding Officers will have the management responsibility for the building, Senators and Members should be involved in establishing priorities. Accordingly the Committee believes that a joint committee should be given the role of client to assist the Presiding Officers in reviewing requirements and assessing priorities.
31. The Committee recommends:
- (a) that a program be adopted for completing all accommodation and developing the landscape in accordance with the approved design over a three year period following occupancy of the new Parliament House, and
  - (b) that, at an appropriate time after Parliament occupies the new Parliament House, a client committee of Senators and Members be given responsibility for assisting the Presiding Officers in reviewing user requirements and assessing priorities for building and non-building items necessary to complete the building in accordance with the approved developed design.



PRESIDENT

Joint Chairmen


SPEAKER



ATTACHMENT A

SAVINGS ACCEPTED BY THE  
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON THE NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE

ITEM	<u>ESTIMATED SAVING</u>	
	Building	NBI
Non fitout of the unused Senators' and Members' suites	800,000	
Reduced quality of stair finishes	143,000	
Changes to design of skirtings in office wings and areas of basement	300,000	
Omission of winches for light maintenance in those areas of the building where access is possible with mobile scaffolding	500,000	
Deletion of window cleaning gantry and runways	900,000	
Deletion of painting of service pipework	55,000	
Deletion of some magnetometer screen units in loading dock		357,000
Reductions in sound and vision facilities arising from reduced suite numbers and deletion of vision services		10,500,000
Provision on a lease basis, rather than purchase, of the decentralised PABX facilities in the building		2,520,000

ATTACHMENT A

(cont'd)

ITEM	<u>ESTIMATED SAVING</u>	
	Building	NBI
Deletion of the future cable tray provisions for Telecom, security and sound and vision	215,000	
Deletion of the bowling green and associated change room	600,000	
Reductions in the formal gardens which are located outside of Parliament Drive on the eastern side of the site	378,000	
Deletion/reduction in quality of certain other landscape items	500,000	
Reduction in the quality of kerbing and guttering	100,000	
Reduction in the extent of water features in courtyards	700,000	
Reduction in depth of topsoil by 20%	60,000	
Reduction in quality of certain new Category B furniture		2,000,000
Re-use of existing acceptable furniture from the provisional Parliament House		8,000,000
Reduction in overall quality of furniture		1,000,000
Reduction in the quality of built-in seating in the public galleries of the Reception Hall, No. 1 Committee Room, Theatrette and Viewing Rooms	203,000	

ATTACHMENT A

(cont'd)

ITEM	<u>ESTIMATED SAVING</u>	
	Building	NBI
A reduction in the budget for notice-boards	286,000	
Reduction in the provision of graphics and signage throughout the building		250,000
Deletion of 50 per cent of the rotational art collection		980,000
Deletion of uncommitted artworks		2,000,000
Deletion of finishes to Ministerial Courtyard	500,000	
Reduction in perimeter security	382,000	
Deletion of noxious gas detector		285,000
Deletion of waste destructor		60,000
Reduction in CCTV cameras		66,000
Non fitout of two Ministers' suites	150,000	
Deletion of miscellaneous minor items	310,000	
Deletion of East garden compound	150,000	
Non fitout of southern security accommodation	180,000	
Deletion of southern security equipment at basement level		100,000
Deletion of all remaining water features and associated pumping equipment	400,000	

ATTACHMENT A

(cont'd)

ITEM	<u>ESTIMATED SAVING</u>	
	Building	NBI
Reduce landscaping at Executive entry	1,200,000	
Reduce landscaping in House of Representatives Outer Courtyards	570,000	
Reduce landscaping in Senate Outer Courtyards	630,000	
Reduce landscaping in Senate Inner Courtyards	1,500,000	
Reduce landscaping in East and West Peripheral Areas	2,300,000	
Additional saving achieved by leasing of telecommunications equipment		1,100,000
Further savings on artworks		70,000
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	\$14,012,000	\$29,288,000
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$43,300,000</b>	