

## **The proposed work**

### **Location**

- 3.1 The new Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) building will have a prime location in the Belconnen Town Centre, on the corner of Benjamin Way and Chan Street with its main address to Chan Street. This location is part of the present Benjamin Offices site and is an area presently dedicated to commercial accommodation. The buildings have close proximity to shops and the bus interchange and convenient use of community services such as the public library and restaurants.<sup>1</sup>

### **Building design concept**

- 3.2 The building design has been conceived to closely match DIMA's operational requirements. Five levels of office facilities will be provided above the ground floor. Basement areas will provide storage and service spaces, alongside secure parking. Air conditioning and ventilation plant will be housed in enclosures. The office floors will have compact and uniformly shaped floor plates to create efficiencies in servicing the building. The regularity in floor plate shape and size will also add to planning flexibility for future changes in workplace layouts.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Submissions, p. 13.

2 Submissions, p. 13.

- 3.3 The public entrance will be located on the ground floor, opening from Chan Street. Facilities for use by non-departmental staff (such as some meeting and conference rooms) will be clustered around the entry foyer. Entry to the secure work zone will require passage through a security checkpoint, which will be the building reception facility.<sup>3</sup>
- 3.4 Within the security perimeter, access between floors will be by lifts or fire stairs located in the building cores. One lift in each wing will serve as both a passenger and goods lift. Skybridges will link the two wings. Informal seating and tea areas will allow staff to meet or work informally in a relaxed environment.
- 3.5 The base building fitout provides a complete open planned office including air conditioning, light/power, fire services, suspended ceilings and carpets. It also incorporates lifts, fire stairs, toilets, tea-rooms, cleaners' rooms, and risers for services, communications and security.<sup>4</sup>

## Scope

- 3.6 The fitout proposed by DIMA will comprise 28,200m<sup>2</sup> net lettable floor space in a new building, purpose designed for long-term leasing by DIMA as the sole tenant.
- 3.7 The proposed tenant fitout works above base building services include:<sup>5</sup>
- a general office fitout with fixed partitioning and screens for open plan work stations;
  - shared use facilities such as foyer reception areas, training/seminar/theatrette, library, staff amenities and reproduction centre;
  - storage facilities on each floor and basement storage areas;
  - whitegoods, built-in items for tea points and audio-visual equipment for training rooms;
  - electrical, mechanical and hydraulics services above base building provision to meet the preferred layout;
  - additional fire protection services to satisfy client fire requirements, (early smoke detection/suppression systems for the computer room);

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3 Submissions, p. 13.

4 Submissions, p. 16.

5 Submissions, p. 16.

- physical and electronic security provisions; and
  - cabling and infrastructure to meet the DIMA information technology requirements.
- 3.8 Existing furniture items that meet current occupational health and safety standards will be reused as far as reasonably possible.<sup>6</sup>

### General office fitout

- 3.9 The DIMA fitout will be designed in accordance with commercial office standards, building codes and DIMA's detailed accommodation requirements as recorded in the Fitout Brief.
- 3.10 General work spaces provided by the fitout will be based on the DIMA Office Accommodation Standards. Work spaces will include:
- enclosed rooms for utility rooms and storage zones;
  - enclosed offices ranging from 20–23m<sup>2</sup> for the Senior Executive Service and 14.2m<sup>2</sup> for Executive Level 2 Directors;
  - the location of Senior Executive Service offices will not compromise the distribution of natural light to open plan work areas;
  - open plan work areas will be at the perimeter of each floor, close to windows;
  - work stations for Australian Public Service Levels 1-6 staff will be 5.76m<sup>2</sup>;
  - large and small meeting rooms, conference rooms and training rooms will be distributed throughout the building;
  - work points will be able to be configured for specialist office equipment and reference materials needed in close proximity to a particular work group;
  - processing or special equipment areas will be located in standard sized work points with furniture to suit the purpose, such as bookcase, computer desk, sorting table or library display shelves; and
  - some quiet spaces where individuals can withdraw for concentrated tasks.<sup>7</sup>

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6 Submissions, p. 16.

