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JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Reference: CSIRO Riverside Corporate Park, North Ryde

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SYDNEY

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Tuesday, 18 May 1999

Members: Mrs Moylan (*Chair*), Mrs Crosio (*Vice-Chair*), Senators Calvert, Ferguson and Murphy and Mr Forrest, Mr Hollis, Mr Lindsay and Mr Ripoll

Senators and members in attendance: Senator Calvert and Mr Hollis, Mr Lindsay and Mrs Moylan

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

CSIRO Riverside Corporate Park, North Ryde

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Committee met at 12.58 p.m.

CHAIR—I declare open this public hearing into the proposed CSIRO Riverside Corporate Park, North Ryde, New South Wales, joint research complex for CSIRO Molecular Science and Food Science Australia. This project was referred to the Public Works Committee for consideration and report to parliament by the House of Representatives on 30 March 1999 at an estimated cost of \$49 million.

In accordance with subsection 17(3) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, in considering and reporting on a public work, the committee shall have regard to (a) the stated purpose of the work and its suitability for this purpose; (b) the necessity for or the advisability of carrying out the work; (c) the most effective use that can be made in the carrying out of the work of the moneys to be expended on the work; (d) where the work purports to be of a revenue producing character the amount of revenue that it may reasonably be expected to produce; and (e) the present and prospective public value of the work.

This morning the committee undertook an extensive inspection of the CSIRO's Molecular Science and Food Science Australia facilities at North Ryde. The committee inspected the broader Riverside Corporate Park and the site proposed for the proposed new joint research complex. Today the committee will hear evidence from CSIRO; Miss Rhonda Ware; Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society; Mrs Helen Ferns; Goodman Fielder Corporate Technology Group; and Meddicoll Pty Ltd. I now call representatives from the CSIRO.

GALBRAITH, Dr Michael Neil, Officer in Charge, North Ryde, Program Manager, Scientific Support Services, CSIRO Molecular Science

MALLETT, Dr Christopher Patrick, Deputy Chief Executive, CSIRO

MAU, Dr Albert Wai-Hing, Chief of Division of Molecular Science, CSIRO

MOODY, Mr Trevor Laurence, Assistant General Manager, Corporate Property, CSIRO

ARDERN, Mr Kerry Charles, Project Director, APP Projects Pty Ltd

EYLES, Dr Michael John, Chief Executive, Food Science Australia

McGILVRAY, Mr Ian, Director, Cox Richardson Architects and Planners

CHAIR—The committee has received a submission from CSIRO dated March 1999. Do you wish to propose any amendment?

Dr Mallett—Yes, Madam Chair. I would like, if I may, to read into the record the correction of some typographical errors. Page 1, paragraph 2, second sentence: delete ‘site’. Page 3, paragraph 14, third sentence: delete ‘\$4.3 million’, substitute ‘\$4.3 billion’. Page 4, paragraph 22, first dot point: delete ‘microorganisms’, substitute ‘micro-organisms’. Page 9, paragraph 48, third sentence: delete ‘CRS’, substitute ‘CRCs’. Page 18, paragraph 102, sixth dot point: delete ‘wast’, substitute ‘waste’. Page 33, paragraph 203, fourth sentence: delete ‘east’, substitute ‘each’. Page 34, paragraph 209, first sentence: insert ‘the’ between ‘in’ and ‘1990’. Page 37, paragraph 221, fourth sentence: add, after ‘facilities’, ‘and loose furniture and fittings’. Thank you. That concludes our modifications.

CHAIR—Thank you. It is proposed that the submission and associated papers be received, taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. Do members have any objections? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The documents read as follows—

CHAIR—Would a representative of the CSIRO now read the summary statement to the committee, after which we will proceed to questions?

Dr Mallett—This is a summary statement of evidence about the proposed joint complex for CSIRO Molecular Science and Food Science Australia at Riverside Corporate Park, North Ryde, Sydney, New South Wales.

This proposal brought before the parliamentary Joint Committee on Public Works is for the construction of a joint laboratory complex for CSIRO Molecular Science and Food Science Australia at Riverside Corporate Park, North Ryde, New South Wales. CSIRO requires appropriately designed and equipped research facilities that will provide safe, healthy and efficient working conditions for its skilled staff. These staff direct and undertake a wide range of research to meet national priorities according to CSIRO objectives and approved programs.

As the committee is aware, CSIRO is progressively upgrading many old, substandard and inefficient laboratory buildings as funds become available and constructing new facilities as required to meet changing research directions and priorities. The committee has in recent years examined proposals by CSIRO for Black Mountain, ACT; Clayton, Victoria; Pinjarra Hills, Queensland; and Bentley, Western Australia—and reported favourably on them. These developments are now proceeding or have been completed following parliamentary approval.

The proposed complex will replace numerous existing substandard or outdated buildings that are currently occupied by CSIRO Molecular Science and Food Science Australia on the CSIRO site at North Ryde. The proposed works are a further stage in the major redevelopment of the CSIRO site at North Ryde into a high technology business park—Riverside Corporate Park—which will incorporate both CSIRO research and development facilities and compatible private industry technology developments.

The redevelopment of the North Ryde site into a high technology park was endorsed by the committee, following its consideration of the proposal in 1991. The strategy for the redevelopment included: (a) the rationalisation and consolidation of CSIRO accommodation—then scattered across the whole site—into discrete, identifiable CSIRO precincts; (b) the upgrade of all potentially viable existing accommodation within such precincts; (c) the release of land freed up as a result of the foregoing consolidation to create a technology park subdivided into marketable parcels of land for private sale; (d) the funds released from such land sales to be deployed to finance the redevelopment and construction of CSIRO facilities within the identified precincts.

Works undertaken to date have included the provision of most of the site infrastructure, site amenity facilities and the concurrent development of facilities in the business precinct for such private organisations as Fujitsu, Syntegra, Gradipore, Oracle, BOC Gases and Revlon. The proposed complex will accommodate a total of 220 research and support staff and will comprise modern research laboratories; service and equipment rooms; and research, management and administration offices together with industrial scale process bays and a small animals facility. The complex will also provide a site library, site canteen, bulk chemical stores and a 140-seat auditorium that will be shared with other CSIRO divisions currently at the site. Substandard temporary and redundant existing buildings located on the

site of the new complex will be demolished, and the two areas of land occupied by the current CSIRO Molecular Science and Food Science Australia facilities will be vacated and offered for sale.

The estimated cost of the proposed complex is \$49 million. Construction is planned to commence in early 2000 with completion and occupancy in late 2001. The proposed complex of approximately 18,150 square metres gross floor area consists of the following facilities: research facilities, laboratories, laboratory special suites and support areas, and laboratory offices, occupying 11,990 square metres; management and administration, 1,130 square metres; such joint amenities as library, canteen and recreation area, auditorium, reception and support facilities, 1,930 square metres; food sensory centre, 200 square metres; animal house, 770 square metres; technical and process bays, 2,130 square metres; plus associated site works, roads, car parking, engineering and communication services, and landscaping.

The design of the complex aims to provide all of the facilities necessary to conduct leading-edge biological and chemical research within a comfortable, efficient working environment conducive to interaction of all staff, their research visitors and collaborators, and to providing medium- and long-term flexibility and adaptability. The design will maximise the use of natural light. Passive energy conservation measures will be incorporated into the building and landscape design, and active measures into the mechanical, electrical and hydraulic services design. Siting of the complex conforms with the general principles of the site master plan.

In developing this proposal, CSIRO and its consultants have contacted all interested groups, including CSIRO staff and unions, and those local authorities having statutory responsibility over locality and services. General support for the proposal has been received from staff, government and industry organisations. The proposed design fully meets the CSIRO functional brief and conforms with the technical requirements of local authorities. The complex will be designed and constructed according to the Building Code of Australia, relevant Australian standards and appropriate laboratory codes.

CSIRO believes that the complex will provide an appropriate workplace that will stimulate and promote research and development activities and further enhance opportunities for conducting national and international research, consistent with its primary functions and long-term objectives. CSIRO is satisfied that the proposed works are the most appropriate, timely and cost-effective way to provide safe and efficient accommodation for the staff of CSIRO Molecular Science and Food Science Australia and to meet their joint research needs. It therefore submits the proposal to the committee for examination and seeks its endorsement.

CHAIR—Thank you. Are there any questions from the committee?

Mr LINDSAY—On page 4 at point 24 of your submission, you talk about sharing costly instruments, such as the nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer and electron microscope, which are provided on a shared basis. What order of cost savings are involved in doing that?

Dr Mallett—I will ask one of my colleagues to answer that, Mr Lindsay.

Dr Galbraith—These instruments typically cost in the order of hundreds of thousands of dollars. A typical nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer will cost \$300,000 or \$400,000. Duplication would obviously mean doubling that cost, so that the cost savings would approximate that. The same applies to electron microscopy.

Mr LINDSAY—About \$1 million in round figures?

Dr Galbraith—More like \$300,000 to half a million dollars.

Mr LINDSAY—In point 20 you talk about the existing building as having problems with occupational health and safety and fire protection. Could you give us a pen picture of what you perceive the problems to be.

Dr Galbraith—The current molecular science buildings down there that you have seen this morning at present do not have a sprinkler system, and it was considered totally uneconomic to provide one in an existing old building like that. They are vulnerable to fire and are without a sprinkler system to protect them. As you will have also seen on your tour, the ventilation of the laboratories is severely deficient in many regards. Many laboratories are only ventilated with window airconditioners, which are totally inadequate for proper ventilation to modern safety standards. Safety standards in science are moving ahead all the time, and new buildings have to be configured to the latest standards.

Mr LINDSAY—Is it right that the airconditioning systems in some of the buildings continue to be unreliable?

Dr Galbraith—That is true, yes.

Mr LINDSAY—With regard to the filtering and control of all stormwater run-off to prevent any potential pollutants from reaching the Lane Cove River, what is meant by ‘filtering’? What are you doing?

Mr Moody—What has been installed as part of the Riverside Corporate Park development is sedimentation ponds to collect overland flow across the site. Fine silt material that would normally be conveyed onwards to the Lane Cove River actually goes into the settlement ponds and settles out and then is cleared over time.

Mr LINDSAY—In relation to the consultations on this project, you said in the evidence that you consulted with local community groups. Can you tell me who the local community groups were that you consulted?

Mr Ardern—In that respect, we consulted with the North Ryde Residents Association. We have consulted with Ryde council as a preface to meeting with other groups. We then covered some of the instrumentalities in terms of National Parks and Wildlife, to cover some of the aspects relating to the environment.

Mr LINDSAY—In the technical solution section, your evidence says that the development will comprise 11,080 square metres of usable floor area with a gross floor area

of 18,150 square metres. That makes 30 per cent of the space unusable. Do you have a comment on that?

Mr Moody—It depends what you call ‘unusable’. The useable space is the net space that is used for laboratory benches and office areas. In any building you still need to provide plant areas, corridor access and other such areas, which provide circulation space through the building, and that defines the difference between a net useable space and a gross floor area. The gross floor area in a large building also has to include the structure of the building.

Mr LINDSAY—The car parking proposed to be provided on site—184 bays. Who determined that demand?

Mr Moody—The 184 bays has been determined on the basis of a staff percentage. The surveys that we have carried out on CSIRO sites around Australia, including this site, indicate that we need to provide car parking to the equivalent of 80 per cent of the staff numbers. So with a staff population of 220 on the site, it equates to something less than 184, but then there is further allowance for visitor parking.

Mr LINDSAY—The current car parking experience on site has been okay? There is no excess parking demand currently?

Mr Moody—There has been a structured car park built on the site to meet current demands for the existing minerals precinct—as we call it—but, now as we are introducing additional groups within that central precinct, there is a need to provide car parking to meet those requirements.

Mr LINDSAY—Under materials and finishes, you use the expression ‘a dramatic metal roofing’. Is that the chimneys on top of the building?

Mr McGilvray—The dramatic element is the curved roof. You will see from the panel side of the model just in front of you how the roof is brought down in a dramatic foil or curved sweep so that the building has a simple but low elegant roof line rather than the building being bulky in any way.

Mr LINDSAY—You talk about a low elegant roof line, but when I looked at the chimneys, my first reaction was ‘Gosh, that looks awful.’ Is there some more aesthetic way of dealing with what some people would see as a monstrosity on top of the roof?

Mr McGilvray—What we would do with the chimneys, which are fume cupboard exhausts and other stacks, is group them together as sculptural elements. We have done this with other buildings.

Mr LINDSAY—As what elements?

Mr McGilvray—As sculptural elements. They have to be visible by the fact that they have to release those gases at high level but, from other projects, we can assure you that they will be grouped in an aesthetically pleasant manner.

Mr LINDSAY—Why cannot all the gases be brought together into one pipe and out of one pipe?

