COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Reference: St Lucia, Queensland - CSIRO/University of Queensland joint building project

WEDNESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 1999

BRISBANE

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, 27 October 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 Murphy and Mr Forrest, Mr Hollis, Mrs Moylan and Mr Ripoll

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

St Lucia, Queensland - CSIRO joint building project

WITNESSES

Committee met at 1.02 p.m.

CHAIR—I declare open this public hearing into the proposed CSIRO/University of Queensland Joint Building Project, St Lucia, Queensland. This project was referred to the Public Works Committee for consideration and report to the parliament by the House of Representatives on 2 September 1999, with a budget of $106 million, of which CSIRO—the Commonwealth's contribution—is $50 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 carrying out the work, of the moneys to be expended on the work; (d) where the work purports to be of a revenue-producing character, the amount of revenue that it may reasonably be expected to produce; and (e) the present and prospective public value of the work.

This afternoon the committee was briefed by CSIRO on research activities and the proposed development. The committee also inspected this morning the proposed site, existing facilities at St Lucia and the site and laboratories at Long Pocket. Today the committee will hear evidence from the CSIRO and the University of Queensland, Professor John Mattick, the Queensland Government, Mr Jock Douglas AO, St Lucia Residents Against Intensive Development, Biohazard Action Alliance, St Lucia Residents Association and Long Pocket Concerned Residents. The committee does plan to adjourn at about 5 p.m.

Before we commence this public hearing and call the first witnesses, I would like to indicate that the committee is aware of the very high level of concern on the part of local residents to the development of this project. An opportunity has been provided for community groups that have made submissions to appear before us here today. These organisations have been requested to nominate two or three representatives to address the committee. If anyone feels that his or her concerns have not been addressed adequately, that person can forward his or her comments to the committee in writing after the hearing has concluded today. I will now call on representatives from CSIRO and the University of Queensland.

[1.05 p.m.]

McCLINTOCK, Mr Alasdair, Director, Property and Facilities Division, University of Queensland

TAYLOR, Dr Ian William, Deputy Director, Institute for Molecular Bioscience, University of Queensland

HEIJ, Dr Elizabeth Gordon, Chief of Division, Tropical Agriculture, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

MALLETT, Dr Christopher Patrick, Deputy Chief Executive, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

MOODY, Mr Trevor Laurence, Assistant General Manager, Corporate Property, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

TAKATS, Mr John, Project Manager, Corporate Property, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

WINTER, Dr William Henry, Manager, Infrastructure and Services, Tropical Agriculture, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

ROEHRS, Mr Mark, Associate Director, Daryl Jackson Pty Ltd, Architects

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

Dr Mallett—Yes, we do. If I can read into the record the modifications we propose: page 1, paragraph 1, substitute 'health' for 'human'; page 1, paragraph 3, the first sentence insert 'of' after 'as part'; page 11, paragraph 63, delete brackets around CRC; page 27, heading 9.10.3, delete 'House'; page 27, paragraph 173, delete 'house'; page 12, paragraph 65, delete entire paragraph; page 33, paragraph 225, first dot point, substitute '215' with '220'. We would also like to change the associated drawing and to replace the site plan in the evidence with the amended site plan.

CHAIR—Thank you. It is proposed that the submission, as amended, be received. Is it the wish of the committee that the document be incorporated in the transcript of evidence? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The document read as follows—

CHAIR—Would representatives of the CSIRO now read the summary statement to the committee, after which we will proceed to questions.

Dr Mallett—This is a summary statement to evidence on the proposed CSIRO and University of Queensland joint building project at St. Lucia, Brisbane, Queensland.

This proposal brought before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works is for the construction of a new research complex for the CSIRO divisions of Tropical Agriculture, Plant Industry and Health Sciences and Nutrition at the site of the existing CSIRO Cunningham Laboratory at St. Lucia, Brisbane**,** Queensland.

The proposed CSIRO facility will be an integral part of a joint building project with the University of Queensland for a major, world-class molecular biological research complex that will house the university's Institute for Molecular Biosciences and the CSIRO divisions. 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 to approved programs.

As the committee is aware, CSIRO is progressively upgrading many old, substandard and inefficient laboratory buildings as funds become available, and is 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 in the ACT, 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 CSIRO facility will replace numerous existing substandard or outdated buildings at the St. Lucia site as part of CSIRO's continuing program to provide high quality, modern facilities appropriate for conducting current and anticipated scientific research and development activities.

The proposal provides a unique opportunity to collocate with the university in a joint complex that will generate strategic benefits through increased scientific interactions and project collaboration, along with savings from the sharing of expensive equipment, facilities and other physical and human resources.

The proposed complex will accommodate 750 university and CSIRO scientists and support staff, including 285 CSIRO research and support staff currently located at the St. Lucia site, at the CSIRO Long Pocket Laboratories at Indooroopilly, and in rented accommodation at the University of Queensland.

The proposed CSIRO facility will comprise modern research laboratories, laboratory support areas, service and equipment rooms, research, management and administration offices, together with library, information services and glasshouse facilities. The total complex will also provide amenity and support facilities to be shared with the university, including a cafeteria, reception, staff amenities, board room, centralised stores, wash-up

facilities, a 300-seat auditorium, bulk chemical and gas doors, an animal house and information technology support.

Substandard redundant existing buildings located on the site of the new complex will be demolished. The existing CSIRO controlled environment facility will be integrated with the new complex. The estimated total cost to the proposed joint complex is $110 million, the CSIRO components being $50 million. Construction is planned to commence in December 1999 with completion and occupancy of the complex in 2002.

The proposed joint complex of approximately 35,000 square metres gross floor area includes the following CSIRO components: biology laboratories, shared chemistry laboratories, information science laboratories, specialist laboratories including analytical chemistry, greenhouse and herbarium, management administration, laboratory support areas, shared amenities, library, cafeteria, auditorium, reception, stores and information technology and support facilities, car park, associated site works, roadworks, engineering, and communication services and landscaping.

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

Siting of the complex conforms to the general principles of the University of Queensland site development plan 1996. In developing this proposal, CSIRO, the university and its consultants have contacted all industry groups including CSIRO's staff and unions, those local authorities having statutory responsibility over the locality and services. General support for the proposal has been received from staff, government and industry associations.

The proposed design fully meets CSIRO functional needs and conforms to 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 the proposal will provide a world-class laboratory complex that will stimulate and promote research and development activities and further enhance its opportunities for conducting national and international research consistent with its primary functions and long-term objectives.

The co-location with the University of Queensland's Institute of Molecular Biosciences will provide a critical mass of molecular biology research expertise to focus on business development outcomes and provide significant cost savings through shared equipment and facilities. CSIRO is satisfied that the proposed works are the most appropriate, timely and cost-effective way to provide high quality, safe and efficient accommodation for the Brisbane based staff of CSIRO Tropical Agriculture, Plant Industry, and Health Sciences and Nutrition to meet their joint research needs. It therefore submits the proposal to the committee for examination and seeks its endorsement. Thank you.

CHAIR—Thank you very much. We will now seek questions from the committee.

Senator MURPHY—With regard to you proceeding to do this development, were there any environmental impact assessments done?

Mr Moody—We have had specialist consultants preparing an environmental assessment report that effectively is dedicated to a study of the environmental issues associated with this project through the design, construction and operation of the complex.

Senator MURPHY—Has that been done?

Mr Moody—The report is in draft form at the moment. It is well advanced and if the committee desires, we can table a copy of the draft report today.

Senator MURPHY—When do you expect it to be in final form?

Mr Moody—Most of these reports are progressive reports. We would anticipate that we could complete that within one month.

Senator MURPHY—Did the people who conducted the report conduct any public consultation?

Mr Roehrs—Public consultation was not a specific component of the environmental evaluation.

Senator MURPHY—Can you inform the committee what aspects of the environment the report intended to address?

Mr Roehrs—The major components of response were the impacts of the building in relation to the local area. We have been particularly concerned about hazardous waste management procedures, evaluation of the chemical activities that are being undertaken in the building, and discharge implications from the building. We have undertaken noise evaluations, and evaluations of traffic are ongoing. The report looks at the evaluation of the design in terms of impact and also puts in place proposals for environmental management plans for both the construction phase and the post-occupancy phase of the project.

Senator MURPHY—Will the report be publicly released?

Mr Moody—We would see no reason why that report cannot be made available to the public.

Senator MURPHY—With regard to the draft report, it might be useful if we were able to have a look at any recommendations that it makes. I assume recommendations will be followed.

CHAIR—Further to the environmental concerns, if the report is made available to the public—and I would think that it ought to be—will there be an opportunity for the public to make comment and to raise any concerns they have for discussion?

Dr Mallett—I think the answer is yes. It is relatively straightforward. We are seeking to be cooperative and sensitive to the views and concerns of the local residents. We will certainly be tabling the report in a way that it can be publicly available. Clearly, if there is input from residents in terms of matters of facts and the concerns they have about some of the environmental aspects which may have been either missed or overlooked, we are happy to take those representations on board.

CHAIR—Further on the environment, I noticed that there were some concerns about stormwater drainage and possible contamination of the river from stormwater waste water. What can you tell us about the provisions to ensure that there is not contamination of the river?

Mr Moody—The issue of stormwater drainage can be looked at from two areas. One is run-off which comes from the roofs of the facility and the other is run-off that comes from parking areas within the site and, I guess, any landscape areas. Roof drainage will be taken as it normally is: directly from the roof into the stormwater drainage system, which is no different to what you have in any residence or any other building anywhere where you have a roof drainage system.

With the pavement drainage, we are looking at techniques to filter the drainage so that there is no possibility of contaminants, pollutants—whether it might be oil from cars that are parked in the parking areas that can contaminate the system. We are looking at techniques to overcome that problem, which is a common problem, of course.

CHAIR—Further to that and the stormwater drain coming off the roof, there was a comment in one of the submissions about the smokestack and emissions from the building. There was a comment that that would drift off. Is there any likelihood of problems emanating from that? What measures have been taken to prevent that?

Mr Moody—It is our intention that any discharge from exhaust flues will meet all environmental requirements. We will be consulting with the environmental authorities to ensure that any discharge from those flues fully complies with what are acceptable limits. We are going to take measures in the control of those emissions to ensure that they are satisfactory for discharge and will not cause fall-out problems as often people are concerned about from such flues.

CHAIR—Is that something that is going to come up in the environmental impact statement?

Mr Moody—That will be covered in the environmental management plan for the facility. We are also going to conduct further modelling studies to look at the impact of flue discharge from the stacks to ensure that there is minimum contamination, if any contamination, that can occur.

Mr FORREST—The committee has something of a problem here. We are being asked to approve expenditure of public funds in a project in which you are a partner. I understand there is a partnership with this development with the university. It is roughly half and half. Who has overall management control of the project?

Mr Moody—Under the agreement that we have made with the university, the project will be managed by the university. We have project control groups and executive control groups made up of CSIRO and university representatives that are working together to ensure that the project is managed to meet the requirements of both parties in a joint venture arrangement.

Mr FORREST—Do you have much say over the way the project is managed, particularly because so far a lot of the evidence is suggesting there is very poor community consultation? The response is that there has been only one formal meeting.

CHAIR—Could we have silence during the presentation of this evidence? Everyone will have their turn and an opportunity to speak. Otherwise, it is going to delay the process and we have a lot of witnesses to get through. Thank you for your cooperation.

Mr FORREST—There has only been one public meeting. Are you satisfied that that is an adequate form of community consultation?

Mr Moody—There has been one public meeting at this stage but our intention is that there will be further discussions with the community during the ongoing design development phases of the project to ensure the community is fully aware of the design. We have only had one public consultation meeting, which was an information session as much as anything else because that was the only stage where we had plans in a suitable state to demonstrate to the community what we were proposing to do. As a result, the community is now fully aware of the building and what it is going to look like. Our intention is to provide more information progressively so they can get a better understanding of what both the university and CSIRO are doing in the design and construction of this building.

Mr FORREST—Isn't the intention to start the project in December?

Mr Moody—The project obviously cannot commence until we have parliamentary approval. CSIRO is really in the hands of this committee as to if it can start or, alternatively, the start is delayed.

Mr FORREST—Assuming a reasonable time and approval is given, what is the construction program?

Mr Moody—The construction program is that the university and CSIRO would like to commence with demolition works as early as December, subject to parliamentary approval, with an aim of completion of the facility in the year 2002. Obviously, if the committee's decision is delayed, or parliamentary approval is delayed, then the commencement would be delayed accordingly.

Mr FORREST—If parliamentary approval is not given for your half-share, will the project proceed anyway?

Mr Moody—The project itself, as currently before this committee, could not proceed because CSIRO would be unable to spend $50 million towards this facility. One would assume that the alternative would be to design a facility for the university alone and they

would fund a separate facility but that has other implications which really means going back to base parameters. The project has been developed as a joint collaborative effort between the university and CSIRO with a view of bringing two groups together to conduct research in an integrated complex. If CSIRO cannot fund its component of the complex, obviously we do not have an integrated complex that we can proceed with.

