



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

# Official Committee Hansard

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

**Reference: CSIRO Division of Building Construction and  
Engineering Development Works at Riverside Corporate Park, North  
Ryde, New South Wales**

WEDNESDAY, 18 AUGUST 1999

NORTH RYDE

BY AUTHORITY OF THE PARLIAMENT

## **INTERNET**

The Proof and Official Hansard transcripts of Senate committee hearings, some House of Representatives committee hearings and some joint committee hearings are available on the Internet. Some House of Representatives committees and some joint committees make available only Official Hansard transcripts.

The Internet address is: **<http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard>**

To search the parliamentary database, go to: **<http://search.aph.gov.au>**

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS**

**Wednesday, 18 August 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:** Senators Calvert and Ferguson, Mr Hollis and Mrs Moylan

**Terms of reference for the inquiry:**

CSIRO Division of Building Construction and Engineering Development Works at Riverside Corporate Park, North Ryde, New South Wales

**WITNESSES**

<b>ARDERN, Mr Kerry Charles, Project Director, APP Projects Pty Ltd</b> .....	<b>2</b>
.....	<b>101</b>
<b>BREWSTER, Mr Ian, Principal, Brewster Hjorth Architects</b> .....	<b>2</b>
.....	<b>101</b>
<b>DINHAM, Mr Richard John, Chief Executive Officer, DesignInc Ltd</b> .....	<b>85</b>
<b>LITTLE, Mr Larry Richard, Chief, Building Construction and Engineering, CSIRO</b> .	<b>2</b>
.....	<b>101</b>
<b>MERCHANT, Ms Catherine Ann, Secretary, Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>MICHEL, Mrs Diane Dorothy, Convenor, North Ryde Residents Group</b> .....	<b>90</b>
<b>MOODY, Mr Trevor Laurence, Assistant General Manager, Corporate Property, CSIRO</b> .....	<b>2</b>
.....	<b>101</b>
<b>SANDLAND, Dr Ronald Lindsay, Deputy Chief Executive, Information Technology, Infrastructure and Services and Manufacturing, CSIRO</b> .....	<b>2</b>
.....	<b>101</b>

<b>THOMAS, Mr Damien Anthony, General Manager Marketing, Building Construction and Engineering, CSIRO</b> .....	<b>2</b>
.....	<b>101</b>
<b>WYNHOVEN, Dr Jacobus Hubertus, Chief Executive, Connell Wagner Pty Ltd</b> ...	<b>81</b>

**Committee met at 10.30 a.m.**

**CHAIR**—I declare open this public hearing into the CSIRO Division of Building Construction and Engineering development works. This project was referred to the Public Works Committee for consideration and report to parliament by the House of Representatives on 30 June 1999 with a budget of \$10 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 that 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.

Earlier this morning the committee inspected the site of the proposed works and the existing site facilities. Today the committee will hear evidence from the CSIRO; the Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society; Connell Wagner Pty Ltd; Ms Rhonda Ware; DesignInc Limited; and the North Ryde Residents Group. I now call the witnesses associated with the CSIRO.

[10.32 a.m.]

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

**BREWSTER, Mr Ian, Principal, Brewster Hjorth Architects**

**LITTLE, Mr Larry Richard, Chief, Building Construction and Engineering, CSIRO**

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

**SANDLAND, Dr Ronald Lindsay, Deputy Chief Executive, Information Technology, Infrastructure and Services and Manufacturing, CSIRO**

**THOMAS, Mr Damien Anthony, General Manager Marketing, Building Construction and Engineering, CSIRO**

**CHAIR**—On behalf of the committee, I welcome you. The committee has received a submission from the CSIRO dated June 1999. Do you wish to propose any amendment?

**Mr Little**—I do. We have the following amendments: page 14, paragraph 93, in the first sentence replace ‘3,300’ with ‘3,700’; page 20, paragraph 128, delete the words ‘usage and’; and, finally, page 26, paragraph 177, at the eighth dot point delete ‘usage and’.

**CHAIR**—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 objection? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

*The submission and associated papers 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.

**Mr Little**—This proposal brought before the parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works is for the construction of new research and testing facilities for CSIRO Building Construction and Engineering 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, Clayton in Victoria, Pinjarra Hills in Queensland and Bentley in Western Australia and reported favourably on them. These developments are now proceeding or have been completed following parliamentary approval.

The proposed development will expand Building Construction and Engineering research activities and replace inappropriate accommodation currently located on a site scheduled for sale and fire research structures on another site erected in the early 1950s. The existing facilities are inadequate for current activities and substandard in terms of space, structure, surfaces, materials handling and security.

The proposal is consistent with government objectives that new facilities be constructed to replace those of the National Building and Technology Centre which was transferred to CSIRO in 1988. It will consolidate the fire science and testing laboratory and construction materials laboratory of Building Construction and Engineering with other division facilities within a dedicated precinct at Riverside Corporate Park. 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 occupants.

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

Redevelopment work undertaken to date has included the provision of most of the site infrastructure, site amenity facilities and the concurrent development of facilities in the business precinct for private organisations such as Fujitsu, Syntegra, Gradipore, Oracle, BOC Gases and Revlon. The facilities proposed in this submission will accommodate 70 research and support staff and comprise modern research facilities and management and

administration offices, together with industrial scale technical areas and testing bays. The estimated cost of the proposed development is \$10 million. Construction is planned to commence in early 2000 with completion and occupancy in early 2001.

The proposed development will comprise buildings with a gross floor area of approximately 3,700 square metres. It will include fire science and testing laboratory; technical and test bays and support areas; construction materials laboratory; process bays and laboratories; central facilities; reception, meeting rooms, office and shared support areas; and associated site works, roadworks, car parking, engineering and communications services. The proposed development aims to provide all of the facilities necessary to conduct leading edge scientific research within a comfortable, efficient working environment conducive to the interaction of all staff, research visitors and collaborators in providing medium- and long-term flexibility and adaptability. 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 development 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 the 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. It 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 Building Construction and Engineering and to meet the division's research and testing needs. It therefore submits the proposal to the committee for examination and seeks its endorsement.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much.

**Mr HOLLIS**—In the past there has been some criticism of CSIRO in connection with the means of alleviating or controlling the water run-off on this site. I note that National Parks and Wildlife has raised some queries about it in its paper. Would you care to comment on your plans regarding the water run-off?

**Mr Moody**—CSIRO is preparing an environmental management plan specific to this project which will address issues of water run-off and control as related to this current project. We have constructed detention ponds on the site to minimise the impact of downstream flooding from activities on the site. Processes will be put in place to filter the impact of siltation effects carried by run-off so that they are not carried forward into the adjacent Lane Cove National Park.



**Mr HOLLIS**—When you say that you are going to do that, will that be in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife?

**Mr Moody**—Yes, it will be.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Will you be relying on their approval with that?

**Mr Moody**—The environmental plan will be developed in consultation with them. We would anticipate it meeting their requirements when complete.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Because this issue has come up at each hearing we have held here, perhaps the committee could be apprised of the development of that plan and get a copy of it.

**Mr Moody**—We anticipate that plan being completed by September. We would be pleased to provide a copy of that to the committee.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Will you make sure that the committee gets a copy of that?

**Mr Moody**—Certainly.

**Mr HOLLIS**—When walking around the site this morning, I noticed that the chainsaws will be active in cutting down quite a few trees. Do you have plans to replace those trees?

**Mr Moody**—Certainly. In relation to those trees, we have had a survey carried out by a person qualified to examine trees. They have determined that existing trees on the site do have limited life and are potentially dangerous. The appropriateness of each of the trees has been assessed. In relation to landscape treatment of the site, we will be replanting areas around the building zone with trees that are indigenous to the area.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Some might argue that the impact of the fire building, in particular, through its location, aggressively imposes itself on the site. I believe that some of the local groups have complained of the visual impact of that building from Epping Road being greater than the visual impact of the other buildings on the site. What is your comment on that?

**Mr Moody**—Certainly we are aware that the Sprinkler and Fire Evaluation building, the SAFE building, is a tall building, which it needs to be by necessity. Obviously we are concerned with the visual impact of any of our development, and we are taking measures to minimise the visual impact on the surrounds. To put it in context, we had our architectural team draw up an elevation of the Epping Road frontage from across the valley, which is probably the most severe view you can have of the site. We have that drawing currently adjacent to the committee and that shows the current visual impact, as such, of that SAFE building.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Are you sure that no poetic licence has been taken with that?

**Mr Moody**—No.

**Mr HOLLIS**—I came along there this morning and glanced up and the only bulk building I saw was that next door, the television building. But I did not see any buildings such as that one there. Mind you, I was on the road; I was not across the valley looking at it. But I suspect there might have been a little bit of poetic licence taken. I can see it here on this model, but I think on that model someone might have exercised a little bit of poetic licence. With those two buildings immediately on my left of your building, the fire building looks almost like an oast-house but the other two buildings look huge and compelling. I did not see it like that this morning.

**Mr Moody**—The view that you are seeing is taken from across the valley. The road level, you can see, is at a much lower level, which reduces the visual impact of our building. The tall building that you can see on the skyline is the building we are currently sitting in, building 12. That has been done to give you an indication of how this building sits in relation to the stepping of the site up to Delhi Road, which is the frontage of this building. As for the adjacent buildings, we have shown on that the Food Molecular Science facility to the left, as you are looking at it, of building 12. That indicates the visual impact of that on the horizon. As you can see, that is less than building 12. There are other facilities that are constructed in the immediate area that we believe blend in; in fact, in some cases they are higher than this current building.

**Senator FERGUSON**—Where is that drawing viewed from in relation to the model we have in front of us?

**Mr Moody**—I might leave Mr Brewster to speak to that. He produced the drawing on our behalf.

**Senator FERGUSON**—I want to know whether we are looking at it from here or from another direction.

**Mr Moody**—I am sorry; you are looking at it from across the valley, the other side of Epping Road?

**Senator FERGUSON**—Is that Julius Avenue?

**Mr Moody**—No, the other side. You are seeing what people would consider to be the worst elevation, which is the view that residents across the valley would have of the site.

**Senator FERGUSON**—Looking back.

**Mr Moody**—It shows the total site, not just that particular building.

**Senator FERGUSON**—Has the slope of the ground that we inspected been accurately reflected in this model?

**Mr Brewster**—The ground levels that you see on the model are the final proposed ground levels, not the existing sloped levels, although the levels on the perimeter of the site—and you can see the perimeter of the site with the shading of the paint colour on the grass—are the actual levels that are there presently.

**Mr HOLLIS**—I have never been one to see the artistic merit in corrugated iron, and I have had a look at the museum at Kempsey which is supposedly of that. Is it true, as some of the residents have said, that the fire building will be constructed of corrugated iron? If that is the case, I must say that I would not like to be looking across the valley at that bulk of corrugated iron.