Mr McGilvray—They can. The bulk or the mass of that group of them would be fairly hefty. So our design approach would be to have them in groupings, but any one grouping would not be too large—to break them down into component parts.

Mr LINDSAY—Exhaust return air will be collected above the equipment bays for efficient heat removal. What does ‘heat removal’ mean? That is on page 25, point 140.

Mr McGilvray—The heat removal refers to heat generated by equipment and experiments mounted on the benches themselves—to remove that heat locally, as quickly as possible.

Mr LINDSAY—How do you intend to remove the heat?

Mr McGilvray—By exhaust fume hoods which are immediately above the bench area.

Mr LINDSAY—I understand; I misread that. I thought you were trying to remove the heat from the exhaust air.

Mr McGilvray—No. It is a bit analogous to an exhaust in a commercial kitchen.

Mr LINDSAY—Does anyone know the capacity that you will be providing in kilowatts for the uninterruptable power supply system?

Mr Moody—I will take that on notice.

Mr LINDSAY—On page 28, point 160, it talks about earth leakage protection being provided. It says ‘30 milliamps sensitive’. I would have thought that might have been 30 microamps sensitive. Does anyone have a comment on that?

Mr McGilvray—If I can just answer the earlier question first: 40 kilowatts is the capacity.

Mr LINDSAY—The earth leakage protection is 30 milliamps sensitive but I think it might be 30 microamps.

Mr McGilvray—We might come back and clarify that point.

Mr LINDSAY—Under the communication system, you say that the site microwave link will remain in the PABX room. What is the site microwave link used for?

Mr Moody—CSIRO communicates between its various sites using a microwave link, so it forms part of the network link for all our sites around Australia. So it is our communication link, effectively.

Mr LINDSAY—But it goes from here to where? To another CSIRO site or to a Telstra facility?

Mr Ardern—We may have to respond to you under advisement. We definitely have links to Bradfield Park from this facility. There is another facility in Marsfield.

Mr LINDSAY—If you can respond on that. Water discharge from dark rooms will be, as for the general laboratory areas, with precious metal recovery. Does precious metal recovery occur on site now?

Mr Moody—Yes, it does. We are required to do that in any such facility where silver can be extracted from that process.

Mr LINDSAY—Laboratory sinks in fume cupboards will be supplied with non-potable water. Where does the non-potable water come from?

Mr Moody—The difference between potable and non-potable water is that potable water is suitable for drinking and non-potable water is not suitable for drinking. It effectively starts off as potable water but once it goes into the laboratory system, as far as we are concerned, it is not suitable for drinking. Hence, we call it circulating non-potable water. We have a back flow prevention device to ensure that none of that water can be put back into the potable water.

Mr LINDSAY—So it just comes from the town water supply?

Mr Moody—Yes.

Mr LINDSAY—In the main entrance lobby area, do you think the space that is provided there is perhaps too generous? Do you think the space could be better used for what this facility is supposed to do?

Mr Moody—It is a very important area from our viewpoint. It is the main entry to the building but it also serves as a break out area for the auditorium and for displays that may be occurring in that immediate vicinity.

Mr LINDSAY—If perhaps you can foresee that these divisions will require more staff in the future, is there room to expand? What is your plan?

Mr Moody—We do have a master plan, which was included in the evidence, for the central precinct. Our long-term plan, as was indicated to the committee this morning, is to relocate our fire technology facilities onto the southern precinct immediately adjacent to the central precinct where this building is located, that is, south of the ring road as we walked around. That will in turn create a further site within the central precinct which will meet CSIRO's expansion requirements, whether it is for this facility or for another division of CSIRO occupying this central precinct.

Mr LINDSAY—In relation to Food Science Australia, what mechanism is there that makes us confident that the Victorian government will continue to fund its fair share of that joint venture?

Dr Eyles—There is no formal requirement on the Victorian government to continue to put any particular amount of money into the joint venture, nor is there any requirement on CSIRO. I think, though, that CSIRO is confident that the Victorian government has shown a long-term commitment to investment in research in food and agriculture. In fact, in the recent Victorian budget, there was a substantial increase in the amount of money available for research and development for the food and agriculture industries. There is no formal requirement, but I think there is a long record of commitment in that area by the Victorian government and we have no reason to believe that commitment will diminish in the future.

Mr LINDSAY—What that is really saying is that you are asking the federal government to make a \$49 million investment based on the fact that you think that partnership might continue.

Dr Eyles—Not really, because this facility here in Sydney is a CSIRO facility owned by CSIRO, and the joint venture will occupy it.

Mr LINDSAY—Yes, that is fine. Thank you.

Mr HOLLIS—To go back to Mr Lindsay's question about the chimneys, I am not so much concerned about the chimney, although I do see the building in Canberra that this committee passed some time ago that has got all sorts of strange things on the roof—AGSO. It is a dreadful looking thing. I am quite concerned about the impact this building is going to have when you are driving past or toward it. There is a generous provision of fully grown trees—I do not know if that is artistic licence or a fact of life—but looking from here, all I can see is the architectural feature of the curved roof leading up to a collection of chimneys. That may well be an architectural statement, but I am not sure that is an architectural statement that would find favour with everyone. What sort of visual impact do you think this is going to have?

Mr Moody—Yesterday I walked down Delhi Road observing the impact of building 12, which is the current building on the Delhi Road frontage. Given the landscaping that is being produced at the front, as a pedestrian walking along there I did not find that building offensive. The building that we are proposing to this committee, I believe, has further taken into account the need for an important image, both to CSIRO and the community. It is a laboratory facility yet at the same time, we are mindful of ensuring that it is aesthetically pleasing. In my view—and such views are always subjective, of course!—with the provision of landscaping, and by providing a setback—and we have increased the 15-metre setback that the council requires to 25 metres along that frontage—and the amount of tree canopy planting we can provide there, I think that the views of the building will be quite attractive. It is not a straightforward building. We have provided colonnades and we have built some appropriate architectural effects into the elevation. Rather than just a box, I believe it will be attractive.

Mr HOLLIS—It is true what you say—that this is always a very subjective thing and it is very easy to make smart comments about it. I appreciate that and I appreciate also the need that when you are building such a building, which has a lot of laboratories in it, of course you are going to assume that. Let me say that I was really impressed when we walked around this morning. I have been coming here since—I do not know how long—the early 1990s, I think; the late 1980s was my first hearing here. I remember the jumble that this site was then. With the ring road and things, I was really impressed when I walked around this morning and had a look at those buildings. My only comment—and, again, it is easy to be smart—is that the most attractive part of the building is hidden by trees and so on, and no-one is going to see the more attractive part of the building. All they are going to see is the top with all those chimneys, which I personally, in a subjective way, do not think is the most attractive part of the building. I think that that is the image that is going to be given to the passing motorists. It is a great pity that all the trees are hiding the most attractive part of the building. That is my comment. You do not have to respond to that because it is just a subjective point of view.

I remember that, at one of the hearings here when we were doing the food science laboratory—the last hearing—the committee made a big play about moving that to the Riverina college at Wagga. Mr Moody smiles; he remembers it well. Of course, you people had a great victory there, because the committee actually recommended to the minister that it go to Wagga but that was overruled. My concern is exactly the same now as it was then. We saw various aspects this morning. It would seem to me to be logical to have a division dealing with food closest to where the food is produced. Whatever you do here with the vegetables, the wheat or the meat you are looking at—whatever it is—it all has to be transported here. Wouldn't it be much easier to do it where the food is actually produced and start taking decentralisation a little more seriously?

Dr Mallett—The answer to Mr Hollis's question, which I suspect he may know, is that the Food Processing Division, as it was then, the Division of Food Science and Technology, as it was known in between, and now Food Science Australia deals principally with processed food. It deals with companies that are by and large located in the Sydney area. The headquarters of all the major food companies in Australia are usually either in Melbourne or in Sydney, with more local operators based in Brisbane and in Western Australia.

The reason we are keen to retain the location of the division here is that most of the people we work with, most of our customers, are in the Sydney area. Furthermore, we deal and work with the senior management, the product development directors and marketing directors of those companies who are also based here in Sydney. If you were out in the Riverina or even further south towards the Goulburn Valley, you would certainly be where the food is grown, but in many cases it is either exported unprocessed or is processed by factories owned by companies that are headquartered in either Sydney or Melbourne. So we also feel that, wherever practically possible, it makes sense to co-locate with other people doing similar work.

I should point out, however, that Dr Eyles explained to you in this morning's presentation that the principal links he has in terms of food technology are not with the Riverina, which has a relatively limited and restricted food science department, but with the

University of Western Sydney, the University of Sydney and also the University of New South Wales, all of which are in Sydney.

Mr HOLLIS—Okay. We will leave that for the moment. Let us come back to the site. It is quite a dramatic site on the side of the hill here, with a great gully going through the middle of it. Given Sydney's storm propensity and so forth, how does this site deal with that run-off? I heard what you said to Mr Lindsay about the filtering. But, given some of the storms we have had in Sydney over recent years, I think the filtering would be a little bit put to the supreme test. How do you manage that drainage and how do you make sure that the run-off does not spill over into the river? Has it been successful?

Dr Mallett—Mr Moody is in a better position to answer that.

Mr Moody—There are two levels of control. As far as this particular building site goes, we will be controlling all stormwater drainage—designed on the basis of overland flow in a 100-year recurrence interval type of storm, so that overland flow is controlled through that site. Obviously, pipe systems cannot take that sort of storm intensity, so the run-off will go downhill. The intention is that those sedimentation ponds will filter the worst of the storm effects, but there is never a guarantee that in an extreme event there will not be some overtopping of such sedimentation ponds.

Mr HOLLIS—You are in quite an attractive bushland setting here. I think the big bushfires were in 1994. I remember watching on the television as fire approached the chicken house down there. I think the chickens had been moved by that time—I am not quite sure—but we would have had the biggest Kentucky Fried in the world. Did the 1994 bushfire come into the ground or very close?

Dr Mallett—Just the edges, Mr Hollis. It did indeed move down there. There was some small damage in the Division of Molecular Science and lesser damage on the edges of the Food Science facility. Mindful of that experience, we have been relatively diligent about maintaining a suitable base cover, based on advice from the New South Wales fire brigade.

Mr HOLLIS—How do you respond to the criticism that was made about that fire, that in fighting that fire the CSIRO had drawn off a disproportionate amount of available water?

Dr Mallett—That was the allegation, Mr Hollis. My colleague, Mr Moody, who has had to—

Mr HOLLIS—CSIRO says you actually contributed to the water.

Dr Mallett—Yes, we did. We went to two ombudsmen's hearings, both of which found in our favour and against the people who made the allegations against us.

Mr HOLLIS—There obviously is a fire management plan here for the internal site. Is there one for the external as well, with access to the fire brigade and so forth?

Dr Mallett—Certainly for the internal site and also for access to the fire brigade. We had a fire here a couple of months ago. The fire brigade not only had no difficulty in getting

to that particular part of the site but did so very, very quickly. We have liaised with the fire brigade to make sure that they know all our major sites and that there is suitable access and suitable water available for them, should they need it.

Mr HOLLIS—A hearing that we have been involved in recently, which had quite sensitive areas in it, had some discussion about access of the fire brigade and whether they actually knew some of the areas that were dealt with. Is there a management plan with the local fire brigade here?

Dr Mallett—There is indeed. We have liaised with the fire brigade in terms of the design of the building and soon we will be liaising with them as it is constructed so that they are aware of where the sensitive areas are, how they access them and, in particular, how they access water or any other material they need to put out a fire, or in respect of any other issue.

Mr HOLLIS—I think you have seen the evidence that has been put to us. There has been some criticism about the entrance. You have two entrances, haven't you?

Dr Mallett—The east entrance or the west entrance?

Mr HOLLIS—I am not sure. Maybe when the witnesses come before us they can expand on that a bit. I thought it was the gate that we came through today.

Dr Mallett—There are two entrances, both on Delhi Road.

Mr HOLLIS—I would call it the main entrance, the entrance that we came through. I actually forget whether it was about the traffic flow or the visual impact or what it was, but I know that they made a significant point about that entrance and more or less indicated that you people could be doing more there.

Dr Mallett—There are a number of submissions that make reference to the very heavy traffic on Delhi Road. We share their concern. We know that Delhi Road has become a major thoroughfare, but it is largely because of it being a link road between Epping Road and the M2 on the one hand, and the Chatswood area on the other. There has always been a fair degree of traffic. This proposal will not make any significant change to that amount of traffic, simply because we are talking about relocating people who are already working here. We are not proposing to increase or decrease the number.

