

Introduction

Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 31 May 2007 the proposal for RAAF Base Pearce Redevelopment Stage 1, Pearce, Western Australia (WA) 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 Department of Defence (Defence).
- 1.2 The Hon Peter Lindsay MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, advised the House that the estimated out-turn cost of the proposal is \$142.2 million, plus GST. Subject to parliamentary approval, further design and construction will commence in late 2007 with expected completion by mid-2011.²

1 Extract from the *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives*, No. 179, 31 May 2007.

2 *ibid.*

Background

RAAF Base Pearce

- 1.3 RAAF Base Pearce is essential to the Air Force capability as it is a flying training Base for the RAAF and Royal Australian Navy (RAN) cadet pilots. RAAF Base Pearce houses two flying training units;
- Number 2 Flying Training School, which provides pilot training with 41 Pilatus PC 9/A aircraft; and
 - Number 79 Squadron, which conducts jet-training courses with 14 Hawk 127 aircraft.
- 1.4 Since 1993, RAAF Base Pearce has also been a flying training base for pilots of the Republic of Singapore Air Force.³
- 1.5 Further, RAAF Base Pearce is the only fully manned military airbase in WA, and is thus of high strategic and operational importance. The Base has operated as an airhead in support of Australian Defence Force (ADF) operations in the Middle East as well as provided support for search-and-rescue and fisheries patrols in the Indian and Southern Oceans. The Base also provides facilities and services to RAN units during major exercises in the Western Australia Exercise Area.⁴

Location of Site

- 1.6 RAAF Base Pearce is located adjacent to the town of Bullsbrook and is in the electorate of Pearce in WA.⁵ The proposed works are contained within the existing boundary of RAAF Base Pearce and observe the RAAF Base Pearce Master Plan.⁶

Inquiry Process

- 1.7 The Committee is required by the Act to consider public works over \$15 million⁷ and report to Parliament on:

3 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraphs 2 – 3.

4 *ibid.*, paragraph 4.

5 *ibid.*, paragraph 39.

6 *ibid.*, paragraph 54.

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

- 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.⁸

1.8 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in *The Australian* on Saturday, 9 June 2007. 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.

Inspection and Hearing

1.9 On Thursday, 19 July 2007, the Committee inspected the site and environs of the proposed works. A confidential briefing from officers of the Department of Defence and a public hearing were held at RAAF Base Pearce, WA, later that day.⁹

⁸ *ibid*, Section 17.

⁹ See Appendix D for the official Hansard transcript of the evidence taken by the Committee at the public hearing on Thursday, 19 July 2007 at RAAF Base Pearce, WA.