**Mr Brewster**—No, it is not to be constructed of corrugated iron. It is proposed to be a profiled metal sheet—and corrugated iron is a profiled metal sheet. However, the metal sheet profile is distinctly different from the profile of corrugated iron. It has a much deeper profile giving a much more dramatic, much more technical appearance.

**Mr HOLLIS**—What colour will this building be?

**Mr Brewster**—The colours on the model are the proposed colours.

**Mr HOLLIS**—So it will be off-white?

**Mr Brewster**—Off-whites and light greys.

**Mr HOLLIS**—So you do not have much pollution here? It will not go from off-white to dull grey and then to black over a period of five years; or is the air so clear here that it will remain that colour?

**Mr Brewster**—The building we were in this morning for the introductory session, the quadrant shaped building at the front, we designed and built in 1993-94. As you can see from looking at it, it is the same colour scheme and it is fairly clean. It has stood the test of time reasonably well.

**CHAIR**—Further to Mr Hollis's concerns, I notice that the North Ryde Residents Group raised the issue of the siting of these buildings, and not just a concern about their profile on this particular site. One of the propositions they put forward in their submission was to defer the construction until such a time as the old buildings could be demolished and the site decontaminated because that site is more towards the centre of the park, rather than have these buildings built closer to the perimeter, to the boundaries. Was this considered? If so, can you explain to the committee perhaps why this idea was not adopted to begin with?

**Mr Moody**—The siting of these buildings probably dates back to 1991, when the original development plan was put to this committee. At that time, we identified progressively two precincts for CSIRO on the site. One is the central precinct, which is where this building is located, and the committee walked through that precinct today. That precinct encompasses the existing fire research facilities.

The southern precinct, which is the area in which the Division of Building Construction and Engineering was to be located, was identified as a consolidated grouping of buildings to serve the long-term requirements of that division, and it was seen as a dedicated site necessary to consolidate their activities. So it certainly has been planned for some time that these facilities would be located in the southern precinct.

We identified at the last hearing before this committee the site occupied by the fire technology facilities as being a long-term expansion site for CSIRO. We see that as necessary to maintain an area within the total Riverside Corporate Park complex for future expansion for CSIRO. Obviously that is an area where we can expand Food Molecular Science facilities and other facilities within the central precinct.

There is a cost penalty in demolishing the existing buildings. That cost penalty is really related to the disruption to research. It means that, in the period that the buildings are demolished and the time it takes to construct the new facilities, no fire research can be carried out on this site. So, from CSIRO's viewpoint, the best solution for maintaining activities at the division is to build on the new site and then demolish the existing building so that people can move across without any disruption to research activities.

**Mr Little**—If I can add to that: the great desire for us is to be able to integrate the division's scientists, our team, all on one site. This plan allows for that. Secondly, if we were to take a look at an alternative of destroying the existing facility and then rebuilding it on that site, the consequence is that we could not do work for the industry which it relies on and which is worth in the order of \$1 million to \$1½ million per annum. So there would be a very significant penalty to the industry and to ourselves.

**CHAIR**—Are you saying essentially that it is largely an economic decision?

**Mr Little**—It certainly has that level of significance. The other part is that it allows us to integrate all of our team onto one precinct under essentially what becomes one roof, if you will.

**CHAIR**—Further to Mr Hollis's concerns about the stormwater, in the North Ryde Residents Group submission another point made was that a very large amount of paved surfaces is being proposed and that this puts further pressure on the Lane Cove River catchment. Can you tell us precisely how much of the area will be paved? Also, what tests have been carried out or what advice have you had on the impact of the run-off from those paved surfaces and its interference with the Lane Cove River catchment area?

**Mr Moody**—I cannot advise what the precise area is of paved surfaces as a result of this development. But our engineers, as part of the design team, have considered stormwater run-off as now imposed by the paved surfaces. No doubt by paving the area you do increase the volume and the speed of run-off from the site. But it is part of the engineering design to ensure that it is controlled stormwater run-off so it does not impact upon the downstream areas.

**CHAIR**—Given the interest in these areas by other divisions of the CSIRO—I think this was pointed out in the North Ryde Residents Group submission—have you looked at other options other than paved surfaces?

**Mr Moody**—By necessity, we need to have durable pavement for service vehicles that will be servicing the quasi-industrial buildings that we are providing. There is no doubt that we could look at alternative means. But we have not. We have considered hard surfaces because of their durability and long life as being most appropriate to serve this facility. It is

doubtful that we can provide an economic solution that really is better than hard paving. Anything else perhaps could be even more damaging to the environment if we were to look at grassed surfaces and trying to drive trucks and so on through those areas. But there are limitations on what we can do to provide effective servicing to these buildings.

**CHAIR**—But you have not investigated any alternatives to the hard surface paving?

**Mr Ardern**—Perhaps I could comment at this point. As I think you are aware from a previous hearing that we had on another project, it was a very ad hoc development of the site before Riverside Corporate Park, as it is, was developed. There were large areas of paved surfaces existing. At that point in time, there were no defined stormwater catchment ponds which were controlling the run-off into the Lane Cove National Park. Since that time we have implemented stormwater control measures.

On this particular site, first the stormwater run-off goes to a detention tank within the site—and that currently exists. It will be piping into that, and there will be some modifications needed to it to extend it. From there, the stormwater run-off flows to a sedimentation basin before being discharged. So there are measures in place to control run-off. We have had discussions with National Parks and Wildlife during the design of those facilities, with the Ryde council; in fact, we had discussions with the EPA as well to determine what their requirements were.

**CHAIR**—Do you consider it worthwhile pursuing that issue a little more to address the concerns of the North Ryde Residents Group?

**Mr Moody**—We can examine alternative paving materials, but whether that has significant impact on the run-off is questionable. As I say, we have designed the civil engineering works, as such—that is, the paving works and stormwater drainage system. So run-off is controlled from the site and controlled in its environment. There could be some reduction through absorption through the soil. But we would need to find something that absorbs stormwater, and that is very difficult to achieve.

**CHAIR**—Yes, we noticed the water lying on the ground that we walked over this morning. I take your point.

**Senator CALVERT**—I noticed when I was coming out this morning looking back across Sydney there is a level of smog laying across the city. You are up above it somewhat here. With a lot of your fire testing and whatever, you use toxic materials and the rest of it. Why would you want to put that here with the possibility of adding to pollution in the city? Why wasn't that part of it put outside the city somewhere? Do you have in place—and I presume you do—or will you have in place pollution control mechanisms? We can see that on the top of the building there. Just how efficient are they and will there be pollution of any sort?

**Mr Little**—We are very concerned and I believe have taken appropriate measures currently and are looking at additional measures when the new facilities are built to control any pollution. We have recently gone out and we now have in place a process which includes electrostatic precipitators. It is a three-stage process removing large particles in the

precipitators kicking in and a carbon filtering process to remove any odours. With the equipment operating we have set specifications for it that the amount of pollutant coming into the air will be a quarter of one per cent. So it is very, very small. You will not see smoke coming out of it or smell it. It is very, very efficient and it will meet or exceed any environmental regulations that are required.

**Senator CALVERT**—Required by whom?

**Mr Little**—Statutory authorities, the EPA.

**Senator CALVERT**—For argument's sake, the emissions that will be coming from your facilities: will they be similar to a wood heater, or do you get down that low with your emission control—

**Mr Little**—They would be less than a wood heater.

**Senator CALVERT**—Likewise, I note—this is a technical issue—you will use in your cooling system for the new buildings chilled water, reticulated and fan cooled buildings on the site. Is this the right way to go? Does that protect against the possible outbreak of Legionnaires that tends to happen from time to time around the place?

**Mr Moody**—The outbreak of that is really related to the amount of maintenance carried out on the systems and the Australian standards now, if they are followed, will avoid any outbreak of that disease. The plant that we have provided for this facility has been subject to life cycle analysis to determine what is the most cost effective solution for this facility. As a result, we are providing the system that you have described.

**Senator CALVERT**—So the airconditioning facilities will be state of the art. Is that correct?

**Mr Moody**—I am not sure what state of the art is.

**Senator CALVERT**—The latest and most modern possible.

**Mr Moody**—We think it the most cost effective, based on the analysis carried out by the design team.

**Senator CALVERT**—Because a lot of your work will be done with fire, is there any risk of fire spreading into the surrounding countryside? Is that a possibility?

**Mr Little**—It is a minimal risk. Where we can do it, we have sprinklers in the facilities. Obviously, because we are doing fire testing in some of the laboratories, it is not possible to put in sprinklers because they would kick in when doing a fire test. Because of that, we already have plans in place with special firefighting equipment. We have people who are trained and go through procedures on how to contain a fire. We have a document which shows our procedures in this regard.

**Mr Thomas**—We have proper emergency evacuation procedures sitting on every employee's desk.

**Senator CALVERT**—Is that for the plant here or the local residents in the area?

**Mr Thomas**—This is for all the staff in the Building, Construction and Engineering Division. It allows them to see what to do in the event of an emergency such as a bushfire.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Senator Calvert was talking about a fire here spreading out. What about the surrounding area and the fire coming in? Back about 10 years ago, I think your chicken place here almost went up or did go up in flames, with or without the chickens. Again, I think National Parks and Wildlife suggest that there be a bushfire management plan. Given the fact that this area is prone, at certain times, to bushfires, do you have those plans in place?

**Mr Little**—I am not aware of a bushfire plan for the site. There are planning measures which are taken to reduce the chances of bushfire affecting you, such as large cleared areas which the fire cannot jump over. We have those obviously on the site. But, in regard to a particular plan to avoid bushfires, I am not aware of one.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Given the history of this place, isn't that an oversight? In the past this place has been threatened by bushfires. Given the amount of money put into this site over the years by CSIRO, as well as by other people, given the fact that you are on the edge of a park and given there is a history of, I think, fire actually having come onto the site at the location of the chicken shed before it was moved to Prospect, how can you now say that there is no thought of a bushfire management plan? You are telling builders how to build houses to avoid fire, and you do not have a plan to deal with bushfires for your own facility here. That seems somewhat of a contradiction.

**Mr Moody**—Certainly we believe the threat to CSIRO facilities on the site has been alleviated by the construction activity that has taken place. There is access for firefighting vehicles around the perimeter of the site to fight fires, which access perhaps may not have existed 10 years ago. As a result, we believe that bushfires can be controlled more adequately. Obviously there are fire hydrants around the site as well as adequate water on the site for firefighting protection in the case of an outbreak of a bushfire. Our belief is that certainly the CSIRO facilities are well protected. We believe that the site is far better protected now than it was previously.