As to the particular entrances, there is a reference made in one submission that the eastern entrance was rather wider and was used for preference particularly by heavy lorries. That was true until recently when, as you have probably noticed, we have upgraded the western entrance. It has just been completed. We have a much wider road with a roundabout which can be negotiated by heavy lorries—and you have heard them pounding past as we have been speaking. We are currently in negotiation with the RTA to see if there is any possibility of the provision of traffic lights at the eastern entrance so that it is made safer. We do feel that the western entrance, because it is now substantially upgraded and because it has a traffic light, is going to be used more and more, and the other entrance less and less by

the heavy lorries unless they happen to be coming up from the Chatswood direction and can turn left.

Mr HOLLIS—Thank you.

Senator CALVERT—Referring to the master plan, do you control all of this land? You have redeveloped a lot of it and sold it?

Dr Mallett—We control the part of land that we currently own. As I mentioned to you, we have actually sold significant parts of the land, and the parts marked orange are plots that have been sold to the developers indicated on the plan.

Senator CALVERT—Do you still control this area?

Dr Mallett—We still control that area that you are signalling there on the plan.

Senator CALVERT—Do you believe that you have kept enough land for future activities? Do you have any plans to bring any of your other operations onto the site? You say on page 4 that there is a considerable advantage in co-location in Molecular Science and Food Science. Is there likely to be any other possibility of bringing your operation into the same area?

Dr Mallett—You are absolutely right and it is an issue. This is a site which is relatively secure simply because of its boundaries, which are either natural or man-made, such as motorways or television stations. CSIRO's presence in Sydney, as I said in the introduction, is split into a number of locations. We have a co-location with ANSTO at the moment in Lucas Heights and we are not proposing to significantly change the numbers there. They might increase slightly but that is going to be a continuing presence because of scientific synergies. We have a location in Prospect where we do animal production which, obviously, as it involves animals, needs to be out towards the west of Sydney.

In North Sydney, apart from this one, we have three other locations. There is a relatively small location, of the Division of Mathematical and Information Sciences, in Macquarie University. There are two larger sites, one of which is at Marsfield, where the Division of Radiophysics was sent by the then Prime Minister during the war. The other is at Lindfield, where we have our National Measurement Laboratory. In developing the master plan for this site, we took into account all those particular bits of CSIRO and whether there would be any prospect of them moving onto this site.

I have already explained the issues to do with ANSTO, which obviously need a nuclear reactor, and Prospect, to do with animals. When it comes to Lindfield, which is the facility for the National Measurement Laboratory, one of the things they need at that laboratory is both a vibration free environment and an electromagnetic radiation free environment. I think you will concede that, with a motorway on one side and a major road on another and with a television station on the intersection of those two major roads, this is hardly the environment they would choose to relocate to, even if we could afford the \$150 million rebuilding cost because of the specialised nature of that particular building.

There is a long-term plan that the Division of Radiophysics, as was, now part of the merged Division—with Lindfield—of Telecommunications and Industrial Physics, will probably move from Marsfield to Lindfield. But that is some time in the future, and it has not yet been finalised. As to the location at Macquarie University, that is currently under consideration. If it were to move, it would be more likely to move to Lindfield or to Marsfield because of their links to that sort of work.

I should also reinforce the comment made by Mr Moody in answer to Mr Lindsay's question. Towards the bottom of the CSIRO lozenge that you have pointed to on the map, there will be vacant land which will have been made vacant by the relocation of the fire testing building that is currently there to the far side of the current Building, Construction and Engineering site. We will just landscape that and reserve it for future use.

Senator CALVERT—Like my colleagues, I am just a little amazed as to why, with all this land you have, you would want to put a building of that size right up against the road. Building 12 is even further back than the building that you are proposing. The impact of building 12 is quite significant. When you look at that and then compare the new building site to it, it is rather a large building. I am not arguing about that, because it needs to be, but I am just surprised that you did not set it back further or even consider putting it somewhere else on all this land you control. It is almost right up against the road when perhaps you could have even put it down in that other area you are going to landscape. It just seems that if you had reversed it, set it back further, it certainly would have downplayed the criticism that has been levelled at the fact that it is so close to the road.

Mr McGilvray—In a master planning sense, the aim of the facility is, indeed, to create a front door on Delhi Road. There is a great purpose in in fact having a building that is well set back—25 metres to the building and some 35 metres to the exhaust stacks—but it does present an entry to a public road. It is a major entry to Australia's leading scientific institution, so in a planning sense it does need a certain address and frontage.

The other guiding principle is an east-west orientated building for solar access. The most solar efficient buildings go east-west. So a combination of sensible siting to have an entry presence, but also discreetly set back from the road, is the thing that is really governing the use of the site, which is quite steeply sloping as you go further to the south.

Dr Mallett—If I could add to that, Senator, your concern is an entirely reasonable concern. It is one we shared. What we did was to look at all the potential available sites, including the ones we have just indicated and several more, in terms of a couple of things. The first was the cost to the taxpayer, either through land sales forgone or through extra cost because of the location on the sloping site, and also the benefits of essentially bringing the vast majority of CSIRO staff on site into one building where they would actually work together. That is the principal reason we have chosen this particular location.

We have considered other locations, and we would be happy to give, under notice, the details of some of the calculations that led us to the conclusion that the current site is the optimum one, leaving aside the architectural considerations that you have already heard about from Mr McGilvray.

Senator CALVERT—You mentioned a while ago that you could not bring the radiophysics on site because of vibrations and acoustics or whatever. Will that have any effect on any of the delicate equipment that you are using in this proposed new building?

Dr Mallett—No, because as far as we are concerned the standard equipment we use is not affected by electromagnetic radiation from the television studios or even from local houses. When, however, in the National Measurement Laboratory you are measuring minuscule amounts of radiation, particularly if you need a radiation free environment, then that is a big deal. It is not so for our standard work.

Senator CALVERT—I could not help noticing this morning and being impressed with the projects you are carrying out here for commercial clients and yourself. Yet I find no reference in here to any security. Do you have security, or are you intending to have security?

Dr Mallett—We do. You have raised a very important issue. I did not actually take you into the rest of CSIRO, but the minerals precinct, the building I am located in, which is also going to be part of the long-term location of CSIRO, the building, construction and engineering buildings, which are relatively new and have been built from proceeds raised from land sales, are all secure buildings. They have a key access with a wand which I myself use, for instance, for getting into my own building. This wand will get me into any secure building on the site, obviously, as I am responsible for the site as a whole.

We are proposing to put a similar system in for the new building, and it will be secure. The problem is that there is a difficulty in retrofitting both of the existing complexes, either Food Science Australia or Molecular Science, with a security system, because they are old and were not designed to be secure. It would not be a very good use of taxpayers' money to do so. I can assure you that, by the time this project is finished, if it is approved by the committee, the whole of the CSIRO location will be secure and will be accessible only to those people whom we wish to give access to.

Senator CALVERT—But by necessity, by having the one large building and bringing everybody together, there are going to be a lot of people who will have access to that building.

Dr Mallett—Employees of CSIRO; yes, that is true.

Senator CALVERT—I do not know whether I have been watching too many videos, but there would be projects in there that are quite significant in terms of value to opponents or competitors. I hope that you make sure that you have proper security to protect not just yourselves but your clients.

Dr Mallett—We certainly do have that. As you know, we have been working for clients for a very long time. There is no occasion of any client levelling an accusation against us that we have breached their commercial confidence.

The second point is that, in addition to the building security, there were also certain sensitive parts of the complex—such as, for instance, some of the very high quality

laboratories—which will have restricted access. I think you saw some today. It is always the case that we have a policy that, when you are working on particularly confidential projects, you work on a ‘clear desk’ policy; and we have suitable safes or lockable filing cabinets to ensure that we are complying with what is an acceptable level of security. I should point out that we are regularly audited by our security adviser, who is on secondment from the Department of Defence, to make sure that we maintain a suitable level of security commensurate with our commercial program.

Senator CALVERT—Nevertheless, for a multimillion-dollar project, in a 40-page report, perhaps you should have included a paragraph on security.

Mr Moody—In fact, Senator Calvert, paragraphs 174 and 175 on page 29 refer to an access control system that we will be providing in this facility. I might add that, as Dr Mallett said, we do have a security expert. We have had a security risk assessment carried out on this facility by our security expert. I am quite happy to table the findings of that assessment for this committee.

Senator CALVERT—That may be of assistance to us. Panic buttons are okay, I guess: in this day and age I was thinking more of vandals and urban terrorists. Security is a problem.

Dr Mallett—We are very aware of it, Senator. We have had a problem with someone getting access to a building, which is now secure, and threatening people with a gun which he had concealed. He was challenged for rifling through people’s belongings, trying to steal money. That was an unfortunate incident. Where it happened is now secure. It is certainly the case that they could not get access like that in the future. We do intend to make sure that the design of the building has, as it were, a passive security element to it. Where we are placing the animal house, for instance, is also a consideration in terms of security.

Senator CALVERT—Even in our wonderful Parliament House in Canberra we never suspected that someone would drive a car through the front door. But these things happen, don’t they?

CHAIR—I noted in some of the public submissions, particularly the one from Helen Ferns, that there was concern about the public consultation process, particularly in relation to environmental assessments. In fact, Mrs Ferns’s submission states:

Where a developer, CSIRO in this instance, fails to lodge a development application under the EP&A Act there is no mechanism to initiate public consultation, hence, any CSIRO development proceeds without the same obligatory requirements as imposed on the private sector.

I am referring to page 4 of her submission. I noted your comments in response, but would you like to elaborate on that as it was an issue raised in other submissions in terms of the environmental impact on the site.

Mr Moody—CSIRO is not required to obtain formal approval for its design for the site as such, because effectively the building is being built on Commonwealth land. However, CSIRO is mindful of being a good neighbour, and with all of its facilities it carries out extensive consultation with all authorities to ensure that we do meet at least the requirements

of local authorities, councils or whatever. We cannot seek formal approval. On many occasions councils are unwilling to give us that formal approval, even if we ask for it, because of the Commonwealth implications.

We have consulted with the Commonwealth environmental authority, the New South Wales Environment Protection Agency, the Department of Land and Water Conservation, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Ryde City Council. We have had extensive consultation with the council. We have met with them something like five times in getting the design to this stage, and we will continue to meet with them on this project to ensure that we do meet Ryde council requirements.

CHAIR—What were some of the concerns raised by those agencies? I notice that National Parks had a submission raising some concerns over environmental issues.

Mr Moody—Most, in general, have said that they do not have objections, but they have set out certain parameters they wish us to achieve in the design and construction of these facilities. We will abide by those requirements in any of the design and construction operations of the facility.

CHAIR—So there has been no requirement for you to have any public consultations, apart from those through this committee?

Mr Moody—As such, no.

Dr Mallett—I think you will find that virtually all of the submissions—if not all of them—are generally supportive of the fact that Food Science Australia and Molecular Science need new facilities. Apart from the very significant number of important letters, which are easy to forget, from industry supporting this particular application, most of the people who have raised concerns do so not so much about the fact that it is a good thing for Food Science Australia and Molecular Science to have a new facility and to have a co-located new facility. They either raise concerns which are beyond our immediate control, such as the traffic on Delhi Road or Ryde council agreeing to a planning application for a chunk of Delhi Road to become a warehouse, which has nothing to do with us and is not on our land, or they raise concerns about what we are doing to make sure we protect the environment in the Lane Cove National Park and the Lane Cove River.

We are happy to go into rather more detail than we already have in terms of our links to the Lane Cove National Park and the filtering of the water and the stormwater sedimentation ponds as a prelude to discharging water into the Lane Cove River during storms—detail of the sort that Mr Hollis has already asked for. Most of the concerns seem to be about the boundary conditions around which this facility should be built and operated rather than whether it should be built or operated at all. We are very mindful of community procedures. Our problem is that, to some extent, we are restrained by the fact that we are a Commonwealth agency and we are subject to the procedure that we are going through today, as a Commonwealth agency.

Equally, because of our status, as my colleague has already indicated, most councils are unwilling to subject any developments that we conduct, whether they be here or elsewhere in

the country, to the same sort of process that is adopted for a private, non-Commonwealth authority. That is to do with the separation of powers between the Commonwealth and the states, which is more your avenue than ours.

CHAIR—I note your comments about Delhi Road, and I agree that the broader issue of Delhi Road is clearly one outside your jurisdiction. I guess where you will become involved, and where the public have every right to have some queries, is the ingress-egress problems, but I think they have been discussed earlier. Is there anything you want to add further to that?

Dr Mallett—Thank you for the opportunity. We are aware of the traffic on Delhi Road. We ourselves have reservations, and we are having discussions ourselves. As I pointed out, this particular proposal is a zero sum game, because we are just talking about co-locating people who are currently here, so the traffic impact on Delhi Road for us is going to be absolutely minimal. A number of the submissions referred to the problems with Delhi Road as a traffic thoroughfare. It is perfectly true, but they have got almost nothing to do with either CSIRO's presence or the Riverside Corporate Park as a whole. Most of it is filtering off other main roads. It just happens to be our thoroughfare, and that is an issue really for the New South Wales state government and the Roads and Traffic Authority.

