

Introduction

- 1.1 Under the *Public Works Committee Act 1969* (the Act), the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works is required to inquire into and report on public works referred to it through either house of Parliament. Referrals are generally made by the Special Minister of State.
- 1.2 All public works that have an estimated cost exceeding \$15 million must be referred to the Committee and cannot be commenced until the Committee has made its report to Parliament and the House of Representatives receives that report and resolves that it is expedient to carry out the work.¹
- 1.3 Under the Act, a public work is a work proposed to be undertaken by the Commonwealth, or on behalf of the Commonwealth concerning:
- the construction, alteration, repair, refurbishment or fitting-out of buildings and other structures;
 - the installation, alteration or repair of plant and equipment designed to be used in, or in relation to, the provision of services for buildings and other structures;
 - the undertaking, construction, alteration or repair of landscaping and earthworks (whether or not in relation to buildings and other structures);
 - the demolition, destruction, dismantling or removal of buildings, plant and equipment, earthworks, and other structures;
 - the clearing of land and the development of land for use as urban land or otherwise; and
 - any other matter declared by the regulations to be a work.²
- 1.4 The Act requires that the Committee consider and report on:

1 The *Public Works Committee Act 1969* (The Act), Part III, Section 18(8). Exemptions from this requirement are provided for work of an urgent nature, defence work contrary to the public interest, repetitive work, and work by prescribed authorities listed in the *Regulations*.

2 The Act, Section 5.

- 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.³
- 1.5 The Committee pays attention to these and any other relevant factors when considering the proposed work.

Structure of the report

- 1.6 Three works considered in this report were referred to the Committee in November 2012. The works were referred by the Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, on behalf of the Special Minister of State, the Hon Gary Gray AO MP.
- 1.7 One work was referred in May 2012 and reported on in November 2012. The Committee has reopened this inquiry. This work was referred by the Special Minister of State, the Hon Gary Gray AO MP.
- 1.8 This report also contains an extension to budget and timeline for a work referred in June 2008.
- 1.9 In considering the works, the Committee analysed the evidence presented by the proponent agency, public submissions and evidence received at public and in-camera hearings.
- 1.10 In consideration of the need to report expeditiously as required by Section 17(1) of the Act, the Committee has only reported on major issues of concern.
- 1.11 The Committee appreciates, and fully considers, the input of the community to its inquiries. Those interested in the proposals considered in this report are encouraged to access the full inquiry proceedings available on the Committee's website.
- 1.12 Chapter 2 addresses the extension to budget and timeline to the CSIRO Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP) radio telescope project. This project was originally referred to the Committee in June 2008. The estimated cost of the project is now \$188 million.
- 1.13 Chapter 3 addresses the proposed Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) Nuclear Medicine Project. The project is estimated to cost \$168.8 million.

3 The Act, Section 17.

-
- 1.14 Chapter 4 addresses the Australian Federal Police proposed new forensic facility at Majura, ACT. The project is estimated to cost \$106 million, excluding GST.
 - 1.15 Chapter 5 addresses the proposed Australian War Memorial redevelopment of the First World War galleries. The project is estimated to cost \$32.52 million, excluding GST.
 - 1.16 Chapter 6 addresses the proposed new National Archives Preservation Facility for the National Archives of Australia at Mitchell, ACT. The project is estimated to cost \$97.9 million.
 - 1.17 Submissions are listed at Appendix A, and inspections, hearings and witnesses are listed at Appendix B.