**Mr Ardern**—I would also add that, during the development of the site, we have had considerable discussion with the Water Board investigating the supply of water to the site. We have improved the main trunk water systems within the site. During our planning of each of the precincts for CSIRO, that has been given careful consideration.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Have you also had discussions with the local bush fire brigade or the fire brigade?

**Mr Little**—With the fire brigade, yes.

**Senator CALVERT**—But you do not have a fire management plan, as such, for the area. I think you have told us that you have an emergency procedure for evacuation and so on.

**Mr Moody**—We have procedures in place for firefighting within the CSIRO allotments. But the total development of Riverside Corporate Park is no different to, say, any other establishment around Sydney as far as fire protection goes. Generally, individual sites would be expected to provide their own particular fire protection with provision of hydrants and access for fire vehicles around buildings to give them adequate protection.

**Mr Thomas**—I think also that all those you met this morning have been properly trained in terms of fighting fires—naturally, because they work in that environment. In addition to that, some of them are also members of the Rural Fire Services. So they train through that forum as well.

**Dr Sandland**—However, I think it is fair to say that CSIRO would be prepared to review for the whole site the risks associated with bushfire incursions onto the site. We would certainly be prepared to undertake that. But we do not believe that this particular development would in any way add to the risk associated with that. We see that as an external risk, and we will review the situation.

**Senator CALVERT**—Mr Hollis asked earlier about trees going off the site. Do you have any plans for the regeneration of flora and fauna surrounding the site? Because you are bordering on remnant bushland, there obviously would be wildlife and bird life in the area. Are you planning to regenerate the areas around the construction, once it has been completed?

**Mr Moody**—It is certainly our intention to provide buffer landscaping around the facilities that will be compatible with existing native planting in the area.

**Senator CALVERT**—If I recall correctly, when we were here last time, internally you went to great expense and trouble to preserve some trees by either wiring them up or having cables attached to them so they would not dislodge themselves from the side of the bank.

**Mr Ardern**—Yes.

**Senator FERGUSON**—Are you still quite confident that the \$10 million proposed cost is accurate?

**Mr Moody**—We believe that the estimate, the budget, is very tight because of the extent of facilities. It is our intention to maintain costs within that budget during ongoing design and development of documentation.

**Senator FERGUSON**—You have a fair cushion for contingency.

**Mr Moody**—Yes. That is because at this stage—and we are really only at the schematic design stage of the project—we have built in both design and construction contingencies to allow for the necessary changes that may occur as the design is being developed and for



unexpected conditions that may occur during construction, whether presence of rock or other such things that may lead to an increased cost. Our intention though is that the \$10 million be an out turn cost to cover the changes that may occur in design and to deal with the problems that we may encounter during construction.

**Senator FERGUSON**—I know that these are confidential cost estimates, so I will not itemise them in figure terms. You have site preparation works, roadworks, external services—there is a fair amount there for landscaping. I am trying to work out on that plan where you are going to do your landscaping because it is a significant expense.

**Mr Moody**—The landscaping includes treatment in the courtyard areas as much as it does the buffer areas to the site. Perhaps Ian Brewster may wish to expand on that.

**Senator FERGUSON**—You have another amount there for covered walkways, links and all of those sorts of things.

**Mr Moody**—That is right.

**Senator FERGUSON**—I would have thought landscaping would only involve work other than that which might be surfacing with tiles or whatever you will be using.

**Mr Brewster**—The landscaping budget covers minor civil works associated with the landscape works; that is, small retaining walls and such. It covers paved areas—hard and soft landscaping, as it is termed. On the model, many of the trees that you see around the perimeter of the site are part of the proposed landscaping. The landscaping treatment between all of the buildings where not covered by hard stand is also covered within the landscaping budget. The landscaping plans for the site are quite comprehensive.

**Senator FERGUSON**—I understand from your submission that the cost estimate of \$10 million for this proposal does not include loose furniture, fittings, research equipment and the cost of staff and equipment relocation. Do you have any indication of how much this additional component will be?

**Mr Moody**—The cost of loose furniture and fittings is very much dependent upon the amount of re-use of such items from the existing facilities. If we provided all new loose furniture and fittings—that is, meeting room furniture, desks, filing cabinets and so on—we estimate that it could be anything up to \$700,000. But, again, we would want to examine that amount to see how best we can re-use existing facilities so they are compatible with the new buildings.

**Senator FERGUSON**—Will that come out of the existing budget?

**Mr Moody**—That will come out of a separate budget within CSIRO which is normally funded through division funding.

**Senator FERGUSON**—We have read a number of submissions claiming that there has been inadequate community consultation throughout the entire redevelopment. What is your response to that allegation?

**Mr Moody**—Community consultation can mean residential groups, individuals or various authorities. We have tried to identify who the relevant organisations are that we should consult with on this project. We would begin with organisations like the Ryde City Council; we believe that reflects the general population of the area and their particular requirements. We have consulted with Environmental Protection Authority, Department of Land and Water Conservation, National Parks and Wildlife, the metropolitan local Aboriginal Land Council, and we have identified the appropriate residential group as being the North Ryde Residents Group. We believe that they are the organisations most relevant to the site.

There may be other individuals who have an interest in the development of CSIRO and, as part of the development, we are quite happy to further consult with those people if they wish to approach us. The examination of this project by this committee was advertised in the press, and obviously the opportunity is there for any interested parties to come forward and discuss with CSIRO the proposal.

**Senator FERGUSON**—I have read the correspondence that was sent from Environment Australia. Would you say that they have given you a big tick, or a small tick with some reservations?

**Mr Moody**—I am satisfied with the response from Environment Australia. They have identified a particular species of bird and three plant forms. Based on a survey we have had carried out by a consultant group, none of those now exist on the site of this current work.

**Senator FERGUSON**—Obviously you are aware that the government has requested that an independent review of CSIRO's property management practices and the existing property management plan be the subject of an inquiry. I notice that one of the terms of reference is CSIRO's management of its property holdings on behalf of the Commonwealth 'consistent with Commonwealth property management principles and industry best practice, including reforms being applied in other Commonwealth agencies and authorities, to accelerate moves to commercialisation and improved performance of property portfolios'. Can you give us any idea of the background to this review, how it is progressing and how it is likely to affect works such as those that are proposed here?

**Dr Sandland**—We cannot do that. The review has commenced and is under way even as we speak. CSIRO is cooperating fully with that review. I do have copies of the terms of reference—which you obviously already have—if any member of the committee wishes to see those. But we are unable to comment further on that review.

**Senator FERGUSON**—It is just interesting that in the third term of reference they talk about 'opportunities for sale and, where required, lease-back, subdivision and consolidation'. So it is quite possible that, as a government, we may approve of the building of these new facilities only to see them sold and leased back.

**Mr Moody**—We cannot really anticipate what the findings of that review will be at this stage.

**Senator FERGUSON**—So, as far as you are aware, the review is just commencing and so there is nothing of significance that should affect any decisions that we make.

**Dr Sandland**—That review will hand down its findings, as we understand it, in October. Clearly, CSIRO has ongoing requirements to prosecute its research programs; any delays would have a significant negative impact on those. I do not believe that the review is in any sense questioning the prosecution of that research, nor really is there any indication that it would be questioning the need for special purpose buildings.

**Senator CALVERT**—So why have the review?

**Dr Sandland**—I am unable to comment on that.

**Senator FERGUSON**—In paragraph 180, you say that the furnaces to be installed in the new facilities and to be located in the structural fire laboratory will be NATA certified. You will have to forgive my ignorance, but I have no idea what ‘NATA certified’ means.

**Dr Sandland**—National Association of Testing Authorities.

**Senator FERGUSON**—So it is a national body; it is not an international body. I understood from your previous briefings with us this morning that you were concerned about getting international standards so that, once things had been tested here, they were accepted by other countries. So you are saying that this testing authority is a national testing authority, but it does not have any international component.

**Dr Sandland**—There are strong linkages between all the relevant standards authorities. The highest international one is the International Standards Organisation. NATA work obviously has an impact through the national organisations into the International Standards Organisation. So there are those strong linkages. No work that is carried out by any Australian standards organisation appropriately certified is anything other than cognisant of what is happening at the international level—not only cognisant of it, but feeding into and actively having an impact on those international standards.

**Senator FERGUSON**—Is it possible to get an international certification?

**Mr Little**—Not that I am aware of. In the countries in which I have worked, they have often been domestic. For example, there is one organisation in New Zealand and one in Australia, and there are mutual recognition agreements between them. But there is not one overall organisation which has services throughout the world saying, ‘We have an accreditation responsibility.’

**Senator FERGUSON**—So, although you will be certified by the national body, your job then is to go around to individual countries and try to get them to accept the standards that you have reached, rather than have one international set of standards that everybody agrees could be reached and accepted.

**Mr Little**—There is an ardent desire by most testing organisations and manufacturers throughout the industry to see international standards come about. We are part of major efforts in that regard. One of the reasons we need these new testing facilities, this new area of science, is to be able to help in that drive towards having international standards.

**Mr HOLLIS**—I think in answer to a question from Senator Ferguson you indicated that you were confident that the cost estimate would be met, would come in under budget. One could argue that it is obvious it will because certainly there is some fat built into the contingency allocation. It is a bit high, isn't it?

**Mr Moody**—We do not believe the contingency allowance at this stage of design is high.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Ten per cent?

**Mr Moody**—Ten per cent. We would normally allow an amount of five per cent of the estimate to represent a design contingency at this stage of design because there is still a lot of design development work that needs to be carried out. We need to provide a further five per cent for the unusual happenings we can have during construction. As I said earlier, it could be encountering rock on the site or it could be change of regulatory requirements.

**Mr HOLLIS**—But you are familiar with this site. Considerable construction has been undertaken on this site over the last 10 years. It is not as though you do not know what is under there. You have put up a construction on either side of that block. I would imagine that you could give me the technical details of what you expect the foundations to be, whether rock, clay or whatever.

Usually when people have contingency plans, they say to us, 'But we don't really know what we're going to find when we start drilling there.' I would be amazed if you did not know exactly what was there on this site. The construction fits in with the other buildings on either side, and it is not as though you will run into anything unusual. Granted that in the fireplace there may be a few technical things. But overall I would have thought that, with this building, you could have predicted the financial outcome pretty close to what it will cost.

**Mr Moody**—What we have tried to report is an out turn cost which makes provision for the unknowns that may occur during construction.

**Mr HOLLIS**—But I am saying that there will be very few unknowns. I can understand contingency. But what are 'escalation allowances'? Are they for professional fees or Senator Ferguson's landscaping? What are they?

**Mr Moody**—There is a base estimate that we prepared in June 1999. From June 1999 to completion of construction, there will be increases in costs in the industry through building materials, through labour costs and whatever. That makes provision for what we anticipate to be the final construction cost—firstly, determined when we go to tender and, secondly, by completion of the work, which is the end of 2001 or early 2002.