7 Submissions, pp. 16-17.

- 3.11 Various measures will be used to reduce the effects of foreseeable, recurring or sporadic disruptive noise. This will provide DIMA staff with the acoustic conditions needed to undertake concentrated work without undue distraction from noise.<sup>8</sup>
- 3.12 Work stations will be equipped with standardised furniture components, including adjustable desk tops, keypad mountings and ergonomically designed chairs. Materials and components will be selected with due regard to their life-cycle costs.<sup>9</sup>

### Special facilities

- 3.13 Special facilities will be located on the Ground or Lower Ground Floor for use by all staff.
- 3.14 These facilities will comprise flexible spaces to be used for consultations with non-departmental staff, meetings, conferences, seminars and training, a staff recreational area and sixteen showers (8 male and 8 female).<sup>10</sup>

### Cafeteria

- 3.15 DIMA has not yet reached a firm decision on whether it will include fitout for a cafeteria in the new building, however, a staff survey carried out in March 2001 indicated 92% support for such a facility. DIMA stated that if it proceeds with the cafeteria it will be quite small (approximately 140 square metres for the cafeteria and some surrounding seating). Commonwealth procurement guidelines will be followed with regard to the selection of a cafeteria proprietor.<sup>11</sup>

### Childcare

- 3.16 The building will include a Carer's Room to cater for a broad range of staff needs such as sick children, feeding mothers and emergency baby-sitting needs.<sup>12</sup>
- 3.17 DIMA stated at the Public Hearing that it had not made a final decision on whether to provide an in-house childcare facility, however its analysis suggested an in-house facility would be unlikely:
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8 Submissions, p. 20.

9 Submissions, p. 20.

10 Submissions, p. 17 and Evidence, p. 11.

11 Submissions, pp. 44-45 and Evidence, pp. 13-14.

12 Submissions, p. 17.

- the results of a staff survey conducted in March 2001 were provided to the Committee. The results indicated that only 26% of staff were interested in an in-house childcare facility, (13% indicated they would definitely use an in-house facility, whilst 13% indicated they were likely to use it);<sup>13</sup>
- DIMA stated during the Public Hearing that a childcare facility would require at least 500 square metres of space, hence to provide a facility would restrict DIMA's capacity for growth;<sup>14</sup>
- DIMA stated in its Submission that, as the new building did not involve a change in location, staff would be able to continue with pre-existing childcare arrangements;<sup>15</sup> and
- in addition, DIMA has sought to address the issue of work access through flexible work arrangements, including variable working hours and working from home.<sup>16</sup>

3.18 A survey of childcare facilities in the Belconnen area conducted by DIMA in March 2001 revealed that all of the eight existing facilities were either close to capacity or had no vacancies.<sup>17</sup>

## Storage

- 3.19 Three types of storage environment have been identified to meet DIMA's needs:<sup>18</sup>
- personal storage at work points (ie storage for day-to-day needs);
  - common storage on each floor; and
  - basement storage for files, equipment, furniture and other items not requiring frequent access.

## Fittings and equipment

3.20 The fitout will include white goods and built-in items such as dishwashers, ceiling mounted projectors and audio-visual equipment for training rooms and other meeting facilities.

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13 Evidence, p. 17.

14 Evidence, p. 17.

15 Submissions, p. 17.

16 Evidence, p. 17.

17 Submissions, p. 61.

18 Submissions, p. 17.

- 3.21 DIMA states in its Submission that it will seek to limit the cost of fitout by re-using existing fittings to the extent reasonably possible.<sup>19</sup>

## **Air conditioning and ventilation**

- 3.22 General office areas will be air-conditioned as part of the base building services provision in accordance with Australian Standards.
- 3.23 The DIMA fitout will provide for:
- boosted air supply and circulation for meeting, conference and training rooms to cope with higher occupancy densities; and
  - a stand-alone, air-conditioning system for the computer room.<sup>20</sup>

## **Lighting and power**

- 3.24 Lighting and power to the workplace is part of the base building provision, however, the DIMA fitout makes allowance for:
- specialised lighting installations in areas such as executive areas, large meeting rooms and conference facilities;
  - the extension of power to work points; and
  - specific task and work point requirements for power.<sup>21</sup>

## **Fire protection**

- 3.25 Fire safety systems fitout works will include:
- adjustment of the base building fire safety systems to suit specific floor and room layouts; and
  - fire detection and fire suppression systems required by DIMA will be installed in the computer room.<sup>22</sup>

## **Security**

- 3.26 The DIMA security objectives will be met through the physical configuration of the base building. In addition, the fitout will include:
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19 Submissions, p. 18.