I go back to the point that we are, however, very aware of the concerns that people have about the environment and we have done as much as we can to develop Riverside to maximise the revenue, as it were, to the taxpayer and minimise the call on the taxpayers' purse for building new facilities of the sort we are describing today. We have, for instance, excised a substantial chunk of land, which has a value of somewhere between \$2 million and \$3 million, which is immediately adjacent to the Lane Cove National Park on the south-east part of the site and which is the site identified by an audit done about seven years ago as containing most of the interesting flora and fauna. We spent \$1.2 million on the waterworks, the sewerage works and the filter works to try and make sure that we reduce to an absolute minimum the impact we have on the Lane Cove River and on the general environment in terms of water.

As to the site itself, each developer who buys a plot of land is subject to an attachment which we attach to the contract of sale whereby they are required to comply with guidelines on landscaping and on the general provision of a suitable environment, including planting with native trees and the fact that, of the area that we sell, one-third is buildings and two-thirds is landscape.

So, within the limitations imposed on us by your committee some time ago, we feel we have done our best to develop it in a way which is economically sensible on the one hand but on the other is also environmentally sensitive and leads, we hope, to the best compromise between the requirements of CSIRO, the requirements imposed on it by the committee and by government, and the interests of the local community.

CHAIR—You have said that there was no statutory requirement for you to undergo a public process in the development of the site. But do you have some plans to ensure that there are appropriate ongoing public relations, I suppose, with the community? Obviously you do occupy a very large area here and there are implications for the public at large.

Would it not be in your interest, and certainly in the public interest, for there to be some ongoing communication? I noted on page 4 of Helen Ferns's submission that she was not very happy about the communication between her and Mr Moody. I refer you to the bottom of page 4, the last couple of paragraphs, and over the page on page 5. Would you like to comment on your relationship with the community at large and how you propose to continue to communicate with the public?

Dr Mallett—I will, if I may, ask Mr Moody to speak for himself in just a moment, but in general we are happy to consult with the community at large. I suppose we are subject to two things. The first is the statutory requirements, like today's hearing, and also the sensible need to consult with people affected.

Although, as you said a moment ago, we did not have an obligation to submit an application for this particular proposal, we have liaised very closely and very carefully with the Ryde City Council, with whom we have built a good relationship, simply because we are very dependent on their agreement on the development of the site. They are very mindful of the way the site is developing and very mindful of the environment in which it does, and they are, as it were, in many ways the community's representative in so far as they represent the community as a local council.

In regard to the second issue in terms of who we involve, the advertisement for this particular public hearing has gone out and has elicited a number of submissions. We are happy to follow up with the proponents of these submissions out of session. Our particular problem is that a lot of people nominated themselves as representatives of the community. Our concern is the credibility we would have if we just dealt with one particular person or one particular group over another particular group. Experience has suggested that we need to be rather careful about this, not only for the local area, but also for other CSIRO facilities elsewhere in the country. Maybe Mr Moody could speak for himself.

Mr Moody—I would like to follow on from what Dr Mallett said. During the design process, we tried to identify which community groups we should consult on this project. I suppose, when something is publicly advertised, comments can come from far and wide. We thought, in designing this particular facility, we had consulted the groups that were mostly affected by the facility.

In defence of a lack of cooperation with Mrs Ferns, I received a request from, as I saw it, a private citizen seeking documents that she believed she needed to make comment on this facility. Some of the documents that were referred to go back to 1991, which we would perceive as commercial-in-confidence documents. For that reason, we were not at liberty to provide the documents that she required. Our view was that, if there was a request for information on this project, quite rightly it should be directed through the parliamentary Joint Committee on Public Works. My understanding was that her initial questions had been answered by correspondence that had passed from the secretariat of this committee. It became a protracted process over about five weeks, culminating, I suppose, in this hearing today.

Mr LINDSAY—During this inquiry, I took the opportunity to go outside and ring the Ryde City Council, seeking some comments on the chimney thing and the height of the

building, and so on. Their view expressed privately to me, I guess, was that they were concerned about the height of the building, particularly that the chimneys needed to be better concealed. In fact, they said to me that the nature of the chimneys makes the building look bigger than it is. My question to you is: if the committee were to recommend to you that we felt that the roof structure needed to be more sensitively dealt with, would you be able to accommodate that?

Mr McGilvray—Yes, I think, speaking from the design team, we would certainly be proactive in working with Ryde City Council if there were any concerns. We have already done a lot of that work already—to reduce the height of the building dramatically below the building adjacent, the minerals building, below the other buildings on Delhi Road and below the tree canopy. They are the written guidelines of Ryde City Council. Our interest is to meet the spirit of what they are doing as well. So I would assure you that we would go all the way.

Mr LINDSAY—Can you give the committee an assurance that this development meets all the criteria of the DCP that exist in this area?

Mr McGilvray—Definitely, without doubt.

Mr LINDSAY—Okay. If this new project is built, it will be a new way of working for many of the staff who currently work here. Have you given some thought as to the problems that may arise out of that and how that might be managed?

Dr Mallett—We have. Staff have been closely consulted on this. Both the chiefs of division, Dr Eyles and Dr Mau, have had slice groups in their particular operations, which have been involved in some detail in the planning of the new building. It is not a matter of a top-down instruction either from me or from the chiefs of division about what is required. It is more a matter of what is actually needed day to day.

It is certainly the case that it will be different from the previous environments. The staff have indicated—and I chair our Industrial Participation Committee covering the whole site, where I have representatives from all the operations on Riverside—that most people are looking forward to a new, considerably upgraded facility that is going to benefit not just food and molecular science but, through the shared facilities in between the two buildings, most of the CSIRO staff on site, and they welcome the fact. I am sure you would appreciate that a lot of improvements in science come from proximity and close interaction.

There are a number of areas which were identified in our submission to you, Mr Lindsay, where we feel that co-locating food scientists and molecular scientists is going to provide opportunities which we have not been able to realise because of separation in the past. I am thinking particularly in terms of food safety and in terms of the molecular biology underpinning some of the aspects of food safety.

Mr LINDSAY—Thank you. Bushfire protection: is that an issue that we should be concerned about?

Dr Mallett—While you were making a phone call, Mr Lindsay, we had some discussion raised by Mr Hollis about the bushfire risk.

Mr LINDSAY—I am sorry. Thank you. Have you given attention to energy efficiency targets in the building?

Dr Mallett—I will ask Mr Moody to comment on that.

Mr Moody—We set energy targets for all of our facilities, but laboratories are an unusual facility to try and establish an energy target for. Consultants over a number of years have been trying to determine what is an appropriate level, the difficulty being that you may have plant or research equipment that can operate for short periods of time but consume large amounts of energy. They may run for three months of a year and may not be used the following year, or not to the same intensity, and so it is difficult to assess.

We do set energy targets for the laboratories, for the office areas and so on. We have a building management system that will be installed in this facility, which will monitor energy consumption to ensure that those energy targets are met. It is something that will be monitored. I guess what it does provide at the end of the day is more data that perhaps can be fed into the industry to show the type of energy consumption that we can expect from laboratories.

We have at the same time built in a number of energy conservation measures into this building. As is mentioned in the evidence, there are passive measures that involve the building design itself and the landscape, and active measures in the design of the mechanical and engineering services.

Mr LINDSAY—Yes, I read that. In some of the evidence put before us this afternoon, one of the people giving written evidence says that, with regard to the planned provision of facilities for employees—such as car parking, gymnasium, swimming pool, child care, retail centres, jogging and walking tracks—by today's standards, the taxpaying public may find this objectionable. How do you respond to that?

Dr Mallett—It was an interesting observation, Mr Lindsay, because we tend to get criticised for not doing that. But it is delightful to see that we have this time been criticised for providing these facilities. The first point I should emphasise very strongly is that these are not provided for CSIRO staff. CSIRO staff can use them and will benefit thereby, but the principal requirement is actually for the substantial population which is going to be coming from the private sector, from the people who move into new buildings.

Based on a survey in terms of the attractiveness of selling land at North Ryde, we talked to people in the industry. They said that one of the challenges you face, in comparison with other sites, is the fact that—leaving aside the issue of public transport access—you need something like a cafeteria, something where people can go and relax, and so it will add to the attractiveness and the marketing potential of the park if you can provide the facilities that we have been so criticised for providing.

We have provided them, and I have to say—without any resiling from the fact—that it was CSIRO's and therefore taxpayers' money which was used to build them. However, the first point we would make in defence of that is that we have used a sprat to catch a mackerel. That is to say, the small amount of money we spent there has more than repaid itself from the land sales.

The second point is that, once Riverside Park is fully tenanted, we would expect in due course to sell the facility off to the private sector, because running these sorts of facilities is clearly not what we would regard as our main business. So we expect to recoup the outlay several times over, not only in terms of land sales but also because, in several years time when the park is fully tenanted, we will more than recover the cost of actually developing the facility in the first place.

Mr LINDSAY—Other evidence given to us in a written form says:

Parts of the site—

meaning this site—

are severely littered with plastic bags, plastic and glass bottles, aluminium cans, food wrappers and an assortment of other litter, all of which could be washed or driven by winds into the Lane Cove National Park . . .

I do not think I have seen any evidence of that. Are you aware of any such litter around the place?

Dr Mallett—Because it is a relatively large site and with it being relatively remote in some areas, one of the problems we face is that people do come in and leave litter. When we find it, we clear it up. I think you have seen from the general standard of the site you have visited today—and essentially you have visited most of the site—that we keep the place pretty clean, and we go out of our way to do so. We are very worried about, and aware of, contamination. We try to do something about it whenever we find it to be a problem.

Mr LINDSAY—I did see some rabbits today, although my colleagues did not. The evidence states:

Despite CSIRO's own rabbit calicivirus technology, significant rabbit infestations are evident over a large area of the site.

Are you missing some rabbits; isn't it a problem?

Dr Mallett—Mr Lindsay, you will know, presumably from your own interest, that the calicivirus has been exceptionally effective in certain areas of the country. I speak as someone who has had to carry this particular banner on behalf of CSIRO for the four years since the calicivirus escaped. But you would probably know that this virus has been particularly effective in the more arid parts, the drier parts, of the continent and it has led to substantial regeneration of native flora and fauna. It has been less effective in rather wet areas. I think, certainly given the climate we have had in Sydney over the last year or so, we would classify Sydney as being one of the wetter areas.

We have not done much about controlling the rabbit population, principally because it is not an issue for us and also because we suspect that the population will diminish as the site is developed. Once we have a stable site, as it were, we will certainly look at measures of controlling rabbit infestation, if it is an issue. But it is also a concern we would have to share with the Lane Cove National Park because, as I pointed out, we border the Lane Cove National Park. There would not be much point in our doing our damndest to eliminate rabbits when all they would have to do, as far as they are concerned, is hop over the imaginary border from the Lane Cove National Park. So it would need to be a coordinated campaign.

CHAIR—Dr Mallett, as there are no further questions, I thank you very much for your evidence.

[2.14 p.m.]

WARE, Miss Rhonda Elizabeth (private capacity)

CHAIR—Miss Ware, the committee welcomes you.

Miss Ware—Even though I am here as a private citizen with concerns about what is going on, I am a member and chair of the Macquarie Park Residents Group. However, the concerns I have mentioned have not been addressed to the broader group.

CHAIR—The committee has received a submission from you which is dated 6 May 1999. Do you wish to propose any amendment?

Miss Ware—Yes, there is a typographical with the way a paragraph is worded. The second sentence under ‘Traffic generating development’ reads, ‘These roadworks form part of the DCP Clause 6 with Ryde City Council.’ That should continue, ‘They were advised to be undertaken, after discussions with the Sydney Regional Development Advisory Committee of the RTA, at CSIRO’s expense.’

CHAIR—Thank you. It is proposed that the submission and the CSIRO response be received, taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The documents read as follows—

CHAIR—Miss Ware, I now invite you to make a short statement in support of your submission before we proceed to questions.

Miss Ware—I refer in my submission to DCP clause 6. Does the committee have a copy of that from the Ryde City Council?

CHAIR—No.

Miss Ware—It might be advisable to get a copy for your minutes of evidence. I will be referring to it. I am reading from the council's business papers. They were available to the public in the week prior to the committee meetings and were published by the council. This particular matter went before council just recently, on 4 May 1999. It was in reference to 2 Rivett Road, North Ryde. They published a previous report and a current report, when they did this one in May. So it is very recent.

DCP clause 6 refers to a number of site limitations, once the initial stage of development got to a floor space of 30,000 square metres. The site has now reached nearly 60,000 square metres, and that has been approved by Ryde City Council. My concern is that the roadworks have not been done. Delhi Road is a single arterial road which takes a lot of traffic. The works were required to be paid for by CSIRO because of the thousands of cars that have been coming to this site as a result of its development.