**Mr HOLLIS**—As my colleague Senator Calvert reminds me, the 10 per cent GST will add considerably to that.

I go back to a question asked previously by Senator Calvert about pollution coming out of the fire building. Someone—I think it was you, Mr Little—said that it would be less than

that coming from a wood heater. Surely a lot more fumes would be created by the testing of fires on doors and in buildings, et cetera, than would be created by a wood heater. Where will these fumes go? Will they be collected in that square part up the top of the building and go down those pipes, or what?

**Mr Little**—That is correct. The buildings are designed to collect the smoke at the ceiling. Then it will be extracted and go through the electrostatic precipitators, which are shown beside the building. It is a three-stage process and it is very efficient.

**Mr HOLLIS**—On page 3 of your submission, paragraph 20 states that you have been doing some testing for the IMO. Tell me about this work and what the implications are.

**Mr Thomas**—These are the International Maritime Organisation's tests for maritime vessels. We have done some tests for the company in Tasmania—I think it is called Incat. We are assisting there I think in the fire testing of the bulk heads of the ferries, which is assisting in the company's export initiatives.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Did the ferry company approach you to do this?

**Mr Thomas**—Yes. We provide services right across a whole range of industries, and they approached us to do this.

**Senator CALVERT**—I presume that is because they are all aluminium. As one of the fire standards, you cannot have vessels with aluminium, for instance, having accommodation on board. So I think it is all to do with fire.

**Mr Thomas**—Yes. I think we are not so much talking about the hulls but the materials inside the facilities on top where people work and sleep.

**Senator FERGUSON**—In percentage terms, what sort of contribution are Incat making to this research? What is the cost of it? Are Incat making a contribution? It is an industry specific thing.

**Mr Thomas**—I am not entirely sure whether we can release that information. We do have confidentiality agreements with nearly all our customers. It would be a small percentage. They will not be contributing to the facilities.

**Senator FERGUSON**—I was wondering whether they were making any contribution at all.

**Mr Thomas**—They are. We do work for them, yes.

**Mr HOLLIS**—I see that you have consulted with an impressive list of people. Tell me about the Ryde City Council. You say in your evidence somewhere that you are meeting their requirements. What requirements do they place on this site?

**Mr Moody**—There is a development control plan that the Ryde City Council has applied to the site. It relates to set back requirements, heights of buildings and the like. We, as a

matter of process, always consult with local councils to ensure that we do comply with local control plans. For that reason, in this case we have consulted extensively with the Ryde City Council to get their agreement, in principle, to the design that is being presented to this committee. I can table a letter that has been received today from the Ryde City Council. That letter states:

Having reviewed the plans submitted I believe your proposal for this site generally meets Council's intent for the development to that part of the CSIRO site.

Yours sincerely

Sue Weatherley

Director Environmental Standards

**Mr HOLLIS**—They say 'generally', not totally.

**Mr Moody**—They are the words used by the council.

**Senator CALVERT**—What about community consultation? There has been some criticism in some of our submissions that you have not consulted with the community as widely as you might have. Can you explain to the committee what sort of consultation you have undertaken with the community on this project?

**Mr Moody**—As I stated before, we would go to, say, the Ryde City Council as being representative of the community as a major point of contact. We would try to identify which community groups we believe are relevant to the activities or the facility we are going to build on a particular site. In this case, we identified the North Ryde Residents Group as an appropriate group to consult. We have done that. We note that the representative of that group has provided a written submission to this committee. We would be pleased to further consult with that group as necessary to achieve a balanced approach to the project.

**Senator CALVERT**—My colleague Mr Hollis touched on some of the technical detail of the site. For instance, when testing for your foundations and so on, do you take into account earthquakes? This is just something that at the moment happens to be in the news a bit. I am surprised that Mr Hollis has not asked that question; he usually does. Is there any history of land movement, landslip or earthquakes in this area?

**Mr Moody**—Personally, I do not know of earthquakes that may have occurred in the local region. But we are required to design any building in accordance with Australian Standard 1170, and one part of that relates to designing for earthquake activity. The design of these buildings will be in accordance with that Australian standard.

**Senator CALVERT**—What about the roofing material being able to withstand hailstorms and things like that? Do you take that into account these days, given that recent problems of that kind in Sydney just about broke GIO?

**Mr Moody**—I suppose there always is the extreme event which may go beyond any provision.

**Senator CALVERT**—I just thought that, with your being CSIRO, with all your techniques, you may be using some different materials to test out roofing materials that withstand these sorts of emergencies. I thought this would have been an ideal opportunity.

**Mr Moody**—That is a challenge, but unfortunately it would probably absorb our contingency allowance.

**Senator FERGUSON**—I think you are probably safe from tidal waves.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much for giving evidence today.

[11.32 a.m.]

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

**CHAIR**—On behalf of the committee, I welcome you. The committee has received a submission from the Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society dated 29 July 1999. Do you wish to propose any amendment?

**Ms Merchant**—No.

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

*The submission read as follows—*



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

**Ms Merchant**—I make this presentation on behalf of our society. We have been active in the local area for over 30 years. This presentation will be brief. It relates directly to ecological concerns we have in regard to the development of the overall site. Some of these issues were raised in our past submissions and at a previous public hearing. We feel very strongly that these issues need to be addressed by the Commonwealth government in order to improve the process by which the CSIRO develops its land-holdings and ensures that there are ecologically sustainable development outcomes which meet the needs of the CSIRO as well as the needs of the surrounding community.

In summary, we have had major concerns with the cumulative impacts of large and insensitive development along the whole Lane Cove Valley ridge top. On the Riverside Park site, the CSIRO had an opportunity to achieve an outcome which would have enhanced drainage and habitat corridors and ensured the long-term viability of flora and fauna corridors. This development could have provided job opportunities and promoted export industries in an ecologically sustainable manner within the local area.

We are not convinced that this has occurred, and we believe that the development of the whole site will be piecemeal. Unfortunately, it will result in piecemeal assessment of individual sites if this hearing looks at this particular site and, in private, development applications are assessed by council at a later date. By this time, the potential of the site to be developed as an ecological whole has been lost. Significant habitat corridors, including those for threatened flora, have been lost; vegetation and cultural heritage sites have also been impacted upon heavily.

Indeed, it would seem that the potential of this site to stop this ad hoc approach was recognised by the CSIRO in 1992. At that time, the CSIRO's Division of Wildlife and Ecology undertook a survey, which they prepared for the property unit, of flora, terrestrial vertebrate fauna, and soils. They state in the introduction, 'The proposed development therefore has the potential, if undertaken in an environmentally sensitive manner, to allow the presently unmanaged areas of remnant native vegetation to be incorporated into a landscape setting which will retain the existing vegetation but will augment this by plantings of appropriate native species.'

This survey recommended preservation of the remnant intact bushland areas. It identified significant vegetation on the site, including the nationally threatened *Darwinia biflora* and the remnant shale area in the centre of the site, which is most likely part of the turpentine ironbark transition which is also included under state legislation.

It should also be noted that conditions were placed on the site in the 1992 rezoning approval by Ryde council. That included that 'every effort be made to preserve and upgrade remnant bushland areas'. The CSIRO has committed itself publicly to adhere to council requirements.

As we stressed in our previous submission, we feel that the CSIRO, as one of the chief contributors to Australia's intellectual property, should be a leader in demonstrating how to

develop a large land-holding which is in a sensitive bush and waterway location. We feel that it should do this in a manner which minimises longer term adverse impacts. We do not feel that this has been achieved over all. We feel that the proposal before you today represents one more piece in the jigsaw of incremental damage within local catchments to water quality, native vegetation and amenity.

While this proposal will leave a visually displeasing icon as its legacy to the local community and commuters along Lane Cove Road—I am particularly referring here to the taller building for this particular proposal—the more insidious legacy will be further degradation of the Lane Cove River and national park and the loss of local biodiversity. The outcomes for this site have occurred because of a flawed process which leaves the local community, local authorities and relevant agencies outside the decision making process. It allows the CSIRO to exempt itself from relevant state legislation.

In this particular site, it also appears that the CSIRO has not conformed to Commonwealth legislation—I am referring here to the Endangered Species Protection Act. It seems that in 1992 *Darwinia biflora* was listed nationally as threatened, but we have not seen a species impact statement. The CSIRO at least had obligations under Commonwealth legislation to assess the impact of the development proposal. But, to my knowledge, this has not been made available to the public, if indeed it was done. The area which contained this species has now been sold to a private developer, after attempts by the CSIRO at relocation of some of the threatened species of plants were refused by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

In conclusion, we call upon the Commonwealth to improve the process by which we have arrived at the poor environmental outcome for this site, as outlined above. In particular, we request that: firstly, the CSIRO be bound by all relevant state legislation and that they meet these obligations in full, with particular reference to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and the Threatened Species Conservation Act; secondly, that environmental assessments, including those of flora and fauna, be independently evaluated if they are in house, and that all assessments be made publicly available; and, finally, that the CSIRO not be permitted to pursue the development of large sites in such a piecemeal manner, and that either a public environment report or environmental impact statement be required at a very early stage of the planning process. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to comment.

**CHAIR**—With reference to the criticisms of CSIRO in their consultations with the community, could you tell us how many times you have met with CSIRO staff over the period of this proposed development?

**Ms Merchant**—None.

**CHAIR**—You have not met at all?

**Ms Merchant**—No. I did go—not for this particular hearing—to the first hearing to get a copy of the master plan.

**CHAIR**—Have you been to any public meetings that CSIRO have held in relation to development here?

**Ms Merchant**—I am not aware of any public meetings having been held.

**CHAIR**—How many meetings have you requested?

**Ms Merchant**—I have not requested any meetings.

**CHAIR**—Is there some reason why you have not requested any meetings, when you clearly have some concerns about the environment?

**Ms Merchant**—I guess we have researched in terms of looking at what was required of the CSIRO. By that, I mean looking at the DCP that the council prepared in 1992. We saw a copy of the survey, and I guess we matched that against what was being proposed.

**CHAIR**—But, surely if you saw that and then had concerns, wouldn't the first point be to contact CSIRO people and request a meeting so that you could discuss your concerns?

**Ms Merchant**—I thought that was the purpose of the public hearing. I must admit that, in the past where that has occurred, the final venue still becomes a public hearing such as this or, if it is in relation to a council issue, you—

**CHAIR**—After having attended the first public hearing and put your concerns, did you then make no attempt to contact CSIRO management?

**Ms Merchant**—No. I guess they knew where I was too, and I was not approached by them.

**CHAIR**—But it is a concern that you have. They have given evidence today that they have met all the requirements. In fact, we have letters from the local authority, Environment Australia and the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service saying that they are satisfied with the measures that have been put in place. Surely, if you are a concerned resident—and you are entitled to be concerned—you would then take that issue up with CSIRO.