20 Submissions, p. 18.

21 Submissions, p. 18.

22 Submissions, p. 19.

- provision of secure areas inside the DIMA security perimeter for particular departmental needs; and
- storage of sensitive material.<sup>23</sup>

## Data and communication cabling

3.27 Voice and data cabling will be distributed vertically and across the floors to meet the DIMA fitout. Generally the installation will include the fibre optic backbone network vertical cabling from the PABX MDF to IDF's and horizontal wiring on each floor by copper cables.<sup>24</sup>

## Occupational health and safety

3.28 The DIMA building and fitout will comply with the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991* and with the series of Codes of Practice titled "Occupational Health and Safety in Commonwealth Government Employment", AGPS, 1983.<sup>25</sup>

## Provisions for people with disabilities

3.29 The DIMA building and fitout will comply in all respects with the disabled access requirements of the *Building Code of Australia, AS1428.1, 1993 Design for Access and Mobility, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.<sup>26</sup>

3.30 DIMA is proposing to contract Bovis Lend Lease for the fitout. Bovis Lend Lease, through its architect Hoadley, Budge Olphert & Edwards Madigan Torzillo Briggs Pty Ltd, will provide DIMA with expert advice on disabled access issues:<sup>27</sup>

- in addition, Wilde and Woollard will audit all development design solutions through the construction period against legislative requirements and standards. Wilde and Woollard will retain additional expertise on disabled access issues if required.<sup>28</sup>

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23 Submissions, p. 19.

24 Submissions, p. 19.

25 Submissions, pp. 20-21.

26 Submissions, p. 21.

27 Evidence, p. 23.

28 Evidence, p. 24.

- 3.31 Four disabled car parking spaces will be provided in the secure under-building parking area. In addition, two car parking spaces for disabled visitors will be provided outside the main entrance.<sup>29</sup>
- 3.32 Other issues considered with respect to access for the disabled include:
- level access at ground level;
  - all lifts to accommodate disabled control requirements;
  - disabled toilet accommodation at all levels;
  - tactile indicators where applicable in public accessible areas;
  - ramp access where applicable in the building; and
  - passageways and doorways as applicable.<sup>30</sup>
- 3.33 As the design development of the project progresses issues pertaining to finishes, fittings, signage and hearing augmentation will be considered.

### **Parking provisions**

- 3.34 Short-term parking for visitors will be available off Chan Street, close to the main ground floor entry. Additional visitor time-zoned parking will be available in the existing on-grade car park off Chan Street and Lathlain Drive. Secure parking for 100 cars will be provided under the building with access from Chan Street through a controlled entry.<sup>31</sup>
- 3.35 The construction works will not reduce the parking available in the existing on-grade car park off Lathlain Drive.

### **Heritage considerations**

- 3.36 DIMA states in its Submission that the only heritage consideration was the retention of a protected yellow-box gum tree.<sup>32</sup>
- 3.37 The Committee expressed concern about the cost of retaining the tree and also about its health, particularly in view of the close proximity it will have to the windows of the proposed new building. DIMA responded that an arborist would be reporting on both issues and that retention of the tree was a base building cost issue (and therefore not an issue for DIMA).<sup>33</sup>

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29 Submissions, p. 57.

30 Submissions, p. 57.

31 Submissions, p. 14.

32 Submissions, p. 15; Ground Floor Plan, (Map 03), p. 26.

33 Evidence, p. 10.



## The developer

- 3.38 The new owner of the Benjamin Office complex is Benjamin Nominees Pty Ltd. Benjamin Nominees Pty Ltd is owned by two local developers, Mr Barry Morris and Mr Graham Potts.<sup>34</sup>
- 3.39 At the public hearing the Committee heard information on the developer. DIMA representatives advised that Mr Morris had just completed the Manuka development, a shopping centre and residential development in Canberra and that Mr Potts was a major developer, mainly of residential space. Both Mr Morris and Mr Potts were also involved in the redevelopment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics building adjacent to the Benjamin Offices.<sup>35</sup>

## Project delivery

- 3.40 It is proposed that construction work on the two stage building for DIMA commence by the end of July 2001:<sup>36</sup>
- Stage 1: To be built on vacant land adjacent to the yellow/green building currently occupied by DIMA and completed in late 2002; and
  - Stage 2: Demolition of the yellow/green building to allow the second stage to be constructed on its footprint and a connection between the two stages built. Construction to be completed in mid-2004.
- 3.41 The fitout works will be integrated with the base building works. The target date for commencement of the fitout work is October 2001, with completion in July 2004.<sup>37</sup>

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34 Evidence, p. 12.

35 Evidence, p. 12.

36 Submissions, p. 21.

37 Submissions, p. 21.