CHAIR—Can I come back for a moment to the public consultation? After Mr Forrest asked the question, you said that there had been one public meeting which was held after you had plans. Is there a formal procedure laid down for public consultation through the development of this project, particularly in this preliminary stage?

Mr Moody—One of the difficulties CSIRO has always had in the public consultation process is identifying who the parties are that we need to consult with. We have attempted to do that. We made inquiries about who the local concerned groups might be some two months ago. Having a public meeting we thought would help to identify who the parties were that we needed to consult with.

I personally made contact with the local member some two weeks prior to that meeting and in discussions we agreed that meeting would be held to perhaps give local residents the opportunity to comment. A letter drop was conducted through the neighbourhood offering residents the opportunity to attend a meeting on 6 October. The local member, Denver Beanland, kindly agreed to chair that meeting. It was at his request and we were quite pleased that he was able to do that as a representative of the local community. From that meeting we have since been able to identify who the concerned groups are within the community. Having now identified those people we can continue consultation with those groups through the ongoing design development and construction phases.

CHAIR—Will there be a formal process laid down for that consultative process to take place with the identified groups?

Mr Moody—A formal process as such has not been developed. We do not have a formal program developed but our intention is that there will be ongoing consultation. We will most likely convene a public meeting in the very short term to identify more information that can be made available to the public and one such item of information could be the environmental assessment report that we mentioned earlier.

CHAIR—Could I ask then that, once this has been developed and decisions made about public consultation, the committee is kept fully informed as to what is happening in terms of public consultation?

Mr Moody—Certainly.

Dr Mallett—We are happy to give that commitment. One of the problems we have faced—and we have had this debate elsewhere in the country—is the issue of what is the role of the committee as laid down as a parliamentary committee and what is the role of CSIRO as a statutory authority and our link between the local authorities, the state authorities, federal authorities and elements of public consultation. We have made a commitment and my colleague has just indicated the commitment here. We have this as a

general issue and we have to make sure that when we put a formal procedure in place it is actually going to stand the scrutiny of your committee. We would like to work, if I may suggest, with you and your colleagues so that we can actually establish that we are not infringing on your rights to determine policy as laid down by the act you referred to.

Senator CALVERT—For the benefit of some of us on the committee who were not here this morning, I was wondering who was supplying the funds for the total project. We had a very detailed briefing from the Vice-Chancellor, John Hay. It is something like $100 million. Where does it sit in the scheme of things of the project itself? I was very impressed when I heard just how big it is but some of my colleagues would probably like to know just where some of the money is coming from.

Dr Mallett—With your agreement, Dr Ian Taylor, who is the Deputy Director of the Centre will give that information.

Dr Taylor—From the university's complement of these funds there is some $55 million: $15 million of that is coming from the state government; $15 million from the university's own coffers; $15 million is coming from the Commonwealth government's Federation Fund and $10 million from an anonymous donor. That gives a total of $55 million.

CHAIR—$10 million from where?

Dr Taylor—From an anonymous donor.

Senator CALVERT—We were told this morning that the facility itself is probably the biggest facility of its type in importance and in character in Australia—in fact in the southern hemisphere, I think. How much do the new building and the proposed joint facilities with the university differ from what happens here now?

Dr Taylor—The new building itself will be considerably different in the sense that it will be a modern facility.

Senator CALVERT—In the work it undertakes basically?

Dr Taylor—The work it undertakes will be almost identical to the work that is currently going on in this site and in a variety of vicinities on the site itself. There is no new work that we are undertaking in the sense of really new techniques or new equipment that has not already been used on the site in some form or another.

Dr Mallett—It is largely a matter of consolidation of work which is carried out in a disparate number of locations, not only in a relatively cost ineffective way but also in a way which militates against its effectiveness simply because it is fragmented. What we would like to do is to consolidate it not only for the reasons we have suggested in our submission in terms of modernising the infrastructure, but also because of the synergies between the university and CSIRO in research areas and also in provision of amenities.

Senator CALVERT—One of the questions raised by some of the concerned groups was that this research facility in a residential suburb was about safety issues relating to

potentially hazardous activities. Could you relate to us what sort of hazardous activities might be conducted there?

Dr Mallett—Can I point out, by way of introduction in answering your question, that this development is actually on the university campus. The university campus is not a residential area; the university campus is a university campus.

On the second point, the work being done is principally standard straightforward laboratory work of the sort which you and some of your colleagues saw this morning. The vast majority of the laboratory space to be provided is what is called PC2. The essential characteristics of PC2 are things like the doors should close, that the floors should be continuous so they can be washed and that people wear lab coats. It is not proposed that we carry out any significant hazardous activities of the sort that, for instance, would be carried out elsewhere in Australia. There is a very small amount of slightly more secure laboratory space, but only a small amount—something like five per cent.

Senator CALVERT—So you would not be doing any work in conjunction with the Geelong facility, for instance?

Dr Mallett—Not at all.

Senator CALVERT—What about the proposed changes at the NSP that we went and looked at this morning—is there any likelihood of any transport of hazardous materials or the like between the two facilities?

Dr Mallett—I would like to explain that this proposal and the NSP are two separate proposals. This proposal is a fairly detailed proposal which we are bringing before you. The National Science Precinct in Indooroopilly is an entirely separate operation. We are currently carrying out community consultation on that proposal and there have been several meetings and leaflet drops of the sort which we would suggest would be suitable for this model once it comes a bit closer to fruition. That is an entirely separate initiative and the two are independent. It is by no means definite that the NSP will go ahead in its proposed form. However, we would like to table this proposal before you today as a fixed proposal. We would not expect significant transport of materials between the two, certainly not of anything sensitive or dangerous.

Mr HOLLIS—My first question is something I suppose we should have asked at the beginning: is this the best location for this facility? It is going to be a rather large and detailed facility within the university, so is this the best location for it and were other locations considered?

Dr Mallett—I would like to refer your question to Mr McClintock, who can speak on behalf of the university, which is a majority partner in this, and he can explain the various options that were examined in terms of location.

Mr McClintock—I would like to refer to the site plan behind you. I point out for members of the committee who were not at the meeting this morning that the university campus is marked by the dotted red line going right around. A site development plan was

prepared for the campus in 1996, and part of that plan was to ensure that we keep the development within the academic core. We have defined three major areas in the academic core. We have research here for biosciences research, we have chemistry here and we have humanities over there. The intention to keep the buildings within the academic core is to keep the parkland setting we have along the Brisbane River free for use by the local community and by members of the university in Brisbane as a whole. There is a very real reason for this because this area here, the ovals, flooded in the 1976 flood and are below the Q100 line.

We were looking for a site somewhere within the academic core and somewhere that is related to the research that is going on at present. The two sites that we looked at were a site here, behind Molecular Biosciences, and this site here, which is presently occupied by the Cunningham Laboratory sites. We also looked at the possibility of demolishing other buildings, but all the other buildings on the campus are in use, and you can see that this site here is in no way big enough for the development that we were looking for. Therefore, this really was the only site suitable for such a large development, and it lies between the research development that goes on in this area and the research development that goes on in that area, so it is the fulcrum of our research arm for biotechnology.

Mr FORREST—I do not know if Mr Hollis intended it but I thought the question was broader than that. This is a research facility for tropical horticulture and agriculture, I understand. Why not Toowoomba, or Rockhampton, or other tropical university sites? This is already fairly congested.

Mr McClintock—From the university's perspective, the research that the university intends to do is already taking place on this campus. The University of Queensland only has three campuses. There is the St Lucia campus, there is the Gatton campus and there is the Ipswich campus. Clearly, for this sort of research centre, where we have all the infrastructure, the libraries, the other associated infrastructure and the teaching facilities, this is the only university site available for the University of Queensland.

Mr FORREST—The others are different universities—is that what you are telling us? It is a different university at Rockhampton?

Mr McClintock—Yes. That is not the University of Queensland.

Dr Mallett—I would like to add to that from the CSIRO perspective. Mr McClintock has indicated that this development is central to the future of the university. It has a major impact on four of the seven faculties currently based at the University of Queensland at St Lucia. There is some discussion in some of the submissions that it should be carried out elsewhere. If that were to be the case, then this would essentially be a relocation of the university from St Lucia by stealth. You are talking about an area of science which is going to be central to Australia's future and particularly to international developments in science. If the last century was a century of chemistry and this century is a century of physics, then the next century is going to be a century of molecular biology of the sort described here. If this facility were not placed in St Lucia, then, essentially, the rest of the university would follow wherever the facility was placed.

Mr HOLLIS—If it is so important and if it is the future, why put it on an already crowded site?

Dr Mallett—Because of the existing commitments in the existing areas. What you need to do is recognise that this has an impact on what they are doing in the science faculty, in the medical faculty and in several other faculties. It is not so much that it is an already crowded site; it is a matter of this being the only place that we have already got the existing infrastructure in terms of researchers and of students. In terms of the sort of work we are talking about, in answer both to your question, Mr Hollis, and to that of Mr Forrest, the future of the biological sciences and, in particular, the application work that CSIRO is required to undertake under the terms of its acts are moving increasingly in agribusiness away from activities in the field and in the rural area to laboratory based work. For that, we need expensive equipment and we need to build the synergies we can with those research partners.

You heard a proposal not long ago for what we are trying to do in Sydney. We have a similar proposal for you tabled today. There is no practical proposition in terms of building it other than where the facilities currently are. You have heard from both CSIRO and the university that we are not proposing to undertake new research. What we are proposing to do is consolidate existing research in a much improved facility to avoid difficulties in terms of an ageing infrastructure and some of the OH&S problems we have because of that ageing infrastructure.

Mr HOLLIS—Let us move on to the practical aspects of it. It is rather a big, bulky building on the location there. What is the visual impact that it is going to have? I am pleased to see that you have got a diagram here, but you have not got what you had down at Ryde where someone used a bit of poetic licence on the visual impact. What sort of visual impact is this going to have?

Dr Mallett—I may ask Mark Roehrs to answer this question.

Mr Roehrs—The design that we have undertaken has been to try and minimise impact on the site. The footprint of the building has been divided into three distinct blocks with open space between them, with transparency under the central block so that, when coming up Carmody Road, you get visual connection up into the university. The studies that we did quite extensively during this design phase evaluated alternative density proposals and heights.

If the building, for example, were to be a three- to four-storey building, it would need to build out almost entirely the whole area of the site. Our feeling was that that had a far more substantial impact in terms of its presentation to the boundaries and the creation of a wall as opposed to a series of thinner, more vertical blades that opened up into the university and allowed green space to set back from the boundary. As you can see, for example, the building is held well back from the intersection of Carmody Road to maintain the existing trees and landscaping and, similarly, from the other elements of the Carmody Road frontage.

Dr Mallett—Mr Hollis, can I just point out that these are computer simulations. They are the poetic licence you referred to that we have at North Ryde. The pictures on the top there are an attempt to try and give an impression of the visual impact of the building.

Mr HOLLIS—It is quite a strong visual impact, isn't it? It is a very bulky building. If you were trying to sell it to me, it would have been better to leave those pictures out of the equation.

Dr Mallett, there is just one query. I listened carefully to what you said to the chair about what I would perhaps describe as a code of contact with people about these projects. I do not want to be facetious, but it really does seem to me very strange that, in about three hearings that I have attended on CSIRO projects, you have always said the same thing. When the local groups have been protesting, either you or Mr Moody or one of the others always said, 'We didn't know who to contact.' We are doing this project; we are not revisiting Ryde, but that was what came out with Ryde and on other things. I am quite puzzled about that because I am a great supporter of CSIRO—Australia's premier scientific organisation—and, not being modest about it, some of the best brains in the field are there, yet on a simple thing like contacting people you do not know who to contact.

I say that because we will do 30 or 40 hearings a year and the CSIRO are the only significant group who never know who to contact among the protesters. Wherever else we go, and we have environmental groups come before us, no-one has any difficulty in identifying them. It just seems to me that CSIRO has a great problem in identifying them. I know that, with Dr Mallett's proposal to the chair, this will be overcome in the future.

Dr Mallett—I hope so, Mr Hollis. In answer to your question, if you look at the submissions and the number of interlocking organisations, some of whom share common personnel, if you want us to, we can go and contact them all. A lot of them are, as it were, self-appointed. Our concern is that there is a law of the land and to some extent it is really at the behest of the committee. If the committee, as it has indicated at previous hearings, encourages us to take a slightly different approach to that which has been taken we are very happy to follow that ruling. In many ways we are trying to anticipate that with the discussions we are having on the national science precinct which is a completely different project. We have had a number of leaflet drops and meetings and open days at Indooroopilly to try and show people what we are proposing. So we already have done some work on that particular initiative.

Mr HOLLIS—I was only feeding your own words back to you because it was you, not me, who said you did not know who to contact. I didn't say it; you said it.

Dr Mallett—That is true; it is perfectly true.