**Ms Merchant**—When I went to meet their representative—and it was not the CSIRO; I think it was the AAP, the consultants who are handling the sale—and raised my concerns, my concerns were not answered adequately. As I said, I feel a public hearing is perhaps the best way to air those. It is also difficult in terms of what is presented as the document for us to talk about. There are other documents that we feel are relevant—as I have mentioned, the DCP and the 1992 survey—and they were not included also. I do not think I would have got those by asking the CSIRO.

**CHAIR**—But, again, I would have thought it would be appropriate that, if you were not satisfied with your discussions with the consultants, you would have contacted management directly and outlaid your concerns and the concerns of others of your organisation.

**Ms Merchant**—With respect, I thought that was the purpose of the public hearing—to air our views.

**CHAIR**—It is partially. But, as I have said, if you have those concerns, I would have thought they should also be addressed to the management. Also, you have mentioned your concern about the *Darwinia biflora* and the fact that it was found on a site that has been developed.

**Ms Merchant**—Sorry, I should clarify that. It is my understanding that it is now in private ownership and that a DA will be submitted. Then it will be assessed against the state legislation. My concern is that it can result in a very piecemeal outcome—and I guess that is the point I am trying to make. I would have preferred to see that conserved within a conservation area, as per the 1992 report which made that recommendation.

**CHAIR**—But that plant has been preserved and it is growing within the precinct here. Is that correct?

**Ms Merchant**—It was identified back in 1992, yes. My understanding is that it was nationally threatened.

**CHAIR**—Are you saying that it is still here?

**Ms Merchant**—I presume so. I guess we will have to wait for the flora reports.

**CHAIR**—You mentioned that the National Parks and Wildlife Service refused to have that plant transplanted. Is my understanding correct?

**Ms Merchant**—Yes. I am not privy directly to what happened, but I understand that a request was made by a consultant, on behalf of the CSIRO. Apparently there are two populations on this site. The idea was to try to relocate one of the populations and, I think, keep the others in a conservation area.

**CHAIR**—I also note that in your letter you talk in very general terms about additional ecologically sustainable development provisions that you would like to see incorporated into the design of this project. Can you give us a clear outline as to precisely what additional ecologically sustainable provisions you would like to see?

**Ms Merchant**—I guess drainage and stormwater management come into that.

**CHAIR**—We just took evidence on that. It is clear that provisions have been made to deal with that.

**Ms Merchant**—Fine.

**CHAIR**—Were you happy with the evidence given, or were you not here during the giving of it?

**Ms Merchant**—I was not here, no.

**CHAIR**—You might have a look at that in the *Hansard* and see whether you are satisfied with it.

**Ms Merchant**—I presume that, if they are doing grey water recycling, they have included that then. That is what I would consider a good stormwater outcome. That is what I am talking about when I say ‘ecologically sustainable development provisions’—water management on that site and getting fairly innovative.

**CHAIR**—How would you recycle the grey water? Can you explain to me what you would do with it?

**Ms Merchant**—I suppose it would be used for the outdoor areas.

**CHAIR**—What sort of outdoor areas?

**Ms Merchant**—Outdoor gardens and that sort of thing.

**CHAIR**—But isn’t part of the plan to maintain the natural vegetation here? That would not require water because it is native vegetation.

**Ms Merchant**—I would hope so, but then you will also have open areas where it is not all native vegetation; that will require watering.

**CHAIR**—What kind of areas?

**Ms Merchant**—Landscaped areas.

**CHAIR**—But I thought I understood that the landscaped areas are preserving the natural environment and, therefore, you would not have a requirement for use of that grey water.

**Ms Merchant**—From the areas that I have seen, there has been quite a lot of disturbance on this site, and you will appreciate that the native soil has been lost. So, where I am talking about intact bushland, I am talking about undisturbed site. I would not imagine that the CSIRO would be rehabilitating all of the open areas back to bushland, or what I would call bushland. There will be plantings there. I would imagine they will be landscaped in the way that people landscape things and that they will require some water there—yes, watering.

**CHAIR**—Perhaps it would be a good idea for you to have some discussions about that aspect and just see how much of the site will be left with natural bushland and whether there is any use for the grey water. If there is not, there is no point in pouring it back. We just walked over some land here and we sank to our ankles in waterlogged land.

**Ms Merchant**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Are there any other points in terms of the ecologically sustainable development provisions that you wish to tell us about?

**Ms Merchant**—I am not sure what they have arranged for waste, but I guess there is the issue of on-site composting. That is a big issue—getting green waste out of landfill. I presume that has been addressed.

**CHAIR**—Site composting and landfill. Are there any other specific issues that you do not think have been addressed?

**Ms Merchant**—There is the overall amount of hard stand. You are talking about a boggy area. I do not know which part that would be. One of the problems is creating too much hard stand on a site, and there are a lot of roads on this site and a lot of car parking areas. Perhaps there are ways of using surfaces that can hold back water a bit and allow it to dry out rather than intensifying water flows lower down. I would see that as a fairly important aspect.

**CHAIR**—This was discussed earlier. I think there was a comment that they would have another look at the use of hard stand and see whether there was any way that could be modified, where appropriate. Is your organisation proposing to put forward some suggestions as to what kinds of materials would be suitable?

**Ms Merchant**—I would not think that we are the most equipped to do that. We certainly could, but I understand that the Ryde council has looked at this and is trying to promote alternatives to perhaps just complete hard stand.

**CHAIR**—Are there any other ecologically sustainable points that you would like to raise?

**Ms Merchant**—There is energy use, the use of solar panelling. I believe that on one of the buildings there was provision for solar panels at a later date. I could be getting confused with the previous hearing, but that would be something we would look at as well. I think on a site like this, if it were incorporated across the site, you could probably look at minimising the amount of energy reliance on greenhouse-gas-producing electricity.

**CHAIR**—How would that affect the amenity? We have heard concerns about the look of the buildings.

**Ms Merchant**—You mean the solar panelling?

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Ms Merchant**—I do not know. I suppose that goes back to innovative design.

**CHAIR**—Are they the main issues you wanted to see addressed?

**Ms Merchant**—In that regard?

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Ms Merchant**—Yes, that is from our previous letter. This follow-on specifically deals with the vegetation.

**CHAIR**—Your submission seems to rest very largely around those issues and the consultation—and I think we have just dealt with some of that.

**Ms Merchant**—Yes. ‘Consultation’ implies to me that the person who is proposing something does the consultation. Our group is only one of the groups, and we are quite frequently consulted on a number of issues. For example, the Department of Urban Affairs will come to us. I do not see my role as secretary to be that of chasing the people who are making the proposal.

**CHAIR**—If I had the kinds of concerns that you have outlined, I have to say that I would not be waiting around for someone to contact me, I would be contacting them.

**Ms Merchant**—These things do crop up quite a lot. I would be kept very busy.

**CHAIR**—I understand that, and I understand the constraints sometimes placed on small organisations like yours.

**Ms Merchant**—You asked me about ecologically sustainable provisions. The other thing we would be keen to see is making sure that the plantings are local indigenous. Also, if any plantings are to be done in the areas that are to be left as bushland, perhaps they could be done with seed that is collected nearby and from a reputable bush regeneration company.

**Senator FERGUSON**—You have mentioned that cultural heritage sites will be impacted upon in this proposed redevelopment; what cultural heritage sites are they?

**Ms Merchant**—The point I was making relates to the piecemeal approach to the whole site. There is a fairly significant cultural heritage site in the south-eastern corner, which I think little by little is being impacted upon. There is a fence around it at the moment.

**Senator FERGUSON**—But these proposed works are not affecting the—

**Ms Merchant**—No. The point I am making is that we have arrived at today as part of that piecemeal approach to the site.

**Senator FERGUSON**—I think we heard evidence this morning that there are no endangered species on the site.

**Ms Merchant**—On that site?

**Senator FERGUSON**—Yes.

**Ms Merchant**—No. This site, as I explained, is now in private ownership.

**Senator FERGUSON**—So, for the works that are being proposed today, there is no concern about endangered species.

**Ms Merchant**—No. The proposed works represent to me just part of this jigsaw of incremental impact.

**Senator FERGUSON**—But the point I am making is that it is very difficult to generalise on it. This Public Works Committee has a specific proposal before it. When you

talk about the surrounding areas, it is very difficult. We have to pass judgment or make recommendations regarding this specific project and, to our knowledge, there are no endangered species on this specific project and there is no cultural heritage impact with this specific project.

You talked about insensitive developments. When speaking of the development, you said it could have created jobs and export industries.

**Ms Merchant**—That was in a general sense.

**Senator FERGUSON**—What sort of export industries were you talking of?

**Ms Merchant**—I presume from reading the document that the CSIRO is looking at food enhancing, the export of food products and ways that we can, I guess, maximise the number of pork and meat—

**Senator FERGUSON**—I am sure they are. I thought you were referring to industries outside of CSIRO.

**Ms Merchant**—No. I thought that was the role of the CSIRO—to augment that.

**Senator FERGUSON**—CSIRO has a number of roles; that is probably one of them.

**Ms Merchant**—Yes, but I understood that was part of what they were doing.

**Senator FERGUSON**—Why is it that, when there is to be any landscaping or regeneration, only native species of flora and fauna should be used? I know that in some of our capital cities we have a mixture of some of the most exquisite introduced species which I think add to the beauty.

**Ms Merchant**—I was referring there specifically to those areas that are bushland. I meant that something that can be quite nice, like an Illawarra flame tree, jacaranda or even some natives that do not belong in Sydney—get them into our bush where we have a functioning ecological system. That is my point.

Across this site there has been a fair amount of disturbance—and I am not questioning it; it has happened. I am talking about the areas that have not been disturbed where you still have native soil. I would hate to see plants going in there just because they were considered to be pretty. I think CSIRO, having signed up to the biodiversity strategy, would appreciate that as well as the importance of ensuring our biodiversity.

**Senator CALVERT**—In the letter you have sent to us, you say that you are concerned about the lack of provision of adequate habitat corridors for this significant bushland area. Can you tell me where the corridor goes from? I have the map here which shows the location of Lane Cove. Where would you want the corridor going? Would you want it going through the middle of it?



**Ms Merchant**—No. Where your left thumb is, on the other side of that off the CSIRO site, up the top there is the turpentine ironbark community, which is Bundarra Reserve. It is fairly important that we ensure a link between that, which is outside your site, going down into the national park.

**Senator CALVERT**—Down here.

**Ms Merchant**—Yes. We would see that as being fairly critical. In the 1992 report, they did identify some transition area. It was very difficult to do because the maps were different, but up around there there were some species that would be part of the transition of this. Obviously, from a clay soil community moving down into sandstone, you do get a transition. But it is still included as threatened within that transition area. I would see that as a fairly significant corridor. On the north-eastern side, it would be fairly important to link that as well to that other side of Delhi Road. The national park, yes, obviously contains significant bushland.