I realise that here, today, you are only looking at a small portion of this overall development. Nevertheless, this is the only chance, as was mentioned earlier, the community will have to get involved in this site expansion and the associated potential impacts on being able to move around on our roads. I have had a reply from the CSIRO to my submission. On the issue of traffic generating development, the CSIRO—and this is written by Mr Trevor Moody and dated 12 May—has said:

The requirement for particular roadworks to be completed when the Park development reached 30,000 square metres is now not applicable and future roadworks and intersection signalisation in Epping and Delhi Roads are the subject of continuing liaison between CSIRO, the Roads and Traffic Authority and Ryde City Council.

According to what I have in front of me and my inquiries, I find that that is misleading; it is not true at all.

I will just quote to you some of the things that are in these business papers. Ryde council has allowed them to carry on past 30,000 square metres. However, they have imposed conditions of consent on the development. They are going to ensure that a building is not occupied prior to the requirements of clause 6 having effect. Compliance certificates would be required prior to the occupation of the building. So they are trying to control things at the occupation stage.

The traffic generating development concern is that, when there is a large traffic generating development, it falls under the provisions of schedule 1 of the state Environmental Planning Policy No. 11, Traffic Generating Development. So that means that the applications from CSIRO need to be referred to the Sydney Regional Advisory Committee of the RTA. This was done on 30 November. There was a meeting of the committee on 22 December 1998, the outcome of which was forwarded on 19 February 1999

as the following advice—and I can read this out to the committee or I can photocopy it and give it to you later.

CHAIR—I think the committee can get a copy of that report. We do have limited time and a number of other witnesses to hear. So please try to keep your remarks succinct.

Miss Ware—I will try to keep them concise. It does say here that certain roadworks are required involving the widening of Delhi Road to four lanes from Epping Road to the easternmost vehicular point access of the CSIRO and refers to further upgrading of the intersection of Epping-Pittwater and Delhi-Plassey. There are seven points required there. That can go in as further evidence. I am not quite sure whether that should be a further submission from me or how you want to accept that.

CHAIR—We have had a letter from Ryde City Council, dated 4 May, in which they advise that the council does not wish to make any submission and that basically they are satisfied with the development proposal. The committee can get hold of that report and members can have a look at it, if necessary. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Miss Ware—Yes, I have only addressed my first point. The other one is environmental impacts, and I have photographs concerning these. I do not have any photographs of the rabbits that have been spoken of, but I do have photographs concerning the issues I have raised, being stormwater, weed infestation and overflow of siltation fences.

CHAIR—Would you like to circulate those now while you are talking to your paper? As I have said, we have a number of other witnesses and we have limited time. So please keep your remarks short.

Miss Ware—I am sorry, I was not given a time. If I were given a time of five or 10 minutes, I would know what to speak to.

CHAIR—It is about 10 minutes maximum for each witness. There is no set time, but we do ask you to keep your statement short. You have given us a written submission, and you are really talking to that.

Miss Ware—The photographs I am circulating show the tree dieback; that the tree canopy has been lost; and very high piles of mulch. This mulch is from trees which have been taken from the site and mulched; that is then left on the site. The rabbits are quite prolific in that area; they are eating the grass on the site. Water goes underneath this mulch at the southern corner. There is a hole and the water goes down the slope, so the siltation fence is not working. Siltation fences are either non-existent or overrun. That water goes across a rock ledge further down the site.

The parking area for the Revlon workers and those at some of the other sites is to be developed. They leave their glass bottles and other things all over the place. As you will notice, the trees are not protected by any protective barriers or orange-coloured or reflective material. The workers are mostly on the site in daylight hours, which means that they are leaving about 3.30, 4 o'clock and can see the trees. But there are some very big pieces of equipment which could damage those trees, and I feel they should be protected.

I have been quite concerned about what has been going on at this site for over 12 months. It is some eight years since the last committee was held and I have lived in the area for 20 years. This was quite a well vegetated site, with quite a good tree canopy prior to all this development. There have been a lot of trees lost from this site.

Mr HOLLIS—You are not seriously proposing that all work on this site now stop, that no more work go on?

Miss Ware—No, I am not. The previous minutes of the evidence said that the tree canopy was going to be maintained. The council and the Sydney Regional Traffic Advisory Committee have imposed certain restrictions that, when it gets to so much development, certain things had to be done. I am just saying to you that these things have not been done. So before you approve any more, this is the only opportunity that you are going to have. Someone has to stop things somewhere, because what the Sydney RTA committee say is not mandatory. They have to be consulted—they have been consulted—but the DCP, and the restrictions in that, cover it from council.

It just concerns me that there is all this consultation going on and that the rules have been made. In fact, the word in the business papers is ‘flexibility’: ‘allow CSIRO flexibility,’ ‘we have asked for and been granted flexibility’. No-one else would be allowed to do what they are doing without having to address these different concerns.

Mr HOLLIS—We will most certainly put that, because another submission has also made the point that the tree guidelines have not been adhered to. I appreciate the problem of the traffic—quite frankly, I do not know how you solve that problem in any city—but I am a little surprised that Ryde City Council did not feel that they had sufficient worries to come along and express views either for or against this submission.

Miss Ware—It was not a surprise to me.

Mr HOLLIS—Well, maybe as a ratepayer of Ryde you can take that up with them, because, if they are gung-ho for it, they usually come along and say, ‘Yes, we are very much in favour.’ Or, if they have got reservations—which someone informally expressed to Mr Lindsay—we would have appreciated that being on the public record. Environment Australia talks about there being no things on the Register of the National Estate. The Environment Protection Authority—although they raise a couple of questions about the run-off and that—also give it the tick. They are the very department in New South Wales that is supposed to be looking at these things.

Miss Ware—Yes. I have some reservations about the Environment Protection Authority. I have spoken to them about quite a number of other issues—I have not spoken to them about this site—and they do not seem to be coming to the fore when noise, air and other pollution problems have been pointed out to them. They will not investigate, which is a concern. They should be the appropriate body, but there has been a change to the environmental planning legislation, apparently, and a lot of it has now gone back under Ryde council. It is only certain properties, which are legislated under the act and have chemicals and air concerns, that are now covered under the EPA. The rest have gone under Ryde council. Basically, it is Ryde council that should be doing the policing of the site and CSIRO

should be looking after the rubbish collection and the stormwater concerns. There does not seem to be anyone being the policeman on the site.

Mr HOLLIS—You are, I take it, a ratepayer of Ryde council?

Miss Ware—Yes.

Mr HOLLIS—If I were you—and it is not for me to tell you what to do—I would express my displeasure, if I were a ratepayer, that, on a significant proposal in the city area, the city council only thought it appropriate to write a one-sentence thing on such a significant project. Even if they were for it, I think they could have appeared at least—they have got enough staff. If they did have reservations about it, it is no good expressing them in a personal capacity to a member over the telephone; it is up to them to come before the committee and have the guts to put their reservations on the public record.

Miss Ware—Yes. It seems that someone has mentioned some reservations to Mr Lindsay. I do not know whether it is the same person who has signed that letter. Who has signed the letter from Ryde council?

Mr HOLLIS—Sue Weatherley, Director, Environmental Standards.

Miss Ware—That is right. Sue is the Director of Environmental Standards. I do have some problems with her personally, because I often make representations to council.

Mr LINDSAY—Are you aware that the original requirements of traffic management after the site reached a development of 30,000 square metres have been changed?

Miss Ware—What do you mean?

Mr LINDSAY—In your evidence you referred to the requirements that were needed if this site reached 30,000 square metres of development. Are you aware that those requirements have been changed?

Miss Ware—No.

Mr LINDSAY—You should have a look at that.

Miss Ware—I am referring to the latest document from council dated May 1999 and the quotes from it.

Mr LINDSAY—I suggest that you check with council.

Miss Ware—I have made enquiries to the best of my ability.

Mr LINDSAY—I am just telling you of evidence—

Miss Ware—What date are you referring to?

Mr LINDSAY—No. Can I move on and ask you one more question? Are you aware that this particular development generates no extra traffic on this site?

Miss Ware—It must generate some extra traffic.

Mr LINDSAY—It is minimal, though.

Miss Ware—I am sure this particular—

Mr LINDSAY—It is just replacing the facilities that are already here.

Miss Ware—The Food Science Australia parking—what figure was it? 184—would obviously generate probably all of that.

Mr LINDSAY—Those workers are already on site. This development that we are considering today does not generate any extra traffic.

Miss Ware—Right. I do not think you can look at things in isolation. You have to look at the cumulative impact of everything that is going on on this site.

Mr LINDSAY—Yes. I understand your point. You are looking at the whole thing.

Miss Ware—It is a car park out there on Delhi Road from 3.30 p.m. or 4 o'clock onwards. It gets to the stage where traffic just does not move down the steeper section and on into Chatswood.

Mr LINDSAY—This is why you should move to paradise and live in paradise where I live!

Miss Ware—Where is that?

Mr LINDSAY—I was sympathising with you over the amount of traffic that you have.

Miss Ware—Could you say where paradise is, because I am not aware?

Mr LINDSAY—In Townsville.

Miss Ware—It is very difficult to control the amount of development going on in North Ryde. It has been absolutely massive, and there has not been a traffic study done since 1991. There was one done in 1998, which has not been made public by Ryde Council, and I wonder why. I know there has been a lot of traffic work ordered since it was completed, and I think that is because they know that traffic is a big problem.

Mr LINDSAY—I think I agree with Mr Hollis in relation to your council. Thank you.

Senator CALVERT—Following on from Mr Lindsay, if the Ryde council had been here, I would have asked them if they had a plan as far as signage standards are concerned. I am a former member of a local government, like a lot of my colleagues.

Miss Ware—They do have a sign code.

Senator CALVERT—Well, how come they allowed the Fujitsu sign that you are concerned about? It must have some ramifications, surely.

Miss Ware—Yes. But also in the minutes of evidence it says that there was not going to be a sign that was particularly visible. I do not have the actual minutes in front of me but there is something in there saying that there would not be any problems like this. It is up to the CSIRO to keep to what they said they were going to do in the minutes of evidence.

Senator CALVERT—But if Fujitsu contravene the planning provisions and put up a sign that is not in conformity with the planning policy, surely it is Fujitsu whom you should be pursuing, not the CSIRO?

Miss Ware—I understand it is part of the CSIRO riverside corporate complex. It is the Ryde council that has allowed the thing to go up there.

Senator CALVERT—That is right.

Miss Ware—As you have probably gathered by now, I do have problems with Ryde council.

Senator CALVERT—It does seem that they may be somewhat lax in carrying out their duties.

Miss Ware—Also, it was stated earlier that the Ryde City Council is the community's representative. I would absolutely deny that. That is not the case at all. There are a lot of things going on without community consultation with Ryde council, and to say that they are the community's representative is not true. The community's credibility was also questioned as to who we are, who the community are, why we are here and what community groups there are. The Ryde council does know. There are only about eight community groups in Ryde, and there might even be less than that. There are not a terrible lot of environmental community groups. Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna is testifying later and they may be able to say exactly how many community groups there are, but there are not very many. It would not be very difficult to provide you with a list of who those people are and to have their representation at these sorts of things.

CHAIR—Thank you very much, Miss Ware.

[2.38 p.m.]

MERCHANT, Ms Catherine Ann, Secretary, Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society

CHAIR—Ms Merchant, I welcome you on behalf of the committee. The committee has received a submission from the Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society, dated 5 May 1999. Do you wish to propose any amendment?

Ms Merchant—Yes, I do. I have something written that I would like to read.

CHAIR—Thank you.

Ms Merchant—Since forwarding our written submission, we have received other documents which have clarified the issues and concerns we initially raised. These include the minutes of evidence from a previous standing committee in 1991, the 1992 council papers related to the original rezoning of the site, the 1993 development control plan for the site, the flora, fauna and soils study undertaken by the CSIRO and the current riverside master plan.

From these, it seems clear to us that the horse has well and truly bolted from this site. Most of the land has been sold and significant disturbance of intact bushland in the south-eastern part of the site has occurred. This is despite the conditions placed on site in the 1992 rezoning approval that ‘every effort will be made to preserve and upgrade remnant bushland on the site’. The flora and fauna report, which recommended that areas of intact bushland be retained, has not been achieved. Further to the concerns in our written submission, we wish to elaborate on the following three points.

CHAIR—Is this part of the amendment?

Ms Merchant—Yes, with further research that I have done. This is typed. I do not know what the procedure is. It is four pages long, but it is big writing, so I can read it. There are three points I wish to elaborate on: bushland protection, the current developmental controls which apply to the site and the development generally upon the Delhi Road ridge top. First, bushland protection: we reject CSIRO’s statement that any potential impact of this development will be managed.