Mr RIPOLL—Dr Mallet, you have already half explained the importance of this facility, but could you go a little further to explain how significant this facility is so we can get a better understanding of it and how important it is in terms of the work you are doing there?

Dr Mallett—Our concern for this facility is that, as has already been alluded to this morning, when we discussed the issue with the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor

Hay, the future of the biomedical industry, and particularly of the agribusiness operation, particularly tropical agribusiness, is bound up with an understanding of the molecular basis for either human health or plant and animal functionality through molecular biology. Without that we are going to be behind the rest of the world in an understanding of new products and new processes.

Increasingly, as I mentioned earlier, there has been a change in the character of work done. Molecular biology has transformed the curricula of a number of courses, essentially all the courses where biological science has an impact, and will, in our view, completely revolutionise the way, for instance, the application work with which CSIRO is principally associated is developed and adopted within Australia. For our commitment, you have heard from Dr Heij, the Chief of the Division this morning that the sort of work done in terms of the plant and the animal operations—be they plants, the northern grains, or soya bean or sugar, or be they animals, beef cattle and aquaculture—if we are going to be internationally competitive in these areas, we must have a facility which allows us to understand at the molecular level exactly how these organisms operate to allow us to develop products for our markets in Asia and elsewhere. This is a crucial facility to this.

It is a world game. The amounts being spent in this area internationally are massive. A lot of it is from the corporate sector, but there is a very substantial commitment from governments in Europe and in North America to public sector research of this kind. Without a facility of this sort, we are not going to be able to reach the critical mass to even be a player internationally, which is why we so strongly support this concept because, as I said before, it is not just one of the most significant operations in Australia, it is certainly one of the most significant operations in the Southern Hemisphere. In our view, the future of a number of Australian industries is going to revolve around a better understanding of how those industries transform inputs from sunlight and water through plants or animals into products which our customers, overseas and domestically, buy.

Mr RIPOLL—Can I go back to the residents. Where the site is, is it one or two residential blocks straight across the road? How many of those blocks are owned by private residents? How many are owned by the university or CSIRO? What is the make-up of that?

Dr Mallett—I will ask Mr McClintock to answer this. To clarify, CSIRO does not own any land here at all; we are leaseholders from the university.

Mr McClintock—The university owns a number of the houses opposite, but the real issue is that the area opposite is zoned residential A. Therefore, it is immaterial whether the university owns those houses or not. The building that is designed must respect those houses and respect that it is a residential A area.

Mr RIPOLL—What are you doing to minimise the impact? It is a fairly large building and it is going to be a huge project. Are there specific plans to minimise traffic noise—actually the construction phase noise—in that period?

Mr McClintock—We have interviewed and short-listed the contractors for the job. One of the criteria was their environmental management. An environmental management plan will be drawn up with the successful contractor. There will be strict rules and regulations of when

they can and cannot do work, how the lorries come and how traffic goes throughout the area. We will set up a system of temporary car parking on the campus for the subcontractors who come to work on the job. It is our intention to establish a hotline. The local residents will know the number, which is a 24-hour service, so that they can phone up and, if there is a problem, we can get straight on to the person who is causing that problem and stop that problem. It would be our intention to advise the residents of the program so they know when noise is going to occur.

Mr RIPOLL—I want to move on to a couple of probably bit more stickier questions. It might be handy to have them on the record now because I am sure we will be discussing them later this afternoon. Some people have conveyed to us that they are concerned about safety on the site. There may be some fears as to either the type of science or research. Can you explain safety on the site in terms of the type of research you are doing?

Dr Heij—The type of research conducted is basic biological sciences and applied biological sciences for both plant and animal sciences and also for natural resource management. We do use biotechnology in that science, although a very small part of what we do would be labelled as GMO related. Biotechnology is much broader than GMOs. They are only a small part of it. Biotechnology is an increasingly valuable range of tools by which we understand the basic biology of living cells. Only occasionally would we be working with organisms where we modify the genetics deliberately to create a GMO. Most of what we do has nothing to do with GMOs at all. That is one safety aspect.

We work with some types of bacteria. We work with the sort of bacteria that associate with legume plants to fix nitrogen from the air and increase the fertility of the land. We work with them as we would any other bacteria, but they are not in the slightest way dangerous to human health. Likewise we do some work with the natural bacteria which are found in the rumens of farm animals. They are natural bacteria found in pastures all over Australia. We work with them under conditions where we do use containment but we use that containment mostly for the integrity of the science. In other words, we need to keep the strains of these organisms that we work with pure but they are in no way dangerous to people at all. We do work with plants, animals and microbes on the site. We contain them mostly for the integrity of the science.

Mr RIPOLL—I asked that question because I have heard a bit of a story about some possums. I thought it might be appropriate if you gave your version of the possum story just to put it on the record. I am sure we will be discussing that issue later as well.

Dr Heij—With the committee's indulgence, I will read to you and formally table the true record of the possum saga. In the first instance, because of some insecurity with the trapdoors into the service ducts in the building, just through age of the building and the fact that—

Mr FORREST—Which building?

Dr Heij—The Long Pocket facility.

Mr FORREST—Where is that on that map?

Dr Heij—It is not on this campus at all and it has absolutely nothing to do with this building.

Mr RIPOLL—Sorry, I raised it in terms of general concern about safety. I suspect that it will be raised as an issue, so we would like to have that on the record now.

Dr Heij—We had an incursion of possums into one of the service ducts of the building owing to the building becoming old and decayed. The situation was discussed with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and all instructions that they gave us were followed to the letter. We did gain a permit to destroy the possums that had gained entry into the service ducts of the building and were thus able to access our laboratories.

We were required to use a licensed possum control contractor to catch the possums. We used 'Peter the Possum Man' for that purpose. A total of 14 possums were caught and humanely euthanased by lethal injection. This was administered by a regular animal handler who was qualified in that respect. They were then incinerated. We were then required to send a return notice to the National Parks and Wildlife Service stating how many possums were killed. We did that.

There was a second instance of entry by one possum which arose from some maintenance work being carried on in the building and a contractor leaving access. In that instance, we again gained a permit from National Parks and Wildlife Services to cull one brush-tailed possum. The Brisbane Wildlife Relocators were used to catch the possum. It was euthanased by a legal injection, as had been done before, administered by a qualified animal handler. The carcass was incinerated. We do stress that, if we have proper facilities for our research and not these very old substandard facilities we are needing to use at the moment, that sort of incursion will not occur again.

CHAIR—Doctor, can you tell us why the possums had to be exterminated?

Dr Heij—That was the advice we were given by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

CHAIR—What was the basis of that advice?

Dr Mallett—That they were territorial animals and if relocated would try to return to where they were originally based and had developed their colony. I should explain that there have been some incorrect press reports about possums getting access to sensitive material and chomping away at Petri dishes. This building was in the process of being upgraded to move in some of the people displaced from a particular site across the road. There was nothing of any sensitivity out on the benches. It is not our practice to leave anything out on benches. It is always in refrigerators or locked cabinets. This particular possum had worked its way through ducts into the laboratory and settled down by the exit of a refrigerator where clearly the warmth from the motor was very attractive to it in winter.

Dr Heij—Just to add to that, there are no GMOs on that site. So there would have been no possibility that a possum could have got access to them.

Mr RIPOLL—Are you saying that, even if a possum does get in, there is nothing of danger in terms of anything they could eat or carry or take outside?

Dr Heij—Yes, as I tried to explain at one stage—and got misquoted—if the possum had been able to access the materials in the lab, supposing it was able to open the refrigerator which I really doubt that it would be capable of doing, it could only have got access to bacteria that are anaerobes. If you expose those bacteria to the air they die. I hope that gives a sufficient explanation. If necessary, I can table copies of the permits that were obtained for euthanasing those possums.

Mr FORREST—I do not understand that. If there is no risk to the possum, yet it had to die anyway, it just seems ridiculous.

Dr Mallett—Mr Forrest, what we were trying to do was to remove the colony from continually trying to get into the service duct where they had established themselves. The reason for euthanasing the possums was not because of what they got access to; it was to eliminate the colony from our property.

Mr FORREST—If the committee is not able to give approval within the time you have stipulated, what would be the repercussions for the CSIRO?

Mr Moody—As I explained earlier, the repercussion is that it will mean a delayed start to the facility. I suspect this will have implications from the university's viewpoint. It being a joint facility, its funding is dependent upon meeting certain requirements of the state government and potentially their anonymous donor. Perhaps Dr Taylor or Mr McClintock can expand on the impact, but from our viewpoint it is a delayed start. We would like to start the facility and have our researchers in appropriate facilities as quickly as possible. We see it as an urgent need to house our scientists, and the sooner the better from that viewpoint, but we respect this committee and we respect the ultimate parliamentary approval of this project.

Senator MURPHY—What did you say the construction period was?

Mr Moody—Our plan was to commence demolition, pending parliamentary approval, in December. There would then be a period of excavation, and we would anticipate the main building contract commencing about the middle of next year.

Senator MURPHY—What completion date do you anticipate?

Mr Moody—In 2002.

Mr FORREST—I am also worried about the security of the Commonwealth's investment when we are spending capital on a site that someone else owns. How is that all tied up? It is in the MOU, I hope.

Mr Moody—A building agreement has been signed by the university and CSIRO. We will have equity in that facility on the basis that we have a rental agreement with the university for 99 years at $1 per annum.

Mr FORREST—Is the memoranda of understanding commercial-in-confidence? I would like to see a copy of it.

Dr Mallett—Can we take that on advice, Mr Forrest? We do not in principle have a problem but we would like to check. I should just explain that this proposal, as you may be aware, is a proposal which is adopted elsewhere in Australia, rote irregularly, with different states and different partners.

Mr FORREST—You will get back to us about the memorandum of understanding?

Mr Moody—We can make the building project agreement available to the committee.

Mr FORREST—Dr Taylor, you mentioned an anonymous donor of $10 million. I do not need to know who the donor is—they want to be anonymous for a proper reason—but I would like some assurance as to whether that $10 million entitles them to some say in either the way the building is operated or the nature of the research that is undertaken.

Dr Taylor—The money was given by the anonymous donor as completely untied funds. We are not the only organisation in Brisbane to receive such funds. A scrutiny was undertaken by the Treasury department of the state government, who had similar concerns initially, to ensure that everything was indeed above board and that it was quite proper for us to receive these funds.

Mr FORREST—Has the donor any associations at all with chemical companies or anybody interested in the technology?

Dr Taylor—The funds are completely untied. To the best of my knowledge, he has no such association. However, one issue, which relates back to your earlier question, is that the donor has been extremely keen that we complete the project as rapidly as possible. There would be some concern from the university's part that these funds might be lost if the project were to be subject to significant delays.

CHAIR—I want to briefly touch on the dust problem again because I noticed it was raised in some of the submissions. Is CSIRO or the state government going to prescribe standards relating to noise and dust on the site during the construction period? Will sanctions be applied to the contractor if those standards are not met?

Mr Moody—The contractor will be required to prepare an environmental management plan in consultation with the university and CSIRO that will cover noise, dust, haulage of materials, and so on, which must be complied with. The work that he is doing in those construction activities will be monitored and audited by engineers who are competent to monitor that work, and any breach of the necessary requirements by the contractor in monitoring will also ensure that action is taken to remedy the situation so he does comply with the requirements of the environmental management plan.

CHAIR—What kind of action would be taken?

Mr Moody—It will be terms written into the contract to ensure he complies and that is what we need to get developed when the contract documents are prepared.

CHAIR—So to this point you have not really decided what sanctions or what penalties will apply for breach of that contract?

Mr Moody—No, that is something we need to examine because there are obviously legal implications in how we will police that, but certainly a direction will be given under the contract for him to perform to the contract requirements and it is the same with constructing the building. He must meet specifications, as in this case he would, for environmental issues. We will certainly ensure that the clauses in the contract are quite tight to ensure we can police those requirements.

CHAIR—Thank you.

Senator CALVERT—When the complex is completed, will that increase the number of people on the campus? Will there be increased traffic and need for extra parking? That seems to be one of the questions that has been raised during this inquiry.

Dr Mallett—The short answer is no, it will not and it will not because this facility, from the CSIRO's perspective, is revenue neutral. So from the point of view of the Commonwealth's money, as I have indicated, we are not actually going to increase the number of people on the site in the immediate area. There are some relocated staff from Long Pocket so, yes, there will be a switch in traffic from the Long Pocket site to this site: we are increasing the number of staff on this site by about 80. The rest of the staff are already present.

Over time, the university does expect that the number of staff involved in this facility will increase. But the Vice-Chancellor has given a very strong commitment publicly that the number of staff in the university will be decreasing substantially owing to a decision to increase the operations in Ipswich. Perhaps Mr McClintock might like to comment.