**Senator CALVERT**—What sort of fauna would you expect to move through these corridors?

**Ms Merchant**—I am including flora and fauna. One of the problems we have, if we do not get seed dispersal by whatever means—whether by ants moving through a system or by birds—is running the risk of genetically isolating communities. That is fairly important in that, without it, we could get inbreeding.

**Senator CALVERT**—But what of these particular trees up here that you are talking of?

**Ms Merchant**—I am sorry that I cannot be more specific.

**Senator CALVERT**—This says 'BRI'.

**Ms Merchant**—I do not know. In the 1992 report, there was this area located. When I try to overlay it onto that map, it seems to me that it is in that vicinity. I do not know what has happened to them now.

**Senator CALVERT**—They might not have been retained; they might have disappeared.

**Ms Merchant**—They could be gone. I do not really know. But the point I am trying to make is that, at the very early stages of a large piece of land, it is important to establish those corridors first. Whether that means identifying conservation areas very early in the piece that are no-go zones as well as at a later date looking perhaps at—perhaps 'infilling' is not the right word—making sure that you do replace to ensure that we do not create gaps.

**Senator CALVERT**—Looking at this plan, fine, you have your Lane Cove National Park, but really it is an industrial development now. To try to maintain a—

**Ms Merchant**—It is a challenge.

**Senator CALVERT**—A big challenge, I would have thought.

**Ms Merchant**—I am trying to make the point that I would hope that CSIRO would be in a position to meet that challenge because they do have the expertise with regard to biodiversity issues, flora and fauna. They have it all in house and they should be able to achieve that outcome.

**Mr HOLLIS**—I appreciate that your organisation is concerned with flora and fauna, so we may be coming from slightly different angles. But I have been coming to this site for public hearings for about the last 12 years, and I must say that I am a little puzzled when you talk about ‘a jigsaw’. I think this site today is much more attractive—and, again, it is in the eye of the beholder—and, I would say, much better managed ecologically than it was when I first started coming here in the late eighties or early nineties. We have asked questions about run-off and various other things. I remember when I first came here that there were scattered buildings and it was a jigsaw. There were fibro huts here and there, and experiments were being conducted out in the open. There used to be a whole mishmash of architectural styles. Again this is only my own view, but I think now the site is much more attractive and there is a plan for the whole site.

Our limitation is that we can only deal with CSIRO or government building proposals on this site. We have no mandate to interfere with the commercial, private activities. You may be right in that there should have been an overall master plan into which everyone was tied. But I dispute your statement that it is a jigsaw. I think it is quite an attractive site and I think it has been quite well managed. That is not to say it is perfect; obviously more things can be done. But, if I were working here, I would much rather do so on this site in 1999 than in 1989.

**Ms Merchant**—Can I reply?

**Mr HOLLIS**—Yes.

**Ms Merchant**—I agree with you. I think the survey that was done in 1992 recognised that there was a real mishmash of buildings across the site. But, if I can use the example of the *Darwinia biflora*, it is now in a fairly precarious situation in that it now will go through the DA process at a later date, when the applicant or the owner puts in the application to council. By then, I have concerns that it may have been disturbed and fewer numbers may be there. I would have preferred to see that area in particular—and that south-eastern corner has always been of major concern to us—safely locked up in a conservation area.

Once we get into the realm of DAs, it becomes very difficult. People make arguments about it being unviable. Large areas have been conserved in the upper Lane Cove Valley, which is the southern limit of this species. It is fairly important from a genetic point of view that we do ensure that we keep it in the circuit. I just think it is more vulnerable now, and I think that is a bad outcome.

**Mr HOLLIS**—With the Chair’s permission, we will get a little bit of advice on that—I am not an expert on it, and I do not know whether anyone else is—before making our final recommendation.

**CHAIR**—Yes, I have made some notes to that effect. Thank you very much for your evidence.

[12.03 p.m.]

**WYNHOVEN, Dr Jacobus Hubertus, Chief Executive, Connell Wagner Pty Ltd**

**CHAIR**—On behalf of the committee, I welcome you. In what capacity are you appearing?

**Dr Wynhoven**—I appear in an individual capacity.

**CHAIR**—The committee has received a submission from Connell Wagner Pty Ltd dated 2 August 1999. Do you wish to propose any amendment?

**Dr Wynhoven**—No.

**CHAIR**—It is proposed that the submission be taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. Is there any objection? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

*The submission read as follows—*

**CHAIR**—I now invite you to make a short statement in support of your submission. We will then proceed to questions, if necessary.

**Dr Wynhoven**—In order to provide world-class research and development, you need, firstly, world-class people—and I think we saw that demonstrated this morning and, clearly, from an international background as well. But you also need world-class facilities. I think that is what we certainly still need to provide for this campus.

The whole built environment, which consists of buildings and infrastructure, has a great dependence on the science and understanding of materials. They make up the whole built environment. The whole built environment that we see and rely on consists of materials, while public health and safety greatly rely on the science and understanding of fire engineering.

This North Ryde campus—I have had dealings with it going back to the early seventies, when it was the experimental building station—now part of the CSIRO, has been a centre of excellence in fire engineering for decades. I consider that it has been pivotal in the quality of the fire engineering skills we now have in Australia—and I have had direct experience of that.

Research and development in materials and fire require laboratory and testing facilities. They require physical buildings because they need to carry out full-scale testing. Desktop computer simulation is important certainly in fire engineering, but it cannot replace physical tests. The proposed buildings that we are considering, I believe, are needed if we are to retain this world-class research and development from which I believe the whole Australian community benefits.

The Australian building and infrastructure industry has been remarkably successful in South-East Asia. For example, my company, Connell Wagner, has designed the new Hong Kong airport terminal building. We did all that engineering fundamentally using Australian engineers. That would not have been possible if our engineers had not had world-class skills in both material science and fire engineering, and I think a lot of that has been developed by the CSIRO. At present, in terms of international work, we are also working on the redevelopment of the Wembley Stadium in London. Those skills, I think, have been greatly enhanced by the CSIRO.

I personally believe strongly that the buildings proposed for materials and fire research will bring continuing benefit to Australia, not only domestically but also through increased export income. I believe that these new facilities, having been familiar with this site for many years, are long overdue.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much. The committee has gained a very good insight this morning into the specialised nature of these buildings for testing.

**Mr HOLLIS**—I am pleased to hear that you were involved in the fire control aspects of Hong Kong airport, not its luggage handling facilities.

**Dr Wynhoven**—That is true.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much for making your submission to us today.

[12.08 p.m.]

**DINHAM, Mr Richard John, Chief Executive Officer, DesignInc Ltd**

**CHAIR**—On behalf of the committee, I welcome you. In what capacity are appearing?

**Mr Dinham**—I appear in an individual capacity and as a practitioner in the industry.

**CHAIR**—The committee has received a submission from DesignInc Ltd date 4 August 1999. Do you wish to propose any amendment?

**Mr Dinham**—No.

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

*The submission read as follows—*

**CHAIR**—I now invite you to make a short statement in support of your submission.

**Mr Dinham**—Our industry, as you are aware, and my practice over the last 30 years have been involved very extensively in the work of CSIRO, particularly in the use of materials testing and fire safety and fire laboratory facilities. Indeed, we have been particularly involved in the area of the new consultancy of fire engineering which, as you are probably aware, is a new applied science in our industry. Some of the recent buildings in which I have been involved are: the exhibition pavilions of some 80,000 square metres at the RAS at Homebush Olympic Park; the Olympic Velodrome; the Olympic equestrian facilities; all of the underground stations for the New Southern Railway. These are all current projects which have used fire engineering. Our clients have benefited from both the risk management and, indeed, the cost saving of the application of this new science which has stemmed out of the work particularly of CSIRO.

You know that this facility comprises three parts: the construction materials laboratory, fire testing, and general facilities for the site. You will be aware that the functions this new facility will be used for are quite broad and involve very strongly issues of public safety—particularly in relation to fire engineering, which I mentioned previously—concerning bushfire suppression, ecological sustainability, building regulation and fire-safe materials. So it is a very broad program that we are talking about, particularly in terms of new areas of basic and fundamental science in connection with fire suppression. One of the key attributes of the new facility, to my mind, is that we would have a facility that would comply with the regulation it espouses—and I think that is a very important one.

The public client interface with these facilities is also very important, given the nature of both national and international export of both science and regulation. We would have facilities that would provide greater confidence in use by making sure that there are clients and public that can come together in terms of education and being able to approach and view these facilities in a way whereby everyone can learn the nature of the research—and that is very important in terms of both the commercial outreach as well as the research outreach nationally and internationally.

In terms of the relevance to industry, you will be aware that there are very few other facilities that are involved in both testing and fire science. The main ones are at the Victorian University of Technology. These are complementary to the facilities that lie here. There are private testing and engineering facilities, but none of these are involved in fundamental research. Also, fundamental research is no longer available in some of the major areas like the SSL, which was the Scientific Services Laboratory of which you would be aware, and BHP which have now moved their facilities to the Victorian University of Technology. So you will find that the CSIRO has a very central and key role in this area. As you would know, CSIRO is a key training area. Many of the personnel who have gone out into industry have come from the CSIRO camp.

The importance of the proposal is quite broad in terms of providing a basis for research. The greater the urbanisation of the world, the greater the need for fire safety. While this might seem a very large perspective to put it into, it is very central to urbanisation and very central to life safety. There is a place for the private sector in materials and fire testing, but



it is unlikely for any fundamental research to occur in commercial institutions or in commercial enterprises, particularly from a long-term perspective.

An important issue is that there are few change agents in the construction industry due to the risk issues, and it is essential that an independent change agent exists. That is the sort of role that an organisation like CSIRO would have. Fire engineering, as I mentioned before, is a new applied science which is saving millions and millions of dollars for clients, both in the public and private sectors right across this country. That needs solid fundamental research as a performance warrant. The right facility will now enhance that process, and it is very much central to the continuation of the reputation of CSIRO in terms of research and testing activities. They cannot continue in the present facilities, and the role of a respected change agent is absolutely central to innovation in our industry.

**CHAIR**—Once again, the committee had a very comprehensive briefing from CSIRO this morning, and we do recognise the importance of the work and the importance of providing modern appropriate facilities to enhance and continue that work.

**Mr HOLLIS**—You have mentioned in your statement that very little research is done in this field in the private sector.

**Mr Dinham**—Correct.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Why is that? Is that because it is so complex? This morning we saw many examples of doors, roofs and things like that. Would research in this field be too wide ranging for a single individual firm to carry out? Is it that it has to be a centralised agency? What is the reason?