CHAIR—Did you say there were four pages?

Ms Merchant—Yes.

CHAIR—You have only one more page to read?

Ms Merchant—No, I have three.

CHAIR—I think we should incorporate those into the transcript, unless there is something in particular.

Ms Merchant—There is something that has come to my attention since then.

CHAIR—Can you summarise the key points of the amendments and submit those papers for inclusion in the *Hansard* record?

Ms Merchant—The Delhi Road ridge top has been addressed previously, so I will address the bushland protection and the current developmental controls. We reject CSIRO's statement that any potential impact of this development will be managed without risk to the environment. This is from the current report. For example, the disturbance which has occurred within the south-eastern section of the site contradicts the original assessment contained in the flora and fauna report. Society is concerned with the extent of the disturbance, the planting of non-local, indigenous species and landscape works, the lack of bush regeneration follow up, the increasing weed invasion and the construction of environmentally insensitive rock structures across the south-east section of the site.

Of particular concern is a small population of a threatened species, *Darwinia biflora*, which is at its southern limit in the vicinity of two sites. While this species is well preserved in other government areas to the north, it is very poorly conserved in Ryde. The management plan prepared by consultants for CSIRO for this remnant population appears to include a proposal to relocate one cluster of plants elsewhere. This appears to have been prepared without a formal application to Ryde City Council and without full consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. This has occurred whilst the land was under CSIRO crown authority and we are unclear of CSIRO's responsibilities in this area. We feel that this will have a significant adverse impact on local biodiversity and the preservation of threatened species within the local area. Given CSIRO's involvement in the Commonwealth biodiversity strategy, the community expects evidence that biodiversity principles are put into practice by CSIRO itself.

The other point I would like to make is in regard to the developmental controls which apply to the site. Generally, the developments on the site by CSIRO which have been sold are being assessed against developmental controls using old allotment details which were prepared prior to the M2 tollway, prior to expansions of the Lane Cove National Park and prior to the Threatened Species Conservation Act. As initially stated, the horse has bolted. It is unfortunate that this development is under the crown authority of CSIRO and it has not been based on principles of ecologically sustainable development. This was particularly important along this ridgetop near the national park.

CHAIR—That was the extent of your amendment?

Ms Merchant—Mainly about the management of threatened species that has occurred on the site.

CHAIR—The rest of that can be incorporated into *Hansard*.

Ms Merchant—We just had a conclusion. Is that all right?

CHAIR—Yes.

Ms Merchant—We feel that CSIRO, as one of the chief contributors to Australia's intellectual property, must do it better. We suggest that, first, full consultation with Ryde City Council occurs and any development proposal is based on developmental controls which conform with Ryde's most up-to-date planning ordinances. What I did not explain to you is that there is a real lag time and that currently we have planning ordinances in Ryde that are over 30 years old. We are on the brink as we speak of having the new LEP put on display. Ryde is playing catch up—and I am not here to defend Ryde council on this—but you will be aware that across the road the developmental control plans that are in place currently have set height limits. I think it is four storeys with a 10-metre overall height. We feel this sets a better direction for development along this ridgetop, but we have this lag time with council at the moment.

Secondly, building height along Delhi Road is reduced, with a reconfiguration which puts more bulk towards the southern side of the complex. Thirdly, there is provision for the future removal of the existing building at 11 Julius Avenue with minimal expenditure on this building in the interim. Fourthly, we suggest that disturbance to the south-eastern section should cease and that full consultation should occur with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to rehabilitate this area. Thank you.

CHAIR—It is proposed that the submission and the CSIRO response be received, taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. Do members have any objection? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The documents read as follows—

CHAIR—As you have made an opening statement, we will proceed directly to questions.

Senator CALVERT—You talked about endangered species. Could you elaborate on that a bit?

Ms Merchant—In the flora, fauna and soils report, *Darwinia biflora* was identified in the south-eastern section of the site, around that area of the site.

Mr HOLLIS—What is this *Darwinia biflora*?

Ms Merchant—It was a rare and threatened plant. It is now on schedule 2 of the threatened species conservation act. It seems to me—and I have tried to clarify this with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Ryde City Council—that both seem to be unaware of the management plan that the CSIRO have prepared for what they are going to do with the threatened species on the site. What we are picking up is that there will be a plan to actually relocate some of the plants to another area. From what I can gather, this has not been approved by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Ryde council is unaware of it.

Mr HOLLIS—There is a legitimate complaint, whether it is right or wrong, that various things to do with vegetation in the 1991 proposal were not followed. What I did find strange, when you talked about the land being sold, was that I was on the 1991 committee and I was always aware—and it is on the public record—of the long-term plan of the CSIRO for this site. It was made clear to the hearing back then that this was going to be made into a science and technology park. There has never been any secret about that. I do not see why people are expressing surprise today, because that was something that was on the public record.

Ms Merchant—I guess it is the development of that which is the issue, and that it be ecologically sustainable and that it does adhere to current practices, in particular conservation of biodiversity. The CSIRO are a think tank. People would expect that they could set out a bit of a vision for how they would see development on the site. Can I also say too that there have been some changes. It has been hard to actually establish this, but the maps that are in council are slightly different to the master plan in terms of the allotment. Whether there has been some reconfiguration as well, I am not sure.

CHAIR—I do notice in relation to remnant bushland that the NPWS, on page 2 of their submission, note that parts of the larger CSIRO site do contain remnant bushland. They say:

Although it is unlikely to be affected by the current proposal, the NPWS suggests that protection of any remnant bushland should be afforded a high priority in planning for future use and development of other areas of the site.

But their earlier statement is that they think that it is unlikely to be affected by the current proposals.

Ms Merchant—I think this was also confirmed in that report, which identified 14 per cent of the site as intact bushland. There was not a lot of debate about the *Darwinia biflora* because it was considered to be in an area that was not going to be developed. It seems that, in the eight years since that report, there have been some changes and that the CSIRO have proceeded with this management plan without consultation with Ryde City Council and the

National Parks and Wildlife Service. It seems that in actual fact they answer to Commonwealth legislation in this particular case, which is rather unfortunate for us at a local level.

Mr LINDSAY—In relation to that development control plan, in earlier evidence I asked representatives of the CSIRO whether they would give the committee an assurance that they would fully comply with the relevant development control plans for the area. They said yes. Do you have a problem with that? Do you think that is not so?

Ms Merchant—As I have tried to explain, I have rushed through this. We have a real lag situation in Ryde. We have planning ordinances that I think are the oldest in Sydney, and we are playing catch-up. I am not here to defend the professionalism of Ryde City Council staff, but I think that there has been a lot of effort put in to developing a new consolidated LEP and that the work they have done with the developmental control plan across the road has been quite good. It has been good quality stuff.

Obviously, the whole ridge top of the Lane Cove valley has had massive development. The M2 went through. It has created all sorts of hassles, and I think that Ryde is playing catch-up. The current planners have inherited this. This is one of the legacies of the past direction of Ryde City Council. We are talking about a developmental control plan that is, I think, nine years old as well and I do not think it reflects current community expectations. It certainly was developed before the threatened species conservation act. As I said, we have had the expansion of the national park and the M2. It has not even been amended to take account of the M2 and the loss that occurred with that. So I think you have to question things, even if they are saying they conform to the current planning ordinance. There is a bit of a history there, and it is perhaps something they should be more sensitive about.

Mr LINDSAY—Thank you for that.

CHAIR—The National Parks submission to us was dated 10 May, which was very recent.

Ms Merchant—The Lane Cove office is not aware. As I said, National Parks is unaware of the plan to relocate the species. I do not know what consultations occurred.

CHAIR—Thank you very much.

[2.52 p.m.]

FERNS, Mrs Helen (private capacity)

CHAIR—I welcome you on behalf of the committee. The committee has received a submission from you dated 20 April 1999 and a further submission dated 11 May 1999. Do you wish to propose any further amendment?

Mrs Ferns—I do not.

CHAIR—It is proposed that the submissions and the CSIRO response be received, taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. Do members have any objection? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The documents read as follows—

CHAIR—I now invite you to make a short statement in support of your submission and then we will proceed to questions.

Mrs Ferns—I understand that you are restricted for time. I do not have anything much to add to my submission. If I may, I would like to address a few of the comments that have been made here today.

CHAIR—Certainly.

Mrs Ferns—As far as the appearance of the building is concerned, as I stated in my submission it certainly is subjective as to whether it is a beautiful looking building or not. However, on a ridge top it has a very severe impact on people looking across into the site, and I would like the CSIRO and this committee to take that on board. The CSIRO spoke about their image. This does not reflect well on their image. This is something that can be seen for many kilometres away, so there is another part of their image that they perhaps should address.

As for the comments about the 1994 bushfires, one of the CSIRO officers remarked that there had been two ombudsman's hearings. Maybe we need to have that clarified. I do not know whether that was in reference to this site here or in reference to the site at Lindfield. I know that there were concerns about the water supply at Lindfield. I was unaware of concerns about the water supply at this site; I am confused about that. To my knowledge, there was no ombudsman's hearing on the Lindfield site and the loss of water there. If there was, I would be curious to know why community members were not invited to participate in that. To my knowledge, the water problems at Lindfield are still not settled.

I think that this committee should be aware of the impact CSIRO's water usage has on the water supply of the rest of the community. There are small residential communities that would be impacted on by their use of water in bushfires. Burst valves automatically draw the water out of the main supply and do not allow it to get through to residential communities. CSIRO have stated that they are not required to lodge development applications. That has been stated several times over. I question that. There was—and I do not know whether it still stands—a ministerial directive that required them to follow all local and state government requirements. There was the act that I have referred to in my submission.

I have noticed that the committee keeps referring things back to the council, saying that it is the council's role to represent the community and to put the controls on. However, if CSIRO's relationship with the executive of that council is such that it does not allow proper process, then there are no controls put.

I know that over in Ku-ring-gai, when CSIRO wanted to proceed there with development proposals and the original proposal was rejected by the council, the mayor, who was very closely associated with the local theatre, was offered money to have that theatre refurbished if it went ahead. Thankfully, the mayor at the time rejected the offer. Another mayor was offered a day at the races. We cannot rely on our councils to represent us in these proposals. However, if CSIRO were required to lodge development applications, we would then have a process whereby all residents would know that those applications were there and would have an opportunity to comment. It is not a matter of contacting the local community groups.

There may be people way outside those groups, just ordinary residents who would like to have some comment on what is going on around them. The only mechanism for that is through a development application to council. That is all I would like to comment on. Thank you.

CHAIR—Thank you. Are there any questions?

Mr HOLLIS—On those points—and I do not know this council—you made a couple of serious hints there.

Mrs Ferns—Can I make the comment that it is on public record in Ku-ring-gai. I am not a member of Ryde municipality.

Mr HOLLIS—I am not going to get into an argument about local government. What you said about Ku-ring-gai, you then hinted about Ryde. I do not want to get into a debate about that. You talked about the development application on this project. We may comment about Ryde City Council not coming here, but we have received a whole list of submissions from a wide range of people. I would say that this proposal has been fairly well advertised, not only in the metropolitan media but also where the secretariat writes to a whole lot of interested people, including the environmental impact people.

If you like, we can make available to you a list of the people who are written to and asked for comment. This is a standard practice and ranges from the state and federal members through to a range of other people. In many respects a hearing such as this can be even better than an environmental impact statement or an inquiry by council. That was the only comment I wanted to make there.

The reasons this committee refers back to council are the very reasons that Mr Lindsay and I gave before. Usually a council does come along and give a view one way or the other and we usually put a lot of strength on what the council says.

Mrs Ferns—I only make the comment in as much as earlier it was stated by the committee that the council have no problems with it. I am saying to you that there may be a reason the council have no problems with it.

Mr HOLLIS—If the council have no problems with it, they have no problems with it. It is not for us to say whether they should have problems with it or not. They have decided as the elected council that they do not have problems.

Mrs Ferns—If a development application was required from government bodies, as it is required from the private sector, then those applications would be under the same public scrutiny as the private sector's.

Mr HOLLIS—All I suggest to you is that, at the next election, you do not vote for this council.

Mrs Ferns—I cannot vote for this council, anyway. I am not in the municipality.

Mr LINDSAY—Mrs Ferns, under ‘Need for the facility’ your evidence was:

I have a concern with the conduct of gene technology being undertaken on a site in such close proximity to a national park.

Could you elaborate on that concern?

Mrs Ferns—As I understand it, and I am no expert in this field and I certainly stand to be corrected on what I say, the gene technology involves various things, such as insect resistant chemicals, being put into the plants. Should there be a breach from the laboratories into the national park, you are disrupting the ecological system of the park.

Mr LINDSAY—I think I saw evidence today of the reverse technology—to get insects that were a pest in the community.

Mrs Ferns—That may be the case.