Mr McClintock—Yes, as you are probably aware we are developing another campus at Ipswich and the first phase of that campus opened for business this year. There have been students on this site for the last few years who will be allocated to Ipswich. So when that project is finished, when stage 2 and possibly stage 3 are finished, there will be a re-allocation of students from this site to the Ipswich site. So there will be a net reduction of students and associated staff on this campus.

Senator CALVERT—It was pretty obvious to me from the comments made by the Vice-Chancellor this morning that the type of science being carried out here is world class and of world-class significance. What steps are you taking to secure that intellectual property? We have had in recent times some leaks in ASIS and ASIO. I suspect that, in a facility like this, where you will potentially have world-class developments, the intellectual property will be valuable to outside sources. Do you have any particular security arrangements in mind when you build the new facility?

Dr Mallett—Can I make a general point before I ask my colleague to talk about the building security details. I should point out that you are absolutely right: the intellectually property we generate could be of value. The intellectual property we will generate in this complex is of three sorts. The first is that solely owned by CSIRO, the second is that solely owned by the university and the third is that which we share because we have undertaken joint projects.

As you know, in compliance with the obligations of its act, CSIRO as a whole is very careful indeed about safeguarding the intellectual property and how it is actually going to be exploited for the benefit of Australian industry or the Australian community. We have a codified commercial practices manual which contains within it a large number of requirements that staff need to comply with in order to keep their laboratories, notebooks, et cetera, secure and safe. There is obviously a strong expectation that staff will comply with this. I have to say that, to date, we have never had any difficulties with leaks or with people trying to infiltrate.

I can tell you that the executive of CSIRO, of which I am a member, has had confidential briefings from ASIS and ASIO about the potential threat through industrial espionage to the intellectual property, and that we have put in place a number of provisions to ensure that we protect our intellectual property on behalf of the Australian taxpayers as much as is practically possible. Perhaps Mr Moody might like to comment on the issue of security for the building as a whole.

Mr Moody—We have had a security risk assessment carried out, as we always do, for the CSIRO component of our facilities and discussions which perhaps Mr Takats or Mr McClintock might expand upon as far as the joint issue between the university and CSIRO is concerned. We are quite prepared to table that risk assessment report if the committee so desires. It is a confidential report, and obviously it is something we would not want to expand on in detail.

CHAIR—The committee would be interested in that, thank you.

Mr FORREST—I want to refer to the confidential cost estimate that has been provided. Thank you for that. Please do not refer to the figures—and I will not either—because they need to be kept in confidence. There is no set formula for the fifty-fifty partnership, if you like. CSIRO is picking up more than half with some items and less than half with others. Obviously, this kind of reasoning will be in the memorandum of understanding—office space, use and so forth—but can you give us some rationale as to how that operates? For example, CSIRO is picking up the entire cost for car parking.

Mr Moody—To go back to the basic building costs, we have determined between the two parties that, within the laboratory and the main complex, CSIRO will occupy 43 per cent of the facility and the university will occupy 57 per cent of the facility. So we have a breakdown of that proportion for the main building works. There are other areas of external works such as site preparation and landscaping which, in turn, we have also shared in that proportion of floor space occupied within the building. Hence the breakdown between the two components of the estimates provided to this committee.

The car park is consistent with the proposals we have put forward on all of our sites around Australia and on projects examined by this committee. We are obliged to provide car parking for our CSIRO staff on site, and the amount of money that has been indicated in this estimate is to provide car parking on this site for CSIRO staff consistent with what we have done elsewhere around Australia. Hence it is a pure CSIRO cost for the car parking.

Mr FORREST—Could I also ask another question to do with professional fees. Without disclosing any figures, why is there an additional item for professional fees for the car park but it is not built into the main item?

Mr Moody—Certainly. It is following the philosophy of the earlier work. The fees for the building works, site works and landscaping are for a total component of the project where the costs are shared between the university and CSIRO. What we have done in that breakdown is to indicate that there are fees directly attributed solely to CSIRO for the design and construction of the car park.

Senator MURPHY—I would like a little more explanation with regard to the fees. The fees shown in 7 are jointly shared, or shared on a proportional basis with regard to the overall project, but the fees shown in 9 are not jointly shared.

Mr Moody—That is correct. That is because the car park is for the sole purpose of CSIRO, as an independent building on the site.

Senator MURPHY—But it is still on university land.

Mr Moody—It is on university land, but the 220 car spaces being paid for are essentially for the use of CSIRO staff. We pay the building costs and the fees for the design and construction of that facility independently of the shared cost for the balance of the facility.

Senator MURPHY—I do not want to be picky about this, but, as I understand it, the joint agreement is that the land is the university's land, essentially being leased to CSIRO for its part of the overall building, which is a joint user facility. I would have thought that if the university were going to provide anything as part of the project, it would have provided the car park.

Dr Mallett—I suppose what you are seeing here—

Senator MURPHY—It is a bit hard to pick up the car park and take it away if you happen to have an argument.

Dr Mallett—That is certainly true. I made the point that this is a unique facility. I gather it is a first proposal to come before you that has a co-partner and where the Commonwealth money is in the minority. What you are seeing, I suppose, is a somewhat different approach to the two policies. CSIRO's approach—which you will all be familiar with from previous submissions—is that, because car parking is a sensitive issue wherever our locations are placed, we always ensure we have adequate car parking for our staff. The university has made different arrangements for car parking for its staff.

Senator MURPHY—Who is going to maintain it?

Dr Mallett—If you want, we could probably try to negotiate that. All we have done is to say, 'We have a policy to provide local car parking for our staff where they actually work.' The university has a somewhat different policy of using some large, central car parks which are, I believe, those rather large, white rectangles towards the top end of the photograph you seed there. They are multistorey car parks which the university thinks are adequate, and they do not propose to do what we are doing for our staff. That is a determination that CSIRO makes, based on guidance we have had over the years from you guys.

Senator MURPHY—So you could not reach agreement on the car parking?

Dr Mallett—As you probably know—and speaking slightly facetiously—scientists are always keen to talk about car parks and research funding and not much else. We can reach agreement on car parks if you so wish. We can skin this cat however you prefer. We just thought it would be most transparent to you and to your deliberations if we presented it like this, because it is a difference in policy.

Senator MURPHY—Does the overall cost in the document include fit-out?

Mr Moody—The cost includes fixed joinery components of the facility—that is, the laboratory benching, the fixed shelving, the workstations and so on. It does not include loose items of furniture—the chairs, the stools, the filing cabinets—those items which have a short-term life and tend to go with the people as much as they do with the facility.

Senator MURPHY—Will those costs be jointly shared?

Mr Moody—No. CSIRO has an allowance which is put aside to cover the cost of its own loose furniture and fittings. Similarly, I would assume, the university would provide funds for loose furniture and fittings within its component of the facility.

Senator MURPHY—What form of construction contract do you intend to use?

Mr Moody—Our intention is a lump sum contract, perhaps more than one contract. It is likely we will have a separate contract for the demolition, perhaps a separate contract for the earthworks and then another contract for the main building works but, effectively, lump sum contracts.

Senator MURPHY—Is that determined to be the best approach?

Mr Moody—After much consultation between the two parties, we agreed that that was the best approach for delivering this facility.

Senator MURPHY—Finally, I want to go back to the environmental assessment. I understand you said that you could table it. Do you have that here?

Mr Moody—The draft environmental assessment report?

Senator MURPHY—Yes, the draft report.

Mr Moody—Yes, we do. We can provide a copy of that.

Senator MURPHY—Is it possible that we could get that very shortly?

Mr Moody—Certainly.

Senator MURPHY—If I may just make a suggestion that you do make it publicly available—

Dr Mallett—We would prefer to make the final report publicly available rather than the draft report.

CHAIR—There being no further questions we will move on. I now call Mr John Pollock and Dr Ken Reed from the Queensland Department of Primary Industries. After we have heard all of the evidence, we will recall the university and CSIRO for further questioning.

[2.21 p.m.]

POLLOCK, Mr John, Executive Director, Fisheries, Queensland Department of Primary Industries

REED, Dr Ken, Director, Queensland Agricultural Biotechnology Centre, Queensland Department of Primary Industry

CHAIR—Mr Pollock and Dr Reed, I welcome you on behalf of the committee. The committee received a submission from you dated 22 October. Do you wish to propose any amendment to the submission?

Mr Pollock—I have a very brief submission to correct a technical term. We referred in our submission to the Institute of Molecular Bioscience and/or IMB. For the purpose of the record I believe that should refer to the Joint Building Project.

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

The letter read as follows—

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

Mr Pollock—I will make probably half a dozen points very briefly. Firstly, we believe that the competitive viability of our agrifood sectors will depend in large part on the advances in technology that will contribute to the quantity, quality and productive sustainability of our systems.

Secondly, we see that the intellectual property and knowledge generated through an organisation such as the intended institute will provide a critical mass and expertise that will be critical to our competitive viability in those sectors. Thirdly, we see the synergies developed in diverse areas of biotechnolgies such as the human health sciences, agriculture and agrifood are critical in generating that intellectual property and knowledge.

There is also an added benefit there in that, apart from the synergies of an intellectual nature, there are also the shared costs and benefits to be derived from using facilities and instrumentation.

I would also make the point that the department, through the Queensland Agricultural Biotechnology Centre, has an existing significant input on campus through Dr Ken Reed's unit. The QABC currently employs about 30 staff on campus, so we are well placed to participate in further joint work.

Fourthly, QDPI wants to share and participate in this proposed facilities resource base. Therefore, the partnership that the CSIRO and university are proposing is critical both to ensure our scientific relevance and to ensure the quality of service to our industry so that we can deliver. We also see aquaculture and tropical horticulture as significant areas for us to contribute to our industry's competitiveness and viability, and those areas also have very close links and synergies with both the CSIRO and the university's work.

Lastly, I would suggest that Brisbane is a very logical location and centre for us, given our role and CSIRO's role in tropical agriculture, and also given our own government's strong commitment to development in Queensland of our biotechnology capacity. Thank you.

CHAIR—Dr Reed?

Dr Reed—I have nothing further to add.

CHAIR—Does the committee have any questions?

Senator CALVERT—This project has the support of the Brisbane Council—I understand Mayor Sorley supports it. I understand the previous coalition government supported it, the present Premier supports it, and the federal government supports it. It must be a key facility in as much as what we saw this morning illustrated the wide ranging research. There was macadamia nuts, aquaculture and nitrogen retention in soils. All these particular activities are related to tropical agriculture. How important is that to Queensland?

Mr Pollock—The role of agriculture, both in agrifood and fibre, and in the sustainability of production systems, is critical to Queensland. I cannot give you the GDP figures that Queensland derives from agriculture and related products, but it is significant. I believe that it contributes something like 25 per cent of our export earnings, but I would stand corrected on that figure. It is in that order.

Senator CALVERT—Dr Reed in his submission makes the point that the pace and scale of international discovery in the life sciences raises a threat to the future of competitiveness of Australian agriculture. If that is the case, that makes this facility very important. Could you tell me who you see as the main competitors?

Mr Pollock—Let me reinforce that first point. Dr Reed's submission is quite accurate, and that is the department's position, that advances in biotechnology will be a significant contributor to our competitiveness and to our major trade related competitors—whoever they may be—both for exports and for import replacement. That is a very generic question but I could apply that to almost any commodity in which we trade.

Senator CALVERT—What other countries are really pushing biotechnology as hard as we are trying to here in Australia?

Mr Pollock—Most of the advanced countries—the US, the UK and the European Union—all have very significant biotechnology capacities. In fact, they are incorporating those into both production systems and products or commodities.

Senator CALVERT—Being a Tasmanian, one of the things I associate with Queensland are prawns. I was particularly pleased to hear this morning that by a couple of small adjustments made in the breeding techniques here you have been able to increase the size and quality of your prawns you export by something like 30 per cent.

Senator MURPHY—There was a 25 to 30 per cent growth rate.

Mr Pollock—Yes, that is correct and most of that work—or maybe all of it I should say—has been conducted through the CSIRO facility at Cleveland. I believe it demonstrates the very major and significant gains that can be made in some things like a wild stock of prawn.

Senator CALVERT—The new strain that you have developed here using the facility has trebled the production of macadamia nuts, which are quite a large export I believe. I will finish there.

CHAIR—There being no further questions from the committee to Dr Reed or to Mr Pollock, we thank you. I now call Professor John Mattick who will be sworn in by the assistant secretary.

[2.32 p.m.]

MATTICK, Professor John, Director, Special Research Centre for Molecular and Cellular Biology, University of Queensland

CHAIR—Professor Mattick, I welcome you on behalf of the committee.

Prof. Mattick—Thank you, Madam Chair. I am also appearing here as the Director elect of the Institute of Molecular Bioscience in the University of Queensland.

CHAIR—The committee has received a submission from you dated 13 October. Do you propose any amendment to the submission?

Prof. Mattick—No.

CHAIR—It is proposed that the submission be received, taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. 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.