**Mr Dinham**—One of the key issues of research is that it has a particular time perspective which is additive, and a continuum is required. A lot of the work that goes on in commercial laboratories of commercial testing areas tends to be for particular clients who have a start-stop program. So you do not get the follow-on that is so necessary in terms of research in the long term. You need an additive base on which to build the fundamental research.

**CHAIR**—Do you also do international design work? Do you have links with international companies?

**Mr Dinham**—Yes. We have a transport project in Shanghai at the moment. All of the lessons learned with the new southern railway in Sydney and its underground stations are being applied to that project. The fire engineering of that project was done using Sydney consultants, with the experience of CSIRO in the background.

**Senator CALVERT**—CSIRO told us this morning about their standing internationally, but a third-party endorsement from you would be handy. Are you aware of any other research facilities in the world that are as good as or equal to what we have here?

**Mr Dinham**—Mr Little previously mentioned BRANZ, which is the New Zealand facility. I understand there are others that are more distant, particularly in Europe. But if we

are talking about the Southern Hemisphere and the huge area of Asia, indeed, Australia is leading the world in a lot of this. This is the key place for research. Take all of the tests that were done on all the public walkways and tiling for the New Southern Railway, for example; all of that materials testing was done directly by the laboratories of CSIRO. There is a high usage by our industry of CSIRO facilities.

**Senator CALVERT**—Is CSIRO essential to your business?

**Mr Dinham**—To the practice of architecture and construction, indeed, yes.

**Senator CALVERT**—Is there anywhere else you could go for that?

**Mr Dinham**—You can go out of the country.

**Senator CALVERT**—I mean that, within Australia, there is no other comparable organisation.

**Mr Dinham**—I mentioned before the Victorian University of Technology, and a number of the other universities do testing of types. But you do not find the integrated facility that you find here at Ryde. That is the key to it. You are binding a whole group of people with very different programs of research. You are adding all that together in one. So you are getting real fundamental research. That is the difference between the sort of facility that is being suggested here and what is happening both in the universities and, indeed, in any private commercial laboratory.

**Senator CALVERT**—It is almost like a techno-park.

**Mr Dinham**—I think that is a good description.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much for your presentation today.

[12.17 p.m.]

**MICHEL, Mrs Diane Dorothy, Convenor, North Ryde Residents Group**

**CHAIR**—On behalf of the committee, I welcome you. The committee has received a submission from the North Ryde Residents Group dated 30 July 1999. Do you wish to propose any amendment?

**Mrs Michel**—No.

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

*The submission read as follows—*

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

**Mrs Michel**—As I have said, I have no changes to what was said originally. In truth, all I can say is more of the same—that there has been no further consultation for the community, and I think the concerns about the look of the building and where it will be sited have been generally aired.

Listening to what has been said this morning, I might raise a couple of questions. When we asked why the building must go where it has been decided on, we were told that the decision was based on a plan that had been done in 1991. I would like to ask: that being the case, have there been no other changes to that plan? I believe to accept that would be unrealistic.

We were told the cost penalty of relocating the site to where the current facilities exist would be \$1 million to \$1½ million per annum. It would be interesting to see how much of a penalty would exist from work being lost during the transition stage rather than over a full year. The third argument for leaving things as they have been planned is that it allows for integration under one roof. This sounds like a very good idea, but I cannot understand why we cannot have an integrated development on whichever site we would choose.

This is probably a foolish thing to say from the point of my particular submission but, during the considerable discussion about fire earlier in the day, one thing that did not seem to be raised in favour of the site as it is being planned is that there should be better and faster access for the fire brigade to reach the site near Epping Road. Living in the area, I know about this because fire engines make regular trips: they howl through the traffic down Pittwater Road, Epping Road and Delhi Road and are not able to get through—and this happens a lot. So possibly the new site would be an advantage, but it still does not mean that we have to have something that looks, if not like a tin shed, like a swimming pool fence gone high-rise.

Our main concern is that the CSIRO seems in all ways to be continuing to keep its back to the community both in the design of those buildings and in its attitude to public participation. There was an ad in the paper that said that this latest hearing would take place. I do not believe that it appeared in any of the local papers, and I believe that it appeared only once. We also were told this morning that, if anybody from the community or any group wants consultation, it should be up to them to ask for it.

Whether that is acceptable or not, I refer you back to my submission in which I said that, when I was consulted, I suggested very strongly that other groups should be consulted and that possibly some form of meeting should take place so that people could ask questions and there could be some sort of interchange. I most particularly suggested that it would seem a good idea to at least contact the groups which had made submissions here only a month or so earlier. This did not take place.

As Ms Merchant said, we are members of the community. We have other things to do. We are not paid for this and we cannot, as well as attending and thinking about these things and running our own lives, go back and forth to plead and beg for people to talk to us. I

would give an example with this report. When the whole CSIRO redevelopment first arose eight going on nine years ago, my group's particular problem was the lack of a fauna and flora impact study. At the time we were told that that was not necessary. This survey of the flora and fauna and soils was apparently a later outcome of that hearing. It has only surfaced for the community since May this year. You can see by the battered state of this copy that it is not easily come by. One was not given to me, although for some reason the project manager seems to have identified my tiny group as the full expertise of the community. Someone was able to get this after making many phone calls and many demands, and it has been passed from hand to hand and shared amongst the groups.

Hearing this morning about a new report which is supposed to emerge in September—and I noticed that the committee asked fairly strongly to be supplied with it—I wonder whether it will also go to the groups who are appearing here today, or whether we will have to wait another eight years to see what was said and what, in fact, was not done later. As far as I am concerned, consultation with the community is more than putting an ad in the paper, it is more than saying everything is going to be fine; it is listening to us and talking to us, because sometimes we do have something useful to say.

This is not happening, and I do not know why that should be the case. No-one in my experience of the three hearings on this subject has said, 'None of this redevelopment should happen; let's let it all go back to bushland; let's turn it all into a holiday resort.' Everyone accepts that what is going on here is a good thing and it makes sense. But it is not being done in a way that allows the members of the community who live here to suggest what they should do.

As far as identifying the North Ryde residents as the appropriate community group, I am most flattered. But I should also point out that I happen to live in a house which is within walking distance of this facility, and I did walk here this morning. It is very convenient to come and dump something on my doorstep or for somebody to stop in and talk to me and say, 'We've consulted with the community.' Talking to local government also is not consulting with the community.

That consultation still did not happen on this occasion, particularly when I would assume approaches should have been made to at least those groups that took the time and trouble to appear here only a month or so earlier, causes me to state that there is something very wrong about this. I do not think there is anything sinister going on. But I do think there is this attitude of their back being turned toward the community—'We're in a stockade; we'll do it; it is inconvenient and takes extra time and fuss to deal with these people.' I do not think I have anything more to say.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much. I think some of the points you have made are well taken points.

**Senator CALVERT**—You refer to the large fire building as 'a swimming pool fence gone high-rise'.

**Mrs Michel**—We were told that we should not call it corrugated iron.

**Senator CALVERT**—We were told this morning that it is not corrugated iron.

**Mrs Michel**—It is metal with a profile and it is corrugated. It is like a colorbond fence.

**Senator CALVERT**—You have had a good chance to look at it?

**Mrs Michel**—I have not seen the exact thing. All I can say is that, when North Ryde residents were consulting—meaning that a nice man came to see me, sat in my lounge room and gave me some black and white drawings—I immediately said, from the wavy look of the vertical lines, ‘Oh, we’re looking at a tin-shed effect or corrugated iron,’ or something like that. He smiled and did not exactly agree but said, ‘Yes, corrugated profile metal.’ I think at that stage I said, ‘But of course it will be a nice gumleaf green, won’t it?’ He said, ‘Probably eggshell or something like that.’ We were told today it will be some version of white and greyish colours. Because I live on Epping Road in the same area, I would suggest that there will be a trifling problem with the crud from the road and the sky turning it a rather darker shade of grey as time goes on.

**Senator CALVERT**—We were told this morning that that is the colour of it. I presume that from here you can see the metal design. Has that changed your view at all?

**Mrs Michel**—Not really. We are still looking at that highest chimney-like building with very little set back. As at least one of the committee members said when coming up Epping Road this morning, you basically see trees now until you get to the not particularly lovely Optus Global site. Instead of trees, you will see a chimney at the highest point and the backs of buildings. I am looking at them right now. The write-up on this makes quite a point about how the inner surfaces that you are looking at are welcoming and easy going, and we have blank walls facing us.

**Senator CALVERT**—So you have the backyard view?

**Mrs Michel**—Yes, and a very narrow strip of trees which may or may not turn out as it looks with the little toy trees there; often they do not.

**Senator CALVERT**—Are you satisfied with the evidence you heard this morning about pollution control?

**Mrs Michel**—If the CSIRO, with their expertise, are saying that, I am certainly in no position to disagree with it. I do have some experience of NATA personally. In my work as a journalist, now and then I have interviewed them and I know the sorts of things they do. There are many cases—I do not know whether it is so in this case—where Australia is leading in the way of standards rather than following ISO. So, if CSIRO say that it will not put a smell into the air, I wish they would walk down the road to the Goodman Fielder facility on Lane Cove River and tell them how to do it as well.

**Senator CALVERT**—So your basic concern is the visual impact.

**Mrs Michel**—I am equally concerned with the environmental impacts as Ms Merchant’s group, but I thought they handled that so adequately there was no need for me to say the

same thing again. Just last weekend, I walked down that little service road paralleling Epping Road where I assume the committee went this morning. Down at the end where it is bare dirt and becoming bush I noticed that, if you did one of those counts of a square metre, looking straight down it is totally Scotch thistle, which is getting into the bushland. None of these things are really being taken into account.

**Senator CALVERT**—You are lucky that there is no serrated tussock here yet.

**Mrs Michel**—What we have instead is a very close relative called *Paspalum quadrifarium*, and I am waging war against it. If you go down the service road with Epping Road on your right, it is in that little bit of bush on the right, and it is also everywhere else.

**CHAIR**—Coming back to the flora and fauna report that you have there, could you please repeat, if you have already stated it, where you got that report from, when it was done and who did it?

**Mrs Michel**—During the period of preparation of submissions for the previous hearing, Miss Ronda Ware, who made a submission at that time, took it upon herself to pursue all and sundry until she had managed to obtain a copy. At her own expense, she prepared a copy for me which I am sharing with others. It is entitled *Proposed Redevelopment of CSIRO Property at North Ryde, Sydney—Survey of Flora, Terrestrial Vertebrate Fauna and Soils for CSIRO Corporate Property Unit*, M.D. Doherty, L.W. Braithwaite and D.J. Tongway, CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology, December 1992. I would say that this was almost certainly an outcome of the pleas to look into this. There is very good material in here.