Mr LINDSAY—You have no other evidence in that regard?

Mrs Ferns—No, it was just a passing comment.

TEMPORARY CHAIR (Senator Calvert)—You have noted in your comments that:

The Fujitsu building is of a lower scale in size and has not attempted to dominate the site.

The local council did not require a development application from the CSIRO. Is that right?

Mrs Ferns—I do not know. I asked for a copy of the development application, but CSIRO wrote back saying that they were not required to lodge one.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—That is possibly because they are a Commonwealth body, but in most cases they do brief the councils on what they are doing as a matter of courtesy. Obviously the council were briefed on this or they would not have sent us this letter saying they had no problems with it.

Mrs Ferns—Obviously they have been briefed, but what I have stated in my submission and what I am stating here today is that without the development application being lodged with council it does not go through the normal process. Therefore, the general community has no opportunity to view the proposal or comment on it. That is not to say that all comment is negative, either.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—I agree. Obviously the requirements of the Ryde City Council are different from those of some councils I deal with where I come from—it is a long way from here, but people have the right to object to even a subdivision. They have a right to object to any proposal that is put forward—from a boundary adjustment up. The council usually notifies all neighbours. That is where I come from; it is not Ryde.

Mrs Ferns—That is how it is supposed to be here too, Senator.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Thank you very much for coming today and giving us such a detailed submission.

Mr HOLLIS—You have put in a very detailed submission and we will ask the departmental witnesses to comment on many of the issues you raise—if not verbally today then in writing. You have gone to a lot of trouble and it is quite a detailed submission. I congratulate you on it—it is very good.

Mrs Ferns—Thank you. I regret that the appendices were not passed on to you all. In relation to the litter, you stated that you did not see any here today. I suggest you look at the appendices of my submission; you will find the evidence there. If you do not have it I am happy to table it.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Thank you. I now call representatives of the Goodman Fielder Corporate Technology Group.

[3.07 p.m.]

HUDSON, Professor Chris, Goodman Fielder Corporate Technology Group

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Welcome. The committee has received a submission in support of the proposed development from Goodman Fielder Corporate Technology Group dated 29 April 1999. Do you have any amendments to the document?

Prof. Hudson—No.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Thank you. It is proposed that the letter be received, taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The letter read as follows—

TEMPORARY CHAIR—I now invite you to make a short statement in support of your letter before we proceed to questions.

Prof. Hudson—I would like to make several very brief points. The first is about the importance of having a world-class facility to cover the areas of both food sciences and technology and molecular sciences in Sydney. As you would know, Food Science Australia have facilities in Werribee, near Melbourne, and in Brisbane and are proposing to upgrade their facilities in Sydney. I believe it is very important that the facilities in Sydney are brought up to a world-class standard so that they can link with the national programs that both CSIRO and Food Science Australia are now bringing together to support the food and the agri-food industry with its thrust to be a major part of the Australian economy.

I noted in my submission the size and significance of the Australian food industry. It is the largest manufacturing industry in Australia. It has substantial opportunities for export growth. The industry has achieved a lot in the last five years in raising the value of high value added food product exports from something like \$2 billion a year in 1992 to \$5 billion in 1998. But it is very important that that export potential keeps growing. I believe that the facility proposed is going to be critical in enabling companies in the food industry, and particularly some of those companies in the Sydney area that may not have had the opportunity to develop their top technology capability as strongly as they will need to, to become very effective on the domestic market, and one has to be very competitive and ahead in the domestic sense if you are going to be an internationally competitive organisation and an exporter.

As I said in my submission, this facility will provide a very important opportunity for CSIRO to continue to upgrade its collaboration in research and development in both fields—food science and technology and the molecular sciences—with this important industry.

The other matter I would mention is that the facility will also be very important to Australia in a public good sense, in providing world-class expertise in some strategic research areas that are critical not only to the food industry but to the community as a whole in regard to food safety management, to effective capability in food safety management and to human nutrition research, where a lot of the product development and food processing opportunities are starting to link in with the area of human nutrition and the nutritional role that foods play in the diet. Another area of growing importance is consumer sciences, in understanding consumer needs and consumer desires and priorities in terms of the foods they need, where there is going to be an investment in that area.

I would also support a comment that Dr Mallett made earlier about the importance of having a centre close to hand with the major food companies in terms of their R&D departments, their technology bases and their marketing and management areas in the Sydney area. We have certainly seen the value of the investment that has been made in Victoria with the facility at Werribee. We certainly would like to see a similar capability in the Sydney area, given that a very significant part of Australia's food industry is centred in New South Wales and that the operations are Sydney based, as Dr Mallett described. Thank you.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Thank you, Professor Hudson. We saw at first hand this morning what the consumer end of the CSIRO is doing here. We were a little puzzled to see

that all the testers were women, but I am assured that at other times men get to have the opportunity to put their point of view about some of the products that no doubt your company produces. As Australia's largest food manufacturing company, could you just give me a rough ballpark figure of how much your company would spend per year on R&D?

Prof. Hudson—Yes, certainly. Last year our company's investment in R&D was \$A27 million across all its operations. That was investment over about five different business groups. A significant portion of that investment, say, in the region of \$2½ million to \$3 million, was in longer range strategic research done in collaboration with the CSIRO, with cooperative research centres, with universities and, indeed, with some significant research organisations in New Zealand where, as you might know, we also have a presence.

We see that as a very important commitment, but it is not unlike what other parts of the food industry are also looking at. A lot of areas of the food industry have in fact been increasing their investment in technology and research in the last five years or so.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—What do you see as one of the major next steps in food technology that perhaps CSIRO could help you with?

Prof. Hudson—That is a very important question. As a matter of fact there are about five of them. One of them is in the area of advanced processing technology and smart manufacturing so that we can be cost effective and produce high quality products in a cost-effective way and meet those requirements of food safety, given that consumers are requiring fresher and more natural foods in some cases and foods that meet their convenience lifestyles.

The second area is in product development technologies, in understanding the functions that food constituents provide and the interaction between components of food in terms of the products that have to be developed for both Australian and export markets. There are a lot of technologies that underlie product development so that we can put out new products and improve existing products that meet consumer needs into the future.

The third area is food safety, microbiology and food control, which I think is a very important area and one that we are all making significant investments in. As you would be aware, the Australia New Zealand Food Authority are bringing in some legislation to strengthen that area over the next two years or so.

Another area that I mentioned is the consumer sciences—understanding consumer needs, how consumers have preferences and make choices for foods and how those foods influence their lifestyle patterns and their needs. Another one which is very important is the distribution, transport, stability and shelf life of food through the food distribution chain—which we call the supply-management chain for foods—which is an area that CSIRO is going to continue to have a major role in supporting.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—I think we saw all those areas this morning.

Mr LINDSAY—Would you describe your business relationship with Food Services Australia and the CSIRO as very satisfactory?

Prof. Hudson—Indeed I would, and it has been for a number of years. In fact, we have a very satisfactory relationship with several parts of CSIRO, including the Division of Molecular Science, where we have done some very important work on some of our ingredient technologies. I think the formation of Food Science Australia and some of the opportunities to bring together a greater critical mass of expertise is going to be of even more importance to the relationships that we can build between our company and CSIRO.

Mr LINDSAY—Would it be your evidence that the project that the CSIRO is seeking PWC approval for today in fact would be good for Australia?

Prof. Hudson—Yes. I think that Australia would get a significantly effective return from that investment in terms of helping to strengthen the food industry, helping to improve the status of foods to consumers and helping with this very important area of the development of the food safety management programs in particular.

Mr LINDSAY—Has your company had any involvement or any interest in the government's Supermarket to Asia strategy?

Prof. Hudson—We have, through being a member of the Australian Food and Grocery Council, which is one of the major players in the Supermarket to Asia Council.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Thank you, Professor Hudson, for your evidence and support. I think you backed up most of the things that we saw this morning. Thank you for coming along today.

[3.18 p.m.]

KELLY, Mr James, Managing Director, Meddicoll Pty Ltd

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Welcome. The committee has received a one-page submission from you, dated 4 May 1999, in support of the proposed development. Do you wish to propose any amendment to that?

Mr Kelly—No, I do not.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—It is proposed that the letter be received, taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. There being no objections it is so ordered.

The letter read as follows—

TEMPORARY CHAIR—I now invite you to make a short statement supporting your letter, and then we will ask some questions.

Mr Kelly—At the outset, it could be said that I am from the opposite end of the spectrum from Goodman Fielder. Meddicoll and Bioquest Ltd are essentially companies spun out of what is now called the Division of Molecular Science in the CSIRO. We would argue that, although these are not world-size companies, they are world-class companies and they represent what we see as the future of Australian manufacture—intelligence based and technology based manufacture—which Australia is easily able to command with its history of excellence in biotechnology medical research. In fact, we voted with our feet because, in dealing with CSIRO, we bought a site directly across the road from Delhi Road, so it is my staff who will watch those chimneys and that building while it is being constructed and while we interact with them.

Mr LINDSAY—I do not think they are going to be there.

Mr Kelly—I can state on that point, as a past sometimes scientist myself, that the need to exhaust noxious vapours from buildings has to be balanced against the practicalities of design. It is a ‘necessity is the mother of invention’ situation.

There is one small point that came up earlier where I have direct information, and that is the so-called ‘94 fire’. In fact, I was on the Molecular Science site, which at that time was considered the most vulnerable one. Its current location would still make it thus because of its exposure to southerly winds and with the funnel shape of the Lane Cove River valley behind that site. Indeed, the old sandstone building, which is one of the very few heritage buildings in this area and which I think has been converted at this stage to both a library and conference facility for CSIRO to maintain its heritage status, came very close to being lost during that fire. It happened that my staff and I were visiting the site that day, and we and CSIRO staff held that fire and the building was saved.

All I would say on that score is that it could be pragmatically argued that what CSIRO are effectively doing by locating into that centre core, if you think about it in practical terms, is moving to protect public assets under their control, structure and expense with a ring of, so to speak, fire protecting, privately owned buildings which, of necessity and by legislation, must protect themselves, even maybe to a extent greater than CSIRO, because the shareholders of CSIRO only have occasional four-year opportunities to vote whilst the shareholders of public companies can pitch the board out at any time.

I did not come here to be jocular, though. I came to say that it should be remembered by those who are critical of this that changes like this one of this site, the Riverside Corporate Park, were forced on CSIRO. They are not a CSIRO initiative. Having for very many years worked for the organisation, I can tell you that very many of its staff, if they had the opportunity to go back to the 1950s—indeed, there would probably be many of us; my hairdresser would probably prefer that I did!—would take that opportunity to take us back there because they were wonderful times. But that would be seeing history rather than the present and the future.

Of necessity, at some stage, the ancient buildings originally erected in the early 1950s on these sites would have had to have been replaced. To have the government of the day insist that CSIRO dispose of what they styled at the time 'excess land' and to relocate themselves and run part of the finance by sale of land was really the only mechanism open. So, in my view, a lot of the criticism of CSIRO is unfounded on that basis. They are undeserving of some of the brickbats they have received. They are not property developers. And to have done as well as they have is an outstanding example of what can be done when necessity insists that such things happen.

At the same time, in terms of the technology and the excellence for the future, I would argue that, yes, the ability of CSIRO, over its history from immediately after World War II until now, to continue to spin out high technology information, which until relatively recent times tended to be exploited offshore but now with changes in systems and government initiatives can frequently be done within the country, is a very precious situation for us to be finding ourselves in. The recent budget allocation to biotechnology, which bears heavily on Molecular Science and probably activities in Food Science Australia, is proof that, at least through its elected representatives, society and CSIRO can respond to that promise. It is certainly possible for tiny countries with small populations to excel. Certainly we as companies have taken strong initiatives in that area.

So that you have it in proportion, Meddicoll and Bioquest spend only about \$300,000 a year in research. But I would suggest that is a significantly higher proportion of their returns than for most of the large companies. They have to be cutting-edge companies to compete. That the technology is sound is borne out by the fact that both of those companies have recently completed international agreements which will take them to the next size and that both of them will shortly come totally under Australian control, whilst Meddicoll—the principal one right now—has a serious amount of Japanese capital invested.

So my view is that it is for the much wider considerations, not just for what has popularly historically been termed 'industry' but for future industries yet to emerge perhaps amongst the younger generation of scientists working in that organisation. This kind of facility had to come sooner or later. That it happens as a result of a synergistic assembly of two relatively small groups of CSIRO into a single facility is to be applauded because it will obviously have synergies of time, space and overheads attached to the operation.

Mr LINDSAY—Mr Kelly, in your evidence you say the complex is much needed and necessary if groups such as yours are to continue to provide—and then you list three points: the service, the interaction and the revenue generation. Would you like to elaborate on those three points: service, interaction and revenue generation?