Prof. Mattick—Thank you, Madam Chair. I am sure that some of this ground has been covered already but I think it is worth while reiterating that Australia's future competitiveness in knowledge based industries and high technology is going to be driven by its R&D sector. This country has limited resources in the public and private domain for R&D and it is very important that we optimise the use of those resources through co-location which allows us to share the costs of the facilities and the costs of running the facilities but, most importantly, to share the intellectual capital and ideas and have collaborative projects.

The proposed joint building project between the Institute of Molecular Science, CSIRO and other participating organisations has enabled us to develop an institute of size and scope which has attracted already wide international attention. It has been covered three times in leading science journals, *Science* and *Nature*, and has also attracted lead stories in the US biotechnology magazine *BioCentury*.

As in other clusters in the country such as in Parkville, these research concentrations are extremely important to maintain and develop our international competitiveness and, although there are issues, I think that there is very little doubt that these new biotechnologies have tremendous capability for supporting economic growth in Australia and that this facility will be a major contributor to that.

Mr FORREST—Thanks very much, Professor, for your submission because it is the first time I have read a scientist writing about the problem we have with community attitudes. I think is a good step. As Mr Hollis was trying to say earlier, some of you people are brilliant scientists but you are hopeless politicians in terms of bringing the community along with you. Just for the record, would you explore where biotechnology is taking us? It is this technology that has eliminated diseases that used to plague us, like whooping cough and tetanus, and led to the whole area of vaccines. Explain that it is not the big bogey that people suspect that it is and how there are a lot of good things to be had out of the advancement of this.

Prof. Mattick—I will try to do that as briefly as possible.

Mr FORREST—Sell your case.

Prof. Mattick—I will.

Mr FORREST—Get it on the record.

Prof. Mattick—Before I answer the question directly, let me say that one of the reasons I came in late this afternoon—and I apologise for that—is that I spent the morning at the Brisbane institute conducting a public forum on the issues involved in biotechnology, its potential, its risks, and the public concerns about them. It is clearly something we have to have a dialogue about with the community because, in the end, the support of the community both as consumers and how they influence regulatory frameworks is important. A proper public policy debate and framework are important for any new emerging technology. I think

that is a general principle that applies equally to electricity—or other innovations which have the potential for good—and to raising new issues of safety in other areas. This particular area has additional sensitivities because of both the feelings and some realities about the use of genetic information.

To paint the broader picture of the potential of the area and why we and others around the world feel it is important, I will tell you a simple science story. We are in the process of looking at the nature of genetic information which underwrites natural diversity in the human population as well as all the other populations of our biosphere. The differences between you and me, apart from our experiences and educational environment, and the reason we look different from each other and, to some extent, think differently from each other is the idiosyncratic variations between the genetic inheritance from your parents and other parents versus mine. The differences between humans and primates, the differences between primates, mammals and other animals, the differences between oranges, lemons and grapefruit and the differences between varieties of peaches, nectarines or grapes are all embedded in the genetic programming of those species, although that is influenced by environmental parameters.

As a scientific community—and there is great profundity and excitement about this—we are exploring the nature of that genetic variation, as exemplified by leadership projects such as the human genome project, to try to map out all of the genes which make us human and to compare that genetic make-up with that of other animals and plants and so forth. This is knowledge I am talking about here. We are exploring the basis of genetic biodiversity on the planet and that is probably—and I think that this is generally agreed now—leading to one of the greatest periods of scientific discovery in human history. This time, it is not our geographical world or the world of chemistry or physics; it is the world of biology which is being explored.

Out of that knowledge and some of the associated technologies have come new opportunities in health, agriculture, the environment across all of the biologically based industries. If you look at the sectors of our economy that rely on biology—in medicine, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, natural products, waste treatment and the environment—by my assessment, it occupies at least one-third, and possibly up to half, of our total economic activity. All of those sectors are going to be profoundly influenced by this knowledge base and the technology and applications that have flowed from it. As with any changing technology, there are issues and concerns, and these need to be addressed and fully discussed publicly. But to my mind, the real issue is risk benefit analysis. In other words, what are the opportunities for us to provide goods and services that benefit the health, environment and economy of the Australian population? What risks and issues will arise in the course of that?

The potential for economic benefit is huge, so let me briefly leave aside the other issues. Perhaps I can give the committee an example—I cannot recall whether I put it in my submission—that of the pharmaceutical erythropoietin, which is a natural human hormone produced by genetically engineered bacteria and used in post-leukaemic transplantation treatment. Parenthetically, it is also interesting that public acceptance of genetically engineered products in medicine is very high. Genetically engineered insulin is widely used in the community and growth hormone, abused by athletes in some cases, is widely used for

proper purposes. There are a range of others including hepatitis B vaccine which some of you may have had.

In the case of erythropoietin, this is a natural human hormone which promotes the growth of red blood cells. The problem with leukaemia transplantation is that to get rid of the cancer cells the endogenous blood system is killed by chemotherapy and radiation. That is then repopulated by a donation from a close relative who, hopefully, has a close match so that rejection problems are minimised. The window of danger for patients is largely in the few weeks after transplantation when their immune systems and blood systems are down. This hormone is a natural hormone which accelerates the growth of red blood cells, narrows that window and enhances survival rates for those people. It is widely used around the world.

The point I particularly want to make about the economic potential of this—and this is just one example in the pharmaceutical area but there are many other good examples in agriculture, waste treatment and so forth—is that the annual market for that hormone last year was approximately US$3 billion. My understanding is that the entire Australian grains crop last year was of the order of $11 billion but I stand to be corrected on that figure. Nonetheless, the point is that, for a single pharmaceutical arising out of these new technologies, its world market is a significant fraction of our entire grains production.

One of the challenges for us as a nation which has been addressed in many contexts including the Wills report is how we use our biological resources and our intellectual resources to participate in this area. We are one of only eight or 10 countries around the world that have the educational base and the long history of agriculture, medical and biological research to be competitive in the area. There is no doubt that we are lagging behind but it is not too late to join the group.

I wrote about this in the *Australian* earlier this year. It is perhaps our best and possibly our last opportunity to participate as a key player at an early stage in the emerging science and technology which will have wide economic ramifications. The potential for this area despite debates and concerns that are going on is also very high in terms of environmental remediation.

There is evidence from the United States Department of Agriculture—and that is a body that stands at arm's length from government. The American regulatory experience is one that we should look at very carefully in terms of the way Australia handles these issues because the US Food and Drug Administration and the US Department of Agriculture are both statutory authorities which are quite independent of political influence and have a high degree of trust from the American people. Official figures there showed that there have been enormous savings in the use of insecticide in agriculture with the use of genetically engineered crops that are engineered to be more naturally insect resistant.

One can debate the issues around introducing resistance in the environment and that is a discussion we need to have fully and frankly. Intelligently applied, the knowledge that goes with this has great economic potential because in the end, if we are thoughtful and cautious and move appropriately, there is great potential for improving human health and the quality and environmental impact of our agriculture, not only in its sufficiency but in insecticide usage, taking pressure off the natural environment and old-growth forests and so forth

because our requirements for food production are made more efficient and more environmentally sensitive.

There are a range of other industries just like our information technology which are going to arise that we did not even expect. Perhaps as a flavour of that and to finish this extended answer, it is already becoming obvious in parts of the industry in the United States that the understanding and use of advanced biology and biological chemistry—the chemistry that underlies you and me—is starting to impact on information science per se. We can look forward to some of these more sophisticated chemistries which life has evolved being used constructively in the areas of information storage and transmission. You can already start to see the genesis of that in places like Santiago.

There are issues. Some of the issues are perceptual and some theoretical but they are real. It is certainly important as we go forward in this that we all as a community have a standard of public policy debate which is ethical in its own framework in terms of objectivity, and it is the responsibility of all parties that are participating in this debate to be as fully informed as they can be so they can provide advice, not only to government but to the community, so that we can come to considered decisions. The potential is tremendous and there are issues to be addressed. We have to be as intelligent as we can be, with our limited resources, about addressing both sides of that coin.

Mr FORREST—Unless the community is brought along with the debate we will continue to get what has generated a lot of the evidence being put to our committee—an uninformed view, a suspicion that 'this is not natural, therefore it is bad'. There are not sufficient cases made for the advances we have made particularly with vaccines for smallpox, tetanus and whooping cough. That is basically another example of genetically modifying basic processes and finding solutions to problems that have plagued the human race. That needs to be not sold but raised higher in the minds of the general public, otherwise what will happen in Australia is what is happening in Europe and other places.

Prof. Mattick—I agree. There are several threads in the background here. One is a tendency—in all people to some extent but certainly in some sections of the community—to be suspicious of change. There has been, unfortunately, a cultural development which is mitigating but, over the last half century of suspicion of science and technology because of unintended outcomes, we have forgotten that the reason why most of us are sitting here and did not die some time earlier is that we beat infectious disease or largely beat infectious disease years ago through vaccination and antibiotics. That is not perfect, but there has been an improvement in the quality of life and health and the economic circumstances of people through the use of science and technology, and that needs to be acknowledged.

I think this is the first new science and technology where, from the outset, scientists in particular have actually said, 'Let's move cautiously.' The scientists were the ones that first said, 'If we're going to do these sorts of experiments, let's do them in a confined framework just in case.' I would say, to the best of my knowledge, that there has been no example of a serious problem arising from this technology in 25 years of research, despite the fact that, as of last year, 70 million acres of genetically-engineered crops were planted around the world, mainly in the United States. That is not to say there is not the potential for problems and there may be some.

But you are right, we need to have a fuller, more open debate. I think this is a particularly sensitive area because it does deal with issues of life which are of a little more concern to people for all the obvious reasons other than whether it is natural to use rocks or bricks in your houses. The definition of what is natural and what is artificial is very grey, and we as a species have modified our environment in all sorts of ways for good and sometimes unintended ill over the generations. This is just another set of opportunities and challenges that need to be worked through.

Senator CALVERT—I note from your submission that in fact you are the one who promoted this idea back in 1993, along with Ken Reed and Ian Mackinnon, and of course when Vice-Chancellor John Hay came along the matter started to progress. Was this as a result of your overseas observations and, if this building does not get the go-ahead, do you see the opportunity arising anywhere else where this type of operation can operate—a joint facility with the university and CSIRO?

Prof. Mattick—To answer the second part of your question quickly, but I will come back to it, no, I do not. To go back to the history of it, perhaps I can explain to the committee that those of us who work in science are reasonably dedicated and we work hard to try and create a sophisticated and competitive environment for discovery and applications in this country. It is very difficult because we have limited resources in this country, and it is difficult to create the sorts of critical mass and financial resources both from public and private sources to sustain us.

I returned from the United States in 1981 and went to work with CSIRO in Sydney, which is where I made the vaccine that was referred to a moment ago. I realised that Australia had very few places that had the critical mass and resources to be competitive with big places overseas and that this was a critical issue. Now the Centre for Molecular and Cellular Biology, of which I am currently director, was established by this university with very modest funds about 11 years ago, and some other centres in related areas were as well. We boot-strapped up by attracting gifted Australians back from overseas who had the quality to attract their own fellowships from national or international sources and created a community of good scientists. But it seemed to me that, unless we captured and consolidated this, this could fall apart very quickly.

I put it to the university that it had been successful in establishing, I think it is reasonable to say, some very fine research centres, and it needed to move to try and put a physical framework around them so it secured that and could build it as a place to work. In the process of that, we did gain support from the Queensland state government, as you are aware, and also from the federal government and from a private donor, and then we were delighted when CSIRO approached us.

I think this development is quite iconic in terms of Australia's ambitions to be a global player in some of these emerging areas of science and technology. It is not the only site in Australia but it is certainly one of the key ones. If this building did not go ahead in this context, it would be very difficult to reproduce it in any other.

One of the things about the great universities of this country—and there are many great universities in this country but if you take large ones like the University of Queensland or

the University of Melbourne—is that they have tremendous amounts of intellectual resources, capital, students, equipment and so forth. This university has approximately $500 million worth of public investment and private investment per year. These are powerhouses of education and of knowledge generation. They need to be used effectively.

An institute like this is really adding to that environment and draws from it. It really cannot exist outside that environment. We need to be within walking distance of the supercomputers on this campus, the libraries, the maths department, the computer scientists, the pharmacists and so forth, to make the connections to allow us to do our work.

Speaking very personally now, if it did not go ahead, and I say this advisedly and with some humility, I would probably look at what opportunities there were elsewhere in the world to go and do this sort of work. It would be a great tragedy for this state and this country if major initiatives like this, that really put us in the league of being competitive internationally, did not go ahead. It gives us an opportunity to attract our gifted people back from overseas, and others besides. If it does not go ahead then we do not have the capacity to be competitive. This is very important for the future of this nation.

CHAIR—Thank you. As there are no further questions from the committee, thank you very much for appearing today.

[2.52 p.m.]

DOUGLAS, Mr Jock, AO (Private capacity)

CHAIR—Welcome, Mr Douglas. In what capacity do you appear today?