**CHAIR**—Have you read through that?

**Mrs Michel**—Yes, indeed.

**CHAIR**—I presume that report has some recommendations. In your view, have they been complied with?

**Mrs Michel**—No, they have not. I cannot say that as a blanket statement, obviously; some things have been done. But this is the point that Ms Merchant was addressing. She was talking about this document which did talk about an overall site plan to preserve corridors, et cetera—something which has not occurred.

**CHAIR**—We took that point, although in her submission she does mention that there was a master plan. That was acknowledged in her submission to this hearing today.

**Mrs Michel**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Have you had a comprehensive look at that where you can say, ‘Well, these particular things that were recommended in that report have not been addressed’?

**Mrs Michel**—No, I have skimmed through it. I suppose I could; I think it would take a while. If something like this could be supplied to the committee, say, over the next fortnight,

it might be possible to do that, perhaps as a combined effort between Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society and North Ryde Residents Group. Would that be appropriate?

**CHAIR**—The secretary has indicated that we can ensure that that is circulated. If you let us, we will coordinate anyway on who should have a copy.

**Mrs Michel**—Yes, that would be very good. I would again mention this new document that is meant to surface in September; it would be most appropriate if the community had a chance to see it this time.

**CHAIR**—Yes.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Have you seen this artistic impression here?

**Mrs Michel**—Not in this form, no. I have only seen black and whites.

**Mr HOLLIS**—This, we are told, is the view across the valley from the park.

**Mrs Michel**—Yes.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Bearing in mind the rather artistic chimney that has been superimposed on it, does it coincide with what your views are?

**Mrs Michel**—Those trucks are going along Epping Road towards the city, presumably.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Yes, I guess so.

**Mrs Michel**—They would really be on Lane Cove Road going in different directions.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Yes, there is a road down the bottom.

**Mrs Michel**—Yes. I would suggest, as I believe some of the committee members did this morning, that we are seeing a little bit of romanticism here.

**Mr HOLLIS**—I think the background looks like mountains, and I did not see any mountains. I think there is a cemetery where the mountains are.

**Mrs Michel**—The Blue Mountains are that way. But I note all that green that separates the building from the road. I understand that there will be some change in ground levels and so forth. But the very thin strip between Epping Road and the service road which is elevated now has been severely done over by some of the work which has occurred in Riverside Corporate Park, including the dumping of rubbish from sites in there and outside the site at times. Also, with the electricity, Energy Australia come through there, and always have, to lop under the lines. There has been a lot of dumping there in general. There is very nice bush in that little strip, but in places it is hardly wider than this table.



**Mr HOLLIS**—I was more interested in your impression of the buildings. It seems to me that, if we take this as a representation of the view, the most attractive aspect of the whole thing is the chimney.

**Mrs Michel**—Yes.

**Mr HOLLIS**—A fortnight ago I was in Kent. I was particularly impressed there with the hop growing area, the oast-houses. It rather looks like one of those. Of all those rather bulk buildings, that is the only relief in the whole area. So I thought that, rather than being offensive, if we take that as a true interpretation, that chimney would relieve what is a rather austere set of buildings. Am I being too poetic?

**Mrs Michel**—Possibly. I have not had the opportunity to go to Kent, but I can remember a trip to Tasmania on which I took a great many pictures on a foggy morning of hop barns which were absolutely gorgeous weathered grey wood. That might be an idea, instead of having the white tin-shed effect.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for your submission.

[12.38 p.m.]

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

**BREWSTER, Mr Ian, Principal, Brewster Hjorth Architects**

**LITTLE, Mr Larry Richard, Chief, Building Construction and Engineering, CSIRO**

**MOODY, Mr Trevor Lawrence, Assistant General Manager, Corporate Property, CSIRO**

**SANDLAND, Dr Ronald Lindsay, Deputy Chief Executive, Information Technology, Infrastructure and Services and Manufacturing, CSIRO**

**THOMAS, Mr Damien Anthony, General Manager Marketing, Building Construction and Engineering, CSIRO**

**CHAIR**—The CSIRO witnesses now having been recalled, I might begin by putting a question on the issue of public consultation, because it is one that comes before this committee very frequently with organisations. There does seem to me sometimes to be a breakdown in this process, for whatever reason. I wonder whether you would respond to the comments made by Mrs Michel today.

**Mr Moody**—I mentioned earlier to this committee—and I have said it previously—it is very difficult at times for CSIRO to identify who represents the community for consultation. We identified the Ryde City Council, as I said previously, as being representative of people within this area. We identified the North Ryde Residents Group as being representative of people living immediately adjacent to the facility. The Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society came to our notice only at the previous hearing that was held in May.

**CHAIR**—And yet Mrs Michel said in her evidence that, when she was consulted, she made a recommendation that they be one of the groups consulted.

**Mr Moody**—I have to say that I was not personally aware that recommendation had been made by Mrs Michel. I noticed that in her letter to the committee she did indicate that there were some, I think, people rather than organisations that should be consulted. The people who made representations to this committee at the last hearing in May were individuals who were not representing organisations. It is a matter of how open we go in consulting with individuals and identifying who the appropriate individuals are with whom we should consult.

Certainly we are more than happy to talk now with the Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society, and we are willing to continue dialogue with the North Ryde Residents Association. But at this stage we still do not know who else we need to consult with in the community who has a particular interest in the development proposed before this committee today.

**CHAIR**—It is always a difficult issue, but I think it is really important—and I have said this many times—that the community is consulted and that significant groups in the community are consulted. There is a two-way responsibility there. Clearly, it is not all your responsibility. As I have made the point to Ms Merchant today, there are also obligations on people who have concerns to come forward and have appropriate discussions as well as, as they have done, be present at these hearings. So it is a two-way situation.

But an organisation such as CSIRO has many more resources than small community based organisations to ensure that that consultation does take place. Certainly it would be my recommendation—and I think the other members of the committee would agree—that there be some improvement in the communication between yourselves and the significant organisations who have taken the time to submit to this and other hearings in relation to the development of the site.

**Dr Sandland**—Perhaps I might briefly comment on that. I have heard both the statements and your comments. Clearly, some aspects of the consultation, while entirely appropriately intentioned and appropriately carried out, have led to some concerns. I suggest that, as a result of this, we will review our process of community consultation in these matters.

**CHAIR**—I think, if that were to happen, it would be a very worthwhile outcome of these hearings.

**Mr HOLLIS**—I would note that you have undertaken to give us a copy of the plan that I think Mr Moody said he hoped would be completed in September.

**Senator CALVERT**—Ms Merchant made mention of the use of grey water. Was that ever considered for landscaping purposes? For a start, where would the grey water come from?

**Mr Moody**—Any grey water that could be provided on the site would be roof stormwater run-off. That perhaps could be collected and used for watering landscaped areas around the site. We have adopted that practice on some other facilities. But, as was well summed up by Madam Chair, we are providing native vegetation on this site. Whether that needs the same extent of watering as exotic species do is open to question. It costs money to provide it, and we are not sure whether on this site there would be much benefit out of re-use of grey water.

**Senator CALVERT**—Another concern raised—and hopefully you have taken it on board—was the landscaping issue with the use of native vegetation.

**Mr Moody**—It is our intention that any plantings as part of the landscape plan for this site will incorporate native indigenous species.

**CHAIR**—The other concern was the ‘high-rise swimming pool fence’. From Epping Road, will that be shielded by trees to any extent? That model shows that it is.

**Mr Moody**—Under council guidelines, we were required to provide for the rear boundary of the site—and this is seen as the rear boundary—a five-metre setback. We increased that setback to 11.2 metres to allow for more buffer planting to occur between the building and the boundary of our site. There was mention of a service road which runs alongside the boundary, and there is further planting within the land from the service road to Epping Road. So there is a certain amount of buffer planting. How effective the buffer planting is may be open to question at the moment. But our intention, as part of this project, is to reinforce that buffer planting and provide a better solution than what exists today with planting adjacent to Epping Road.

**CHAIR**—Going back to Senator Calvert’s comment about the use of native vegetation, I would perhaps suggest again that you might want to have a planting plan that could be discussed with the organisation that has made the submission today, the Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society. If that is what you are planning, there should be no reason to discuss that, and they can see then that you are meeting the requirements for maintaining the native species.

**Mr Moody**—Certainly we have no problems at all in discussing, with any group, solutions to landscaping.

**CHAIR**—But there will be an overall planting plan, I take it?

**Mr Moody**—Yes.

**Mr HOLLIS**—What about the general question that a couple of the witnesses brought up about an overall plan? I think someone—perhaps it was Ms Merchant—said that the place was ‘a jigsaw’ or words to that effect. They seemed to be very critical about the way buildings have been constructed on this site. What is your response to that?

**Mr Moody**—All private development on the site has been subject to development approvals by the Ryde City Council. There is a strategic master plan for the site which identifies buildings located on a certain number of allotments. As I stated previously, the council has developed a development control plan which sets out setback requirements, site coverage, heights of buildings and so on. The council, as part of its development approvals of projects, would take those issues into account.

I would also add that not only is the council following particular guidelines but also, at the initiative of CSIRO, what was called a section 88B instrument was attached to the title on all lots sold. That provided guidelines for landscaping design construction services and environmental controls. Individual property owners are required to submit a statement of environmental effects as part of the development application submitted to the council. That approval process is really in the hands of the council. CSIRO has done all it can to reinforce the guidelines for development of lots, but it really is a matter between the council and the private developers as to how those sites can be developed.

We can certainly control what we are doing in the central precinct and the southern precincts that are identified for CSIRO development. With those sites we are taking the

responsible approach in ensuring that design and construction environmental controls are applied to ensure that the best solution is achieved on this site.

**Mr Ardern**—Before the committee closes, I might make two points. A point was made by Mrs Michel about dumping on the service road. That is a point which we have been concerned about. There has been illegal dumping. Often that has been of asbestos materials. Most recently there was a trailer load of material dumped there which we treated as being asbestos sheeting. We had a specialist environmental group collect that material and dispose of it in accordance with the prescribed methodologies.

There has been a long history of illegal dumping. There was a period of about three months earlier this year where, to stop illegal dumping occurring, we kept some materials just adjacent to the side of the service road. On completion of the road system, which we have just finished, we removed that material. Since that point in time, if any material has been stored there, it has been illegally dumped; it certainly has not been associated with the park.

Also a point was made about the elevation, and we have tried to represent that as accurately as we could. With respect to the RLs, we have used reduced levels of each of the buildings and therefore the heights, relative to standard datum.

**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—*

Correspondence has been omitted from the data base.

**CHAIR**—Before closing, I would like to thank the witnesses who appeared before the committee today. I also thank committee members, Hansard and 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 sectional committee authorises publication of the evidence given before it and submissions presented at the public hearing this day.

**Committee adjourned at 12.51 p.m.**

