

Introduction

Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 11 May 2005 the proposal to construct a new entomology bioscience laboratory at Black Mountain, Canberra, ACT was referred to the Public Works Committee for consideration and report to the Parliament in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969* (the Act).¹ The proponent agency for this work is the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Organisation (CSIRO).
- 1.2 The Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration, advised the House that the estimated cost of the proposed works was \$14.5 million. She reported that, subject to parliamentary approval, tenders would be called for early in 2006, with a view to completing construction by early 2007.

Location

- 1.3 The CSIRO Division of Entomology is located at the CSIRO Black Mountain Campus; a roughly triangular site which is bordered by the national Botanical Gardens to the west, Barry Drive to the north and Clunies Ross Street to the south.²

1 Extract from the *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives*, No. 28, Wednesday 11 May 2005

2 Appendix C, Submission No. 1 from the CSIRO, Drawing 02 – Campus Plan

- 1.4 The proposed new Entomology Bioscience Laboratory is to be located in a courtyard between the existing Buildings 101, 135, 137 and 150.³ It is proposed that the new building will be constructed at the south end of the courtyard, while the north end of the courtyard will be landscaped and retained as a breakout area for staff. The small buildings and sheds which currently occupy the south end of the courtyard will be demolished.⁴

Inquiry Process

- 1.5 The Committee is required by the Act to consider public works over \$6 million⁵ and report to Parliament on:

- the purpose of the work and its suitability for that purpose;
- the need for, or the advisability of, carrying out the work;
- whether the money to be expended on the work is being spent in the most cost effective manner;
- the amount of revenue the work will generate for the Commonwealth, if that is its purpose; and
- the present and prospective public value of the work.⁶

- 1.6 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in *The Canberra Times* on Monday, 23 May 2005. The Committee also sought submissions from relevant government agencies, local government, private organisations and individuals, who may be materially affected by or have an interest in the proposed work. The Committee subsequently placed submissions and other information relating to the inquiry on its web site in order to encourage further public participation.

3 *ibid*, paragraph 6.1.51 and Drawing 03 – Precinct Plan

4 *ibid*, paragraph 6.1

5 *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, Part III, Section 18 (8)

6 *ibid*, Section 17

Public Hearing

- 1.7 On Friday, 17 June 2005 the Committee travelled to the CSIRO Black Mountain Campus and inspected at first hand the scope and environs of the proposed works. Later that day, the Committee received a commercial-in-confidence briefing on project costs from CSIRO, and held a public hearing at Parliament House, Canberra.⁷

⁷ See Appendix D for the official Hansard transcript of the evidence taken by the Committee at the public hearing held on Friday, 17 June 2005 in Canberra