Mr Douglas—I come as a member of the public, but also as a person who is involved in the dissemination of research information, research knowledge, as someone who has had a long-term engagement in environmental sustainable production systems through Landcare, and also as an end user of CSIRO research as a cattle producer and grain grower.

CHAIR—Thank you. The committee has received a submission from you dated 20 October 1999. Do you wish to propose any amendment to your submission?

Mr Douglas—No.

CHAIR—Is it the wish of the committee that the document be incorporated in the transcript of evidence? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The document read as follows—

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

Mr Douglas—Thank you. I would like to start with the view that molecular biology is the new frontier of science, and that it will profoundly influence human health and environmental wellbeing in the coming century.

If you look at the bigger picture of science in Australia, we are at a disadvantage. The big nations, in fact, the big economies with big corporations, have a very distinct comparative advantage. If Australia is going to match this then it will need to develop a competitive advantage. How do we do that? We will have to do it through partnerships, through pooled resources, through collaborative efforts, and with dedicated team approaches. That is what is so appealing about what is offered within this proposal—it can all be brought together in this one facility.

If you look at the CSIRO, particularly in their molecular biology area and how it is affecting agriculture, Australian agriculture is moving quite fast away from a reliance on basic commodity production to producing high quality goods for high value niche markets. We have heard about prawns; it is happening in all sorts of things. So, the work that CSIRO is doing in genetic markers for livestock and in plant characteristics is extremely useful and absolutely needed. The environmental area, though, is of great interest.

We should all be aware that this country of ours is very old. It is old weathered sediments we work on, they are very low in nutrients, and we have a very challenging climate to work with. Interestingly, within our own environment, the plants and organisms that have come down to us have been generated through a very difficult selection process, there is a range of symbiosis going on within them and, because of that, it is expected that we will find some very useful genetic material which will give us the advantage we are looking for.

The other environmental area is decreasing use of pesticide through manipulating plants and cleaning up urban pollution. Urban pollution is a huge problem, not only in Australia but worldwide. Bacterial cleaners and biodegradable material are big. The CSIRO is not only doing the genetic work, the molecular biology, within this proposed unit; it is also going to transfer the people who are involved in better catchments, biodiversity and sustainable production. This is an area of great public importance in Australia and one which requires public investment because there is not likely to be a huge amount of corporate investment in this area. So it is very welcome, from my point of view, that this capability be facilitated through this proposed facility. Not only that, but when you bring all those people together under one roof, when you have the people and the scientists there who are concerned with the environmental wellbeing of the catchment, they are going to put some really close scrutiny, one would expect, on the molecular biological products which might come out of the plant material and on the environmental effect. Those people will be all together so, to me, that gives the likelihood of a better balance in the outcomes.

My view of the CSIRO is that it is a very responsible organisation which is looking quite a bit wider now than at just research outcomes. They are looking to the socio-economic consequences and the environmental consequences, and when they are working with people

out there where I come from they do know who to contact. That wider CSIRO perspective is going to be enhanced in this facility because they can combine the research work they are undertaking on botany, agriculture, microbiology, computing and maths, geographical sciences and planning. They can also combine the social sciences as they are right next door on the university campus.

In conclusion, I think it is a very good opportunity for a leading edge science facility in an extremely important field, with co-location which gives a multiplier effect to the research effort and also brings some balances into the production of the science itself.

CHAIR—Thank you, Mr Douglas. Does the committee have any questions?

Senator CALVERT—It would be remiss of me if I did not ask one question. My colleague on my left here and I were in Taiwan earlier this year and we visited a 200-hectare complex which is basically the centre of the IT industry in Taiwan. They lead the world with that technology because they are clustered together and work off each other, but in that complex there were companies that were feeding off that and making financial gain. You say in your submission that Australia lacks the critical mass of large corporate investment in research. Wouldn't you see a facility such as this providing financial opportunities for companies to feed off the developments and discoveries, as has happened with CSIRO in years gone by?

Mr Douglas—Absolutely. One of our problems has been that a lot of the good science we have produced is turned into products which are developed to benefit other countries and other companies and corporations. The way this has been set up, as I have read it, is that it has the ability for that to be captured right here, within Australia, within Queensland. That is a great benefit.

CHAIR—As there are no further questions, thank you very much, Mr Douglas.

[3.01 p.m.]

CAVANAGH, Mrs Mary Julia, Committee Member, St Lucia Residents Against Intensive Development

EMERSON, Mrs Robyn, Coordinator, St Lucia Residents Against Intensive Development; and Member, Biohazard Action Alliance

TAN, Ms Poh-Ling, Vice-President, St Lucia Residents Against Intensive Development

CHAIR—Welcome. The committee has received a submission, dated 11 November, from St Lucia Residents Against Intensive Development. Do you propose any amendments?

Ms Tan—No, we do not propose any amendments. I have some additional exhibits to tender which should be read together with that submission.

CHAIR—We will receive those exhibits.

Ms Tan—Thank you very much.

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

The documents read as follows—

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

Ms Tan—I thank the committee for the opportunity to speak. I think the committee has asked a lot of questions which have brought up our concerns. We propose to speak to certain different aspects of the submission. I will give an overall spiel on our submission and then speak on the legal aspects, Robyn Emerson will speak on publicity and public communication, and Mary Cavanagh will speak on interests which affect all residents.

We have made four main points in RAID's submission. Firstly, we are not against biotechnology. We have not said that research facilities should not exist in Brisbane. We are saying that it is inappropriate that such a facility is located right next to a residential community and in a highly built-up area within the University of Queensland itself. Secondly, the construction of such a large building will have an immense impact on long-established homes, it will destroy the streetscape and affect our amenities. I will elaborate on each one of those. Thirdly, there has been a lack of community consultation. That is something that Robyn will follow-up on. Fourthly, there has been no approval under the planning act for this proposed development.

I will quickly go back to the first point about the location of a research facility in a residential suburb. I want to point to the very strong feelings residents have regarding this issue. I would like to tender a letter written by Dr. Rupert Goodman. He tendered this letter to Ray when we held our first public meeting. Dr Goodman wrote this from his hospital bed. He was not able to attend our meeting but he felt so strongly that he had his wife, Mrs Win Goodman, send us this letter.

He says that he has been on the university staff for 21 years and owes his loyalty to the university. He has been a resident of St Lucia for 40 years and he feels that he needs to voice his concern over health and safety issues. He says that while there are scientific benefits—and nobody disagrees with that—it is highly questionable that it be located on the proposed site. I do not have time to go through the letter in detail. I wish to tender it as an exhibit.

The university has said that, if it cannot be located here, it cannot be located on another site. I believe that it is disingenuous of them to say that because the university has land not only in Brisbane. It has other land in Pinjarra Hills, a suburb which is fairly away from the intense development here in St Lucia. It also, by admission, has land in Gatton and Ipswich. Brisbane is not like Singapore or Hong Kong where there is no land. Queensland has plenty of land. I do not believe that this is the one and only site where they can locate their facilities.

It is great for UQ. Everything is kept together. But is it good for the community? They have not addressed that issue of location. On public consultation, I believe one speaker said that Brisbane City Council is in favour and support of the IMB building. I believe that is not so. I spoke to the Lord Mayor, Mr Jim Sworley, about three weeks ago about IMB. He was initially very confused. He said that surely I was talking about NSP in Long Pocket and it was not going to be constructed on Carmody Road. I said that no, it was on Carmody Road. That is when he sat back, thought about it and read a letter saying that the BCC will be

taking a hard line on this. He said it was inappropriate for UQ to build a building of such height and intensity on the site.

I would like to tender my second exhibit. It is a letter forwarded by the Lord Mayor to our group. It is written by his senior town planner. It says that the town planning group is of the opinion—and they have received legal opinion on this—that UQ requires planning approval. Unfortunately, UQ has taken a diametrically different view. They have said time and time again that they self-assess their own development under the integrated planning act. At one meeting they said no less than five times to us that UQ self-assess their development applications and they are answerable to no-one except their own university senate. We were aghast. Is that so, we asked ourselves? That is when we went to Brisbane City Council.

We have also had our own legal opinion on this. There is definitely a second view which totally contradicts UQ stands. The view that appears in the letter is that BCC has stated that planning approval is required for the proposed development. BCC has also said that UQ's own consultants, a private arm of BCC called the Brisbane certification group, have also advised UQ—these are not my words, these are the words of the senior town planner of Brisbane City Council—that planning approval is necessary. The letter goes on to state the basis on which planning approval is necessary.

It is highly upsetting to residents that legal procedures are not going to be complied with by the University of Queensland. Subsequent to this, just a couple of days ago, Vice-Chancellor John Hay says in a press release that the Brisbane City Council and UQ do not have a tiff. I would like to refer to some of this release. He says he is chair of Brisbane City Council's leading lights or leading brains committee, that he has already talked to Jim Soorley about this, that BCC are in support. By implication, he is telling us he is in the inner sanctum and we are on the outer courts.

I believe this is unfair treatment of the community. We deserve to have all the legal procedures complied with. We believe that the proper classification of this project is assessable development under code assessment. That will entail public consultation, public advertisement and an opportunity for the public to object and appeal. If UQ self-assess their own project, none of these safeguards will be available to residents. That is shocking, to say the least. Before I leave this point about the Brisbane City Council, a local councillor, Judy Magub, has also written to the committee, so I do not have to tender that letter. She reiterates the council's position, that the council believes that planning approval is necessary.

I will turn now to CSIRO's response to our submission. The first two pages of that response are: rah, rah, rah, the project is great for UQ and good for CSIRO. That is not a response to our submission. We did not say that the project is not good for UQ and CSIRO. Then they say that the location of the building is great: at the bottom of page 2 they say the location is wonderfully sited. For who? For UQ, for CSIRO. Not for the community. They have not considered us in their deliberations. They have considered Cromwell College. They have made the point—they knew enough to consult Cromwell College. But they did not know enough to consult their neighbours across the road.

Then they say that it is the only suitable site in close proximity to complementary research activities. That is fine, except that there will be a great intensity of usage of that

particular corner of the university—700 extra people will be there, with very few extra car parks. Where are these people going to park? CSIRO made a big deal out of car parks; universities and government institutions are always making a big deal out of car parks. Maybe it is a question not so much of the staff but the students. That head count of 700 people does not include students. What is the bet that students will flood the neighbourhood streets? They already do; without that massive building there they already park on our streets. It is illegal to do so. They still do it, they take the chance. So I do not believe that that location is the best site for the institution.

CSIRO go on to say that the building design sits 'comfortably with the predominant vertical expression and scale of neighbourhood buildings.' Again, whose perspective are they adopting? The university's. They have got six-storey buildings there, they have got the Great Court, and I understand the instructions to the architects were that this should not be taller than the Great Court. What about us? We are one two-storey building. It will completely overshadow us. We look out to the sky right now and we see the existing therapies building—the one with the funny thing on top—and that already completely dominates the skyline, and yet that is further back from Carmody Road. With this building, all we will see is just a precipice of stone, and I do not believe that is good planning practice.

CSIRO then go on to say that a reduction in heights will result in greater site coverage. Is it possible that there is greater site coverage? I think they have practically covered all the site. Then they say that loss of open space and amenity will result in a reduction in height. I do not think that any more open space can possibly be lost. I do not think for residents there can be any worse off situation in amenity. The university is just looking after its own interests; it is not looking after the interests of the community.

Further on, they also say that there will be landscape design to incorporate a vegetation buffer so that the lighting problems—we made a point about lighting—will be minimised. I do not see how trees and shrubs and pretty little flowers will minimise the effect of an eight-storey building. I do not see how vegetation can overcome that problem. At one point, that building comes within six metres of Carmody Road. I built recently in St Lucia. My little house had to have a six-metre setback, and this massive building has a six-metre setback. I think that is totally inappropriate.

Then CSIRO says that information from the university suggests a decrease in net population at the St Lucia campus. They say they are going out to Ipswich—students will be moved out to Ipswich. Why can't they move the building out to Ipswich? And then they say if they are not allowed to build here, it would be relocation of UQ by stealth. I think that is quite ridiculous. Nobody is trying to relocate UQ by stealth; we are just saying that this building should not be on this spot. If there is going to be a building on this spot, it should not be on this scale. Fine, we need neighbourhood enhancement. The back of the existing building is, to say the least, dilapidated, so we need something to be done—perhaps a new building, but not this building.

Now, CSIRO have also said that an environmental assessment report is currently being prepared. That is slack, if you ask me. An environmental impact assessment should have been prepared long ago. The need for such a report was brought to their attention by another group, I believe, as far back as six months ago, and it is still in the process of preparing a

report. I believe that CSIRO, which your committee knows has a bad record of consultation, together with the University of Queensland, which has a patchy record of consultation, have together rushed through their development design without even thinking about residents, and now they are in unholy haste to do things, to bandaid their project because they realise that the community is not with them.

I would like to refer also to the anonymous donor. When we hear anonymous donors of $100, $1,000 and $100,000 it is fine. An anonymous donor of $10 million? They say it is untied funds. Someone from the committee asked about this and I believe the team that was previously here evaded the question. They did not answer whether it was a chemical company—I believe one of the senators asked whether it was a chemical company.

