

## Introduction

### Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 11 May 2005 the proposal for the Holsworthy Program – Special Operations Working Accommodation and Base Redevelopment Stage 1, Holsworthy, NSW, 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).<sup>1</sup> The proponent agency for this work is the Department of Defence (Defence).
- 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 \$207.7 million. Subject to parliamentary approval, works are planned to commence in early 2006, with completion of works progressively to late 2009.

### Background

#### Holsworthy Barracks

- 1.3 Holsworthy Barracks is a precinct within the Liverpool Military Area which has been used for military training since 1906. During World War I, Holsworthy Camp was the principal training camp for troops in NSW. World War II saw the training area enlarged and facilities constructed for

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

the School of Military Engineering and for a Base Ordnance Depot at Casula.<sup>2</sup>

- 1.4 A number of Regular Army units are also accommodated within the Holsworthy precinct, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Health Services battalion, A Field Battery and 17<sup>th</sup> Construction Squadron.<sup>3</sup>

## Site of Proposed Works

- 1.5 The proposed works will be constructed within Tobruk Lines, a sub-area of the Holsworthy Barracks precinct,<sup>4</sup> is the only Defence owned property in the Sydney region capable of accommodating the special operations capabilities approved by the Government.<sup>5</sup>
- 1.6 The proposed project includes works in Melbourne to provide office accommodation and laboratory facilities for the Incident Response Regiment, at the Defence Science and Technology Organisation's (DSTO) establishment at Fishermans Bend, Victoria.<sup>6</sup>

## Inquiry Process

- 1.7 The Committee is required by the Act to consider public works over \$6 million<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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2 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 10

3 *ibid*, paragraph 12

4 *ibid*, paragraph 3

5 *ibid*, paragraph 19

6 *ibid*, paragraph 13

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

8 *ibid*, Section 17

- 1.8 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on Saturday, 17 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.

## Inspection and Public Hearing

- 1.9 On 10 June 2005, the Committee visited the Holsworthy Barracks, NSW and inspected the site and environs of the proposed works. A confidential briefing from Defence and a public hearing were held within the Holsworthy Barracks later that day.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix D for the official Hansard transcript of the evidence taken by the Committee at the public hearing on Friday, 10 June 2005 Holsworthy Barracks, NSW

