

Introduction

Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 8 February 2001, the Hon Peter Slipper MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration, referred the proposal to construct new Commonwealth Law Courts in Adelaide, South Australia, to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report to Parliament, in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969*.¹
- 1.2 Mr Slipper advised the House that the government had approved the provision of \$73.7 million for the development of the proposal. Mr Slipper noted that, subject to the normal Public Works Committee process, it was planned to commence construction of the building in early 2002 with a completion date the following year.²

Inquiry Process

- 1.3 The Committee sought submissions by advertising the Inquiry in the *Adelaide Advertiser* on 17 February 2001. The Committee also sought submissions from organisations, peak bodies and individuals with a possible interest in the Inquiry.
- 1.4 The Committee invited Federal and local Members of Parliament in whose electorates the proposed project is located to make submissions and to attend the inspection of the works site and the public hearing.

1 Extract from Votes and Proceedings No. 164, 8.2.2001.

2 House Hansard, p. 24297, 8.2.2001.

- 1.5 On 27 April, the Committee inspected the building site and was briefed by senior representatives of the proponent agency, the Department of Finance and Administration (DoFA). The Hon Trish Worth MP, Federal Member for Adelaide, accompanied the Committee on the site inspection.
- 1.6 Following the inspection, the Committee held a public hearing at Parliament House, Adelaide and took evidence from representatives of the Department of Finance and Administration, the Adelaide City Council, Heritage South Australia and Planning South Australia.

Background

- 1.7 The DoFA submission advised that in 1987 the Government endorsed a program to provide clearly identifiable and purpose designed Commonwealth Law Courts buildings in each capital city of Australia. These buildings would accommodate the courts and their associated staff and facilities.
- 1.8 Purpose-built Commonwealth Law Courts buildings had been completed in Hobart, Parramatta, Perth, Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. Adelaide was the only State capital without a purpose-built Commonwealth Law Courts building.
- 1.9 On 19 April 1999, Cabinet approved the construction of a Law Courts building in Adelaide.

Current Accommodation

- 1.10 DoFA's submission stated that the present Commonwealth courts accommodation in Adelaide was fragmented. For example:
- the High Court uses the State owned facilities of the Supreme Court of South Australia; and
 - the Federal Magistrates Service uses chambers, registry services and courtrooms operated by the Federal Court and the Family Court under arrangements made with the two courts.

The Site

- 1.11 The site is located on the southern side of Angas Street at the south eastern corner of Victoria Square in the CBD. The site measures 83 metres long by 48 metres deep and totalling 3,984 square metres.³
- 1.12 In 1970, the Commonwealth acquired vacant land at 303/319 King William Street, Adelaide as a site for a new Commonwealth courts building. Adjacent land was acquired in 1989 for a possible increase in the size of a purpose-built complex.
- 1.13 The Commonwealth subsequently entered into an agreement with the South Australian Government to swap the King William site with one located on Angas Street in Victoria Square. Under the terms of the agreement, the cleared Angas Street site would be exchanged by 31 December 2001 to meet proposed construction time.⁴

3 Submissions Volume 1, p. 17.

4 Submissions Volume 1, pp. 4-5.