CHAIR—We will have to get you to wind up if you want your other people to address us because we are on a tight time frame and we do ask for a short statement in support. We have your submission.

Ms Tan—Yes. We are highly suspicious of anonymous donors. I do not believe that everything has been put on the table for us. I do not believe that it is for the community to hunt and search for answers. It is for CSIRO and the University of Queensland to provide us with information. Thank you.

Mrs Emerson—I, my husband and our two small children live on Dell Road which has been, to date, a quiet, tree-lined street about 200 metres from the University of Queensland's boundary on Carmody Road where this institute for molecular biology is planned. My husband and I bought our home three years ago, aware that it was part of an established residential A area close to our beloved alma mater, the University of Queensland, where we met as students 15 years ago.

Today I am deeply distressed to be representing this residential community in a head-on conflict with the university and the CSIRO. Do not be misled by the CSIRO and the university when they say that this is not true.

This project ignores the welfare of its residential neighbours in every major area that I have examined, and it represents a threat to our safety, the amenity of our neighbourhood, and our privacy. Yet while it was under development there was no input from the community, with the university and their architect apparently sure that they knew what was best. Unfortunately for everyone who is involved, including the federal government which is part-funding the project, they were desperately wrong—massively and comprehensively wrong. This project at this location is unacceptable.

Professor Mattick, who was speaking before, spoke about if this project does not go through. One of the things that is said about this is that it is so important for Australia, for our state and for the university. If he thinks that people who have gone overseas seeking more money for research will come back to a country which allows this to be happening to residents in an area, then I think he is very sadly wrong. I think he will find that they are coming back to a country that they do not know if this kind of thing is allowed.

As a member of the Residents Against Intensive Development, I have spoken to many St Lucia residents in recent weeks and, if the CSIRO needs any guidance on how to contact people who are concerned in their community, may I suggest to them that they do what we have done. We put up a stall at our local shop and we held two public meetings where we tried to find people who are very busy. In the very short amount of time that we have had since this project was sprung upon us, we have gathered between 200 and 300 signatures of local residents calling for more information about the project. Only about one in every 100 had any accurate idea of what the university was building.

A complex about the size of the Myer Centre—and I do not know who of you know Brisbane, but the Myer Centre is a very large complex in the city—will rise like a cliff face over Carmody Road. In fact, this is one of the largest buildings in Queensland. It is not two inches high, as you will see over here. It will also exacerbate traffic severely. We have had a small child hit on the road just down from us recently. Traffic here is a serious concern.

We had to extract information from the university. Poh-Ling rang for three weeks without them returning her calls. Finally they did. We were able to go up and see the model that is here. Throughout this process, we have been treated periodically with arrogance and hostility.

We finally found the public notice, which is one of the reasons the university keeps saying that they have already informed people. The public notice actually said 'the Cunningham Laboratories' and did not give a street address. We did not know that this was the Cunningham laboratories. That name is not given on the building, except in one small entrance, and therefore that public notice is invalid. I checked that yesterday. The newspaper articles about this project said that it was going to be on campus, but none of them said where on campus it was going to be—that is, right on the margins of the residential A area.

I would remind you that we are talking about a vast complex of laboratories housing a variety of different activities. I sent a series of questions through to the university three weeks ago after their so-called public meeting, and I have had no response to my questions about hazardous chemicals, disposal procedures, processes for handling dangerous chemicals and, most importantly, the impact zone. Facilities like this have an impact zone. That means that if there is an accident—and accidents do occur—an area around the facility is set aside as a fallout zone. I think it is very unlikely that the impact zone for this building would be the scant metres between it and the house across the road.

Apparently a similar situation occurred at the university in the 1980s when a group of staff got together to stop the university from siting a C3 laboratory. The university did pull out of that, and we can only hope that that kind of sense prevails here.

I would also like to say that our state MP, Denver Beanland, was also unaware of where the university was siting this facility. For your state MP not to know where a gigantic building like this is going to be positioned is pretty serious—he only found out when we found out—yet the university and the CSIRO are steaming ahead, desperately trying to get the project going to avoid 30 March, when the new integrated planning act comes into action.

They are also rushing you in your decision. I have noticed today that they have failed to provide a proper EIS which should have been done a long time ago. They have not given us the chance to input into the draft terms of reference for that EIS. Meanwhile, I have a steadily mounting fear of what the university is trying to build up the road from my children. Over the last two weeks I have lost over half a stone in weight, I have had difficulty sleeping and I have resigned from my job, partly because I need to deal with this situation.

Most distressingly, perhaps, for me, I have discovered that this university, of which I have been very fond—I put my name down as a donor to the university; we have been donating, but we will not be doing that any more—is not a trustworthy organisation. When it has been asked for information it has refused to provide it, or it has provided information so general or irrelevant as to be useless. It has not answered our most legitimate questions, and it has failed to give us the chance to provide information to be taken into account on what our concerns are.

My only comfort is that I have people like these around me who have picked up on what is happening and are similarly concerned. I would appeal to you to freeze your approval for the funding of this project until this situation is resolved in a democratic fashion, as we would expect.

CHAIR—Can I just clarify one point for *Hansard*, and that is that this committee is never rushed on anything. If there are documents that have not been provided that the committee feels must be provided, then we will call for those documents and examine them before any decision is made. This committee is never rushed into making any decisions. Thank you.

Senator MURPHY—In fact we get accused of doing exactly the opposite.

CHAIR—That is correct.

Mrs Cavanagh—Can I table this letter I sent to Professor Hay after the first public meeting?

CHAIR—Yes.

Mrs Cavanagh—I am pleased this hearing is taking place at a university, a place of higher learning. It is exactly because this is a place of higher learning that a building on this site should not even have been considered. Great research has come out of institutions such as this in the fields of communication and social sciences, which I am interested in but which the university seems not to be interested in.

My concern is the size of this building and the impact it will have on residents. This building is to be built on the perimeters of the campus, six metres in from the boundary of Carmody Road. The Vice-Chancellor assures the panel here today that he has consulted the community, yet I have been sitting at a table outside our local newsagency in Hawken Drive for the past two weekends and 99 per cent of the people I have spoken to were unaware of the building proposed for this site—on the perimeters of the campus, six metres in from the

boundary of Carmody Road. I live 50 metres from the university. I was not consulted, nor were any of my neighbours.

I find it strange that, with so many experts on this campus in areas such as town planning, sociology, psychology, community health, communications and marketing, we should get a building that seems to be dictated by a small group who have neglected all of these areas. I put it to you that, given the real adverse effects to residents, had extensive consultation been taken into consideration a building on this site would never have been considered.

The Vice-Chancellor has also stated that the university has the right to do whatever it likes on the grounds and that it is not accountable to surrounding residents. I am sure when government gave the university its freedom to construct buildings on campus they did not envisage the university abusing this power in the way it has by planning to position a huge building on this site.

The university works very hard in creating beautiful vistas for its student population. Obviously research has been carried out that, for the wellbeing of the campus, these vistas are an essential component in the running of the university as a whole. This proposed building will be six metres from the boundary of Carmody Road, near my street and seven storeys high, yet residents have not been taken into consideration in the thought patterns of this project. Where are our vistas? What about our wellbeing?

As a concrete example of the university's failure to consult the community, I rang Ray White, a local real estate agent, yesterday and asked the question, 'When did you become aware of the proposed building in the university grounds?' His reply to me was, 'Last week, when I read about it in the *South West News*.' Real estate agents have not been able to pass on to potential buyers in the area knowledge of this building so that buyers could make an informed decision whether or not to buy, yet the university, according to the Vice-Chancellor, has been talking about this building for the last two years. The university has been placed in a position of trust by parliament. They have abused this trust.

Mr FORREST—Not the parliament that we answer to; a different parliament. Can I just sum up what I have heard the three witnesses say about their concerns. Basically, they feel there has been a lack of democracy—in other words, an opportunity to have their say. Maybe that can be healed in time. Can I have a statement from the three of you confirming that you are not opposed to the science that goes on in a laboratory? I heard Poh-Ling say that. I also note that Mrs Emerson is on the Biohazard Action Alliance committee, so I am a bit confused about whether that statement represents her position.

Mrs Emerson—We do not have an opinion, as a group, on the larger issue of genetic engineering.

Mr FORREST—You are not opposed to that?

Mrs Emerson—We are concerned about what will be going on in a laboratory across from our road.

Mr FORREST—I might come back to that.

Ms Tan—We are not opposed to bioscience per se, but we are opposed to experiments being carried out in this location. It is not just a question of democracy; it is more.

Mr FORREST—You are worried about aesthetics; you are worried about what you perceive as a big building. I heard you say—and I have read—that you are concerned about public transport. That is a legitimate concern. We can try to ensure recommendations are made to make sure that is fixed. I would be interested to ask somebody what the public transport system is here. There must be buses, as I saw a bus this morning. Traffic congestion is also a fixable issue. I heard someone say they are worried about accidents. I wonder what sort of accident they think is going to happen here and if there is a need for an impact zone.

I am a little confused about why you are objecting. All can be fixed with a bit of better consultation and more time, even the aesthetics. I hazard a guess that now is the first time you have seen a full-scale model here in the one that has been presented to us as a committee. Have you seen that model before?

Ms Tan—We were given the opportunity to see that.

Mr FORREST—It shows that the building we are currently in is higher than the proposed building. Do you realise that?

Ms Tan—But the building we are currently in is further back from the road than that proposed building. Some of the problems can be fixed. The road cannot be enlarged, because it is built for residential access. It is not built for a semi-commercial sort of thing with more than 700 people coming in. The building is a research facility and that is inappropriate for residential areas.

Mr FORREST—There is more than one entrance to the university campus. The environmental effect statement ought to take those concerns into account and dictate where access comes from to minimise the hazard up this end. They are all manageable things.

Ms Tan—But they were not thought of when the building was thought of; they were an afterthought. That is what concerns us. Lots of things can be fixed when they are properly considered, but this seems to be a fait accompli. They have had a design competition. That is the design. Then on the environment and noise they say, 'We can fix that.' On drainage they say, 'Maybe.' Those are major issues which need to be considered as the design goes along, not as a fix-it bandaid after. That is a major concern for the research facility. As Robyn says of the impact, there will be accidents. It is not for us to tell the university what to do but for them to tell us, 'This is your impact zone, this is where it is safe.' And six kilometres is not safe.

Mr RIPOLL—On the issue of the research facility and the research going on, we have been told that it is no different from what has been going on for the last 25 years. There is no new or different research. The classification level is C2, referred to PC3, but the majority of it is PC2. It is the current facility. It is really an improvement on what they have in terms

of facilities but no different for the work they are doing. In terms of you saying you are concerned about the research, do you believe different research is going on there?

Mrs Emerson—I know a bit about this. I have asked questions that have not been answered. I do not know the answer to some of those questions yet. Somebody speaking before said that only five per cent of this building was going to have laboratories above C2 classification. Five per cent of one of the biggest buildings in Queensland is a lot of building, and they are talking about C3 and C4 laboratories.

Mr RIPOLL—We have been given assurances that there are no C4 at all. There are one or two C3, so there is no real difference from what we have. We will have a look at those concerns. It is not a C4 research facility. We did ask those questions earlier of CSIRO in regard to the types of research and the Geelong facility and North Ryde. We think we are fairly clear on what they say is going to go in there. It is really no different from what is there now but is an extension.

I want to also raise the point of whether there is another site, because we have made a big issue of asking the question: could this be done somewhere else? You talked about the Ipswich campus. I would gladly take it to Ipswich, because it would be great for our economy and most people would be very happy to have it move there. I just do not believe, from what is being proposed, that the infrastructure or co-location facilities would be there. There really are not too many choices in trying to get not just this one facility but the matching facilities, the co-location and also a controlled climate environment on site. In terms of what is around it and what is needed to do the research, there are not too many choices for the site.

You have raised a whole range of different points following on from what Mr Forrest said, but most of them are fixable. If you talk about increased traffic, the area already has a lot of traffic flow, but there are things that can be done by the Brisbane City Council to control traffic and parking. If people are parking illegally, those issues can be dealt with by the city council. I would like to know what you mean by threat to safety. If you are 200 metres from the university, I do not see how the privacy issue would be any different today from when you moved to the university a number of years ago.

Ms Tan—Is this a question?

Mr RIPOLL—Yes, I am just trying to go through the points you have made about traffic problems. You have also said that you agree it is on the campus but it is in a residential area, albeit on the margins, but still on the campus property. It is not outside the campus; it is on the campus. Whether it is in the middle, left, right, or right on the margin, it is still part of the campus site.

Mrs Cavanagh—Does that excuse it? It is seven storeys high.

Mr RIPOLL—You are using that as a point. Does it make any difference? You are saying you do not like it because it is in a residential site, albeit that it is still on campus property, even though it is still on the margin.