Mr Kelly—The service aspect that in my experience CSIRO has provided—and I can only speak from that viewpoint and from contact with other similar companies—attaches to the fact that CSIRO has in its command rather excellent facilities by world standards and certainly prime excellent facilities by Australian standards which they are prepared to make available either by contract or by lease to external organisations in order to make better value returns on the investment made by the taxpayers originally in some of that equipment. For example, the NMR facility and the electron microscopes often have a cost which is right out of proportion to the ability of a small company to purchase. But they are able to get

access to time and experts, and hence that is the service aspect. The revenue aspect has to deal with the returns by way of royalties that accrue from CSIRO licensing out its technology to commercial operations that are going to exploit that on an international market basis.

The interaction aspect is, for my part, the most critical of all. Inevitably, small companies stand a risk, in isolation, of being attacked by much larger and better funded organisations offshore who can assemble 20 or 30 experts at a moment's notice. I was extremely impressed by the fact that I could contact CSIRO, find the person responsible for, in my case, cutting-edge technology dealing with wound healing and biomaterials research from the Division of Molecular Science—as it happened, in Melbourne—have him accompany me to Japan and have the Japanese see the overall presentation as Australia's capability in that field, because of an agreement and arrangement between Meddicoll and CSIRO, rather than see Meddicoll in isolation, where it would have been lost in the backwash of American and European experts. So those are the three facets where I see that a facility like this one stands to create future dividends quite considerably out of proportion to its initial cost.

Mr LINDSAY—It kind of makes you proud of what we can do in Australia, doesn't it?

Mr Kelly—Well, I have not actually got teary about it. Part of the reason I have not become teary is that I left CSIRO because I thought my bureaucratic procedures were a bit simpler than theirs, but in time to come I hope it is as large and as complicated as theirs.

Mr LINDSAY—It is interesting that you say that because that was what I was going to ask you next. Do you find CSIRO excessively bureaucratic?

Mr Kelly—In an organisation where the fields of expertise are often diverse, the streams of promotion and strategy arise from some ancient but always improving structures and, of necessity in the past, led to what I would describe as a feudal barony style of operations. But we are talking there about the 1950s and early 1960s, when chiefs actively competed with one another for resources.

The restructuring of CSIRO in many ways did not help the organisation as seen through my eyes. It caused a lot of talented people to leave, out of the frustration of constant McKinsey investigations and other organisations investigating it. Indeed, up until relatively recently—about three or four years ago when things started to take quite a turn for the better under the new management structures that they put in at the top of the organisation—there was, and it is what drove me away, the perception that they had started to mistake administration for excellence in science. They are not going to thank me for saying that. I think it has turned the corner, and I believe you can see that it has turned the corner with just a straight statistical analysis of the amount of floor space allocated in this building for administration versus the amount directed towards specifically targeted or general investigative science. There was a time when very large corporate structures were built within CSIRO to house the burgeoning bureaucracy, but they were not really contributing much science overall. I think things have changed enormously for the better. I think it is well positioned for the future, but whether it can survive the continuing constraints put on it federally is difficult to know.

Mr LINDSAY—Thank you for the wide ranging observations you have made, including how to look after bushfire protection in an innovative way. Perhaps I should ask you how to manage tax reform in Australia. We will leave that for another day.

Mr Kelly—No. I think you have a senator problem there.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Thank you for your evidence. Thank you for crossing the road and supporting CSIRO this afternoon. I now call back the CSIRO.

[3.32 p.m.]

GALBRAITH, Dr Michael Neil, Officer in Charge, North Ryde, Program Manager, Scientific Support Services, CSIRO Molecular Science

MALLET, Dr Christopher Patrick, Deputy Chief Executive, CSIRO

MAU, Dr Albert Wai-Hing, Chief of Division of Molecular Science, CSIRO

MOODY, Mr Trevor Laurence, Assistant General Manager, Corporate Property, CSIRO

ARDERN, Mr Kerry Charles, Project Director, APP Projects Pty Ltd

EYLES, Dr Michael John, Chief Executive, Food Science Australia

McGILVRAY, Mr Ian, Director, Cox Richardson Architects and Planners

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Thank you for coming back to the table. I do not think there is any doubt that you have a lot of support out there for your organisation, but there have been a few criticisms of the building, the site and the environmental side of it. Perhaps you would like to comment on some of the evidence we have heard this afternoon.

Dr Mallett—It has been relatively diverse, and I apologise if I speak for slightly longer than I would normally wish to. There seem to be two issues. I am very grateful indeed to Mr Kelly and to Professor Hudson for their support. As you have seen, there are a significant number of submissions from the industry which are saying similar things. I am very happy, although I do not propose to speak to it now, to answer questions on CSIRO's new structure and our diminishing bureaucracy and, in particular, our contribution to actually doing science rather than trying to administer it.

The issues that I suppose I want to deal with are the concerns that were raised by two individuals, who explained that they were here in an individual capacity, about the particular development. I suspect all of you on that side of the table can give us a much better indication about the role of parliamentary democracy and how local councils fit into the government scheme of the governance of Australia than any of us around this particular table can. There seems to be a lot of criticism of Ryde City Council. I am not going to say one thing or the other against Ryde City Council—it is not my place to. I am a public servant and an employee of CSIRO. I am not, as it so happens, a Ryde City Council ratepayer. I do not think any of my colleagues wish to join that debate. It is, however, a bit troublesome for us.

We hear on the one hand—from a cabinet submission, as Mr Kelly has already pointed out, from a directive, an endorsement from a previous sitting of this very committee—about how we should redevelop the site and then, on the other, criticism about the fact that the site has been redeveloped. I am afraid that we are public servants. If that is what the government of the day decrees, and if that is what the parliamentary Public Works Committee endorses, then it is not in our ability not to develop the site. This is an argument, as far as I am

concerned, for people who are discomforted about the local council to involve themselves in local council politics. I am sure all of you could tell me much more about that and about the processes than any of us sitting here could. We do not propose to enter the debate.

However, I would like to reiterate a couple of points that were made in closing and also pick up a couple of issues raised by two of the submissions. I make the point, once again, that the submissions have not been directly against this particular application before you. Their concerns are either about the council or the general development or the road. To some extent, our involvement in those issues is very peripheral in so far as we do not control the council. We act within the guidelines that were set down. If the Ryde City Council—according to one submission—is not, as it were, up to scratch, then that is an issue for Ryde City Council and for the people who elected it. It is not an issue for CSIRO.

We not only will comply—and have complied—with the spirit and the letter of the legislation of Ryde City Council but have also, as my colleague Mr Moody has explained in some detail, a particular integrity and obligation under our corporate environmental policy, which we adopt across the whole of the country. We do not say, ‘Ah, yes, Ryde are relatively lax; we can get away with blue murder’ on the one hand, while, for instance, something in Townsville or Hobart is more carefully scrutinised and therefore we have to be more careful. We have a consistent application of standards across Australia. As was quite correctly said, CSIRO wants to act in a way which is seen to be leading. However, our ability to act is constrained by the fact that we sit on high value land, and in order to make that attractive to people who wish to buy the land we obviously need to build larger buildings than single or two-storey buildings.

The submissions raised a couple of issues in terms of personal intervention. There were issues originally raised that concerned Miss Ware about what was happening on various sites that were being developed. I hope people understand that CSIRO owns only the land that is actually not sold, as it were. Where the land has been sold, it has been sold to a developer who either is acting on behalf of a particular lessee or is the major company developing the site as a whole. The compliance with legislation is not an issue for CSIRO. It is an issue for that particular company and their relationship with the council. That is, I think, possibly somewhat misunderstood in some of the submissions.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—They would have been required to present development applications to council.

Dr Mallett—All of them were required to present a development application and to have it approved. That is a standard procedure before we can sell the land. Usually, when we sell land, we sell it subject to a successful development application. If, for some reason, a development application is overturned or not granted by the council, then the land is not sold. It is usually sold subject to a development application. The submission of the development application is done in close consultation with Ryde City Council. That is the government structure of Australia. It is the local council who either grants or does not grant development applications.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Has CSIRO had any queries or complaints from the council about the land that you have sold?

Dr Mallett—No. Whether it is appropriate for council to make a submission is not an issue which we are able to judge. It is an issue for your decision. But there have been no complaints and the land we sold is owned by someone else. In the same way that, for instance, you would not hold your neighbour responsible for something you were doing on your land, we are not held responsible for things that are being done on land we have sold and where the freehold has been passed over to the owner of the land. It is, as far as I am aware, a relatively straightforward matter of law.

I would like to return to some of the questions raised by Mrs Ferns. The first thing I should say is that, on behalf of CSIRO, we reject completely and categorically any allegation of improper dealings either with this council or with any other council. Under no circumstances did that happen. We have particularly strict provisions which we audit and we enforce across the country as to the propriety of CSIRO staff in particular and their role as a public service in general.

We deny with the utmost vehemence any implication at all in the words of Mrs Ferns that the CSIRO relationship with the council may not allow proper process. The previous witness had already indicated from tabled minutes that the processes that involve the council are free and open. They are minuted and the minutes are publicly available. I am not quite sure what the concern is. We have to say that we reject that out of hand in its completeness.

I also should make one final point in closing because I do not want this to be an issue about rambling. We would like to deal with this issue of the development control plan and floor space area. As has already been alluded to by Mr Lindsay, council has modified its requirements of us through negotiations with it. It has been quite open and above board and, as the witness correctly said, it has been minuted. She is quoting from old data.

You heard two other concerns, leaving aside the development of the site—which is not an issue for us; it is an issue for the government of the day and for this particular committee. On the issues about the road, we have little to do with the road. It is not in our remit to castigate Ryde Council, the Roads and Traffic Authority or the State of New South Wales for developing the M2 and for putting extra pressure on Delhi Road. We are a Commonwealth agency and we are responsible, through parliamentary procedures, for the use of taxpayers' money for our operations. Running roads and building motorways are not part of our operations and we do not actually accept any concern about them.

The second issue is environmental concern. Some concerns have been raised about the southern part of the park. There is reference to the remnant bushland. We stand by the comment made in our submission. We have kept the south-eastern corner, which has been the area identified. We have excised it from the various plots for sale. It will remain in CSIRO. It will be maintained. We will maintain the biodiversity in that particular sector—rabbits included, if necessary—and we will retain the bushland. We have said in our submission that we are going to do it. It is actually still there. We do not accept the fact that the horse has bolted and the whole area has been developed; it has not been developed. There is a substantial chunk of land worth somewhere between \$2 million and \$3 million at least which has been denied, as it were, the taxpayer simply because we stand by our commitment made in the submission and made in a submission to an earlier Public Works Committee hearing that we would look after that particular remnant bushland. So it will

remain in CSIRO ownership. We will negotiate with Lane Cove National Park as to how to manage it and what its future is, but our initial focus—understandably so, I hope, from the committee's perspective—is to conclude the development and, in particular, to build this new facility.

In summary, that is about as much as we want to say. We are very happy to respond to any particular questions you have on any of the issues raised by witnesses.

Mr LINDSAY—I would like you to answer the point about the conduct of gene technology being undertaken on the site in such close proximity to the national park. Are there any implications?

Dr Mallett—Thank you for reminding me of that, Mr Lindsay. Incorrectly, I did not allude to that. Can I make one thing unambiguously clear. The witness said that she was not quite sure what sort of work was going on and assumed that work was going on here. None of that work goes on here. There is no agribusiness gene technology done at this site. It is done elsewhere.

I would like to clarify a point. This morning Mr Lindsay raised an issue about the earth leakage protection. We can confirm that the figure is 30 milliamps and not 30 microamps.

Mr LINDSAY—Thank you.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—There were a few questions around the table concerning the exhaust chimneys. I presume Mr McGilvray took those on board?

Mr McGilvray—Yes, we are certainly very conscious of minimising the apparent bulk of the building. As I said earlier, we have already gone to great measures to pull the front edge of the roof down. From the point of view from a car or from a pedestrian in Delhi Road, the top of this building will very much be the edge of that curved roof with the exhaust stacks beyond in a reflective colour reflecting the sky. We will work very closely following through your strength of opinion on the importance of keeping those chimneys to a minimum visual obstruction, but we also must meet the law and the regulations of occupational health and safety. We believe that can be a successful outcome.

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Thank you. As there are no further questions, it is proposed that the correspondence received, that has been circulated to members of the committee, be incorporated in the transcript of evidence. There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The correspondence read as follows—

TEMPORARY CHAIR—Before closing, I would like to thank the witnesses who appeared before the committee yesterday and today, particularly those who assisted us this morning, showed us through the facility and explained to us so many of the workings here. I also thank our committee members, Hansard and, of course, the secretariat.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Hollis**):

That, pursuant to the power conferred by section 2(2) of the Parliamentary Papers Act 1908, this committee authorises publication of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

Committee adjourned at 3.47 p.m.