Mrs Emerson—I think that is significant in terms of planning for the university. If the university has activities that are more hazardous than other activities, then you would not put them right on the margin. Good neighbour policy would dictate that the university would take into account the concerns of people who lived around it. It is a densely settled area.

Mr RIPOLL—Is that your main concern in respect to safety?

Mrs Emerson—You can imagine what the privacy issue is. If you have a one-storey home and an eight-storey or seven- storey building looking over you, then you have students looking down into your home where there has only ever been a one- to two-storey building before. That is a significant difference.

Ms Tan—I believe a lot of the planning and amenities consideration would be at least considered if the university complied with Brisbane City Council processes.

CHAIR—You said you have some concerns and questions that you have put to the University of Queensland and they have not been answered. Are they concerns that are outlined in your submission? Are they a different list of questions? If so, can we have a copy of those questions that have not been answered?

Mrs Emerson—I have a copy with my pile of notes there. The submission generally stated the problems. This is a series of questions about health and safety and impact zones that I put through to the university after the public meeting. Another member of our group also put questions to the university that were not answered and still remain unanswered.

CHAIR—Can the committee have a copy of those questions?

Mrs Emerson—Yes.

Senator MURPHY—I ask a question with regard to the letter that was sent to the site planner from the town planner. With regard to that issue, which really goes to a question of legal differences of opinion, one would assume that the council will pursue its position if it feels that it is legally correct. I would have thought that it would have been obligatory for them to pursue that issue. It may well be that, at the end of the day, the council prevails with regard to assessing the suitability or otherwise of the proposal. If, at the end of the day, it approves it, what then?

Ms Tan—I do not know whether the council will be prepared to go to court to stop the university. It may have to come to that because, if the university persists in going ahead with this and if it gets the necessary funds, I do not see Brisbane City Council going to court to do that. We may just be the sacrificial lamb.

Senator MURPHY—I would have thought, though, given the tone of the letter, that it could become a fairly significant issue for the council if it were not to pursue what it believes its position is, because this would not only have an effect in respect of this development; it could have an effect in respect of other developments.

Ms Tan—I sincerely believe that if there was any enforcement of the legal position it would be for the residents. We will have to seriously consider engaging a barrister and making an application for a declaration that UQ has to comply with planning approval. I think it is more likely that will happen than Brisbane City Council fighting UQ in court. If planning approval is given I do not believe this building will be allowed. If planning application is made, I believe that the answers will fall on the side of the residents, because I do not see such an intense development being allowed under council considerations and criteria.

Senator MURPHY—I am certainly not going to claim to be an expert with regard to approval processes in Brisbane City Council, but I suspect they will weigh it up on the basis of what their laws or their by-laws say in terms of intensive development or other development, and that will be a matter for them. At the end of the day, if the residents take the action, as I said, this is really a matter for the local council rather than a matter for us, other than that we are aware of it.

Ms Tan—I can submit that it be part of the committee's recommendations that funds not be released till UQ complies with its legal obligations. I believe it is within the committee's powers to do that. That would certainly save a lot of angst and financial commitment on behalf of the community, if that be made part of the conditions for release of funds.

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

[3.50 p.m.]

HART, Mrs Patricia (Private capacity)

CHAIR—Welcome. The committee has received a submission from the Biohazard Action Alliance dated 12 October. Do you wish to make any amendment to your submission?

Mrs Hart—No.

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

Mrs Hart—I live with my family within 100 metres of the proposed IMB site. I grew up in neighbouring Indooroopilly, attended this university, and I have lived at my current address for the past five years. I love this area. It is very special and a unique part of Brisbane. It is a beautiful, leafy suburb with the river as an added benefit.

However this beautiful suburb is now under threat. I do not want to see this community being torn apart in the name of progress. The more I find out about this IMB, the more anxious, alarmed and, indeed, appalled I become. What shocks me even more is the strategy used of giving a minimal amount of information to local residents, as well as a lack of consultation with the local residents. It was only at our local state member's instigation that a public meeting was held. Moreover, this meeting was only held on 6 October, within a mere couple of months of the construction beginning.

Although I am extremely concerned with the total unfairness to the local residents, I have chosen today to focus on the construction issue and what a devastation it will cause to the local residents, not just for six months or a year but for two years. I am overwhelmed with the enormity of these three buildings. It is almost too difficult to imagine this massive Godzilla looming over the suburb.

This site consists of solid rock. I only became aware on the weekend that it will be blasted with dynamite. The area will be excavated at least 10 metres in some parts to cater for the two levels underground. My mind just boggles at the thought of this. I just cannot imagine such a gigantic hole.

I read with interest that the CSIRO submission dated 22 October 1999 stated that an environmental assessment report is currently being prepared. Isn't this report too late in the day? It is simply ludicrous that this proposed seven-storey building right on the edge of residential A is only just now having an environmental assessment report being done at the eleventh hour. This is another prime example of the poor treatment being endured by local residents. Put simply, there are just too many unanswered questions. I will endeavour to discuss a few.

Firstly, to what extent will the foundations of houses and home units be affected? There are many brick houses in the area. What percentage of risk is there of finding cracks in our walls or movements in the foundations of our houses? Of equal importance to this question: to what radius of the site will the area be affected by all this drilling? I would like it to be

put on notice that, at this point, neither my neighbour nor I have cracks in the walls of our respective houses. I am also particularly concerned about my swimming pool. Can it be guaranteed there will be no damage?

Another area of grave concern is the lack of privacy. There are many young families and, also, many old people living in the area, and so looms a further issue of safety. Moreover, none of us want to be watched. We do not want strangers having an opportunity to observe all our movements. I will simply not feel comfortable swimming in my pool or sunbaking, and my courtyard will be spoilt with this seven-storey Godzilla bearing down.

And what about the shadows from this building? I notice that, in the CSIRO's submission dated 22 October, shadow studies have been prepared. Where are they? Surely, we, the neighbours, who are the ones who will affected, are entitled to see them. I would find it very hard to believe that extensive problems will not result from such an overpowering set of buildings.

Then there is the nightmare of the noise pollution that will result from the construction. How long will the dynamiting and the drilling go on for? Will it be two, four or six months? I am just living in dread of this ordeal. Then there is the question of removal of the massive amounts of rubble. How many trips to the dump will be required. Thousands of dump trucks will be travelling along our local streets creating havoc and noise.

Running a house means that domestic concerns will also have to be addressed. As trivial as it may appear, I am very much concerned about my washing. Will my washing come off the line dirtier than when I put it on? Living with the dust will just be another nightmare to be endured.

What about the people who suffer from asthma? How are they going to cope with all of this? Last Sunday, I manned a stall at the local shops with the sole purpose of providing information about the proposal of the IMB. It is apparent that there are still many residents who are unaware of the project, and this is of great concern. Of equal importance to those who do know about the project, the general feeling is that the university just does not care about its neighbours. I must mention that the Vice-Chancellor came up to our stall. This was a very disappointing and frustrating meeting. He simply did not listen. I was appalled by his high-handed cavalier approach.

In summary, there are just too many unanswered questions for the project to go ahead. I am sick and tired of the lack of empathy and the lack of concern on the part of the university and the CSIRO. The bottom line is this: no matter what environmental management plan is put in place during the construction period, the sheer enormity of the whole project right on the edge of campus will have a completely damning effect on the local residents. And to think that this construction nightmare will go on for at least two years!

CHAIR—Does the committee have any questions?

Mr RIPOLL—Mrs Hart, are you and the other groups opposed totally to any construction in that area or are you particularly opposed to the size of the building? Perhaps

you could be a bit more specific, because anything they do build there is going to involve similar work, whether it is seven or four storeys or even a low-set designed building. The construction work will be roughly the same. Are you opposed to any construction or just this particular building?

Mrs Hart—It is really the sheer enormity of the building right on the edge of residential A. If that building was anywhere else, it would not be allowed. It is the size of the building which we find so overwhelming.

CHAIR—Mrs Hart, I notice in your group's submission to the committee that you also were concerned about contamination, because you mention the fruit bat colony.

Mrs Hart—It was not me who mentioned that.

CHAIR—No, this was the submission, though, that was presented to the committee by your group: is that correct? This is the submission by the Biohazard Action Alliance: is that the group you are representing today?

Interjector—The Biohazard Action Alliance is an amalgam of all the resident groups in the area.

CHAIR—Yes, but Mrs Hart is speaking on behalf of that group, isn't she? Given that, I just wanted to check the statement about the fruit bats by Biohazard Action Alliance. It says:

> They could be just as easily contaminated, as were the possums of Long Pocket. (In 1998, the CSIRO secretly culled all possums in Long Pocket, after one consumed a dish of genetically modified bacteria, in their laboratory). Local residents and the community were not informed, and this has dashed any illusions we may have had of the purported safety of GMO research.

Are you satisfied today that the CSIRO have given evidence under oath that those possums were culled not because they were contaminated but because they would return if they had not been culled?

Mrs Hart—I can only talk on my own behalf.

Senator MURPHY—You are here representing a group that makes a claim that the possums were contaminated. It is all relevant.

CHAIR—You are here on behalf of the Biohazard Action Alliance.

Senator MURPHY—We cannot have people coming before the committee making claims that cannot be supported by fact. In this committee we deal with fact, and the committee will give the residents and everyone else a fair hearing and the degree of support that it needs, if that is the case. But we would like to see claims backed up. It is all very well and all very easy for people to come before any committee and make a whole host of claims—and I say that to everybody. But we will only deal with the facts at the end of the day.

CHAIR—Who is the spokesperson? You say you are appearing here for yourself? You have been sworn in as the representative for the Biohazard Action Alliance. Are you speaking for yourself or are you speaking for the Biohazard Action Alliance? If so, why have we sworn you in as representing the Biohazard Action Alliance?

Interjector—Excuse me, can we make a comment here?

CHAIR—No, I am sorry, you cannot.

Interjector—Trish is not aware of it.

CHAIR—No, I am sorry, it is not in order. Can you answer the committee?

Mrs Hart—I cannot answer the question truthfully on that. I do not have enough information.

Senator MURPHY—Can I say that there is nothing wrong with Mrs Hart appearing before us and putting her position as a resident who has a concern.

CHAIR—That is quite correct, but not as a representative of that group if you cannot answer questions on behalf of their submission.

Senator MURPHY—As far as I am concerned, the submission does not stand properly before us.

CHAIR—No, that is correct. The submission cannot really be received in the fashion in which it has been tendered, with you having been sworn in to speak to this particular submission.

Mr FORREST—Can we accept Mrs Hart as a resident, and her verbal submission?

CHAIR—We can accept Mrs Hart as a resident speaking on her own behalf, but we cannot accept you on behalf of the Biohazard Action Alliance speaking to their paper which is before us at this present time. Are there any other questions?

Mr FORREST—You mentioned your address. Could you tell me what is your address?

Mrs Hart—It is 11 Dell Road, St Lucia.

Mr FORREST—Is it possible for you to indicate roughly on that map where that is?

Mrs Hart—I do not have my glasses with me.

CHAIR—Could CSIRO point out Dell Road for us?

Mr FORREST—I know where Dell Road is, but I am just wondering how close it is to the site.

Mrs Hart—I am about the fourth house in from the corner in Dell Road.

Mr FORREST—You are four houses down from the corner. That will do. Thank you.

CHAIR—There being no other questions, thank you very much for your attendance.

[4.07 p.m.]

ELLIOTT, Mr James, Member, St Lucia Residents' Association

MASSEY, Mr John, Chairman, St Lucia Residents' Association

RIDLEY, Dr Peter, Member, St Lucia Residents' Association

CHAIR—I welcome you on behalf of the committee. Would one of you like to make an opening statement?

Mr Massey—Yes, but before I do that I would like to make a statement about the previous speaker and the Biohazard Action Alliance, if I may.

CHAIR—You may make a point of clarification.

Mr Massey—Thank you. When we were contacted by Mr Michael Fetter, the secretary of your committee, to arrange our presentations, we were advised that we were allowed up to three speakers for each group. The previous speaker, Trish Hart, is a member of the Residents Against Intensive Development. However, all of our residents groups are combined within the Biohazard Action Alliance. We all have different views on things but we have combined together under that name.

There was to have been another speaker under the Biohazard Action Alliance, Dr Jenny Byth, who unfortunately had to appear before a workers' compensation tribunal this afternoon and had to give her apologies as she is not able to appear. That may explain why Trish did not know precisely the contents of the submission made on behalf of the Biohazard Action Alliance.

CHAIR—Thank you for explaining that. This committee has a process that it must go through, and that submission was made on behalf of that group. When people appear before this committee to speak on behalf of that submission, they should be able to answer questions in relation to that submission when they are sworn in to do so. That is to clarify our position as well: we have statutory obligations.

The committee has received a submission from the St Lucia Residents' Association dated 10 October 1999. Do you wish to propose any amendment to the submission?

Mr Massey—No.

CHAIR—Is it the wish of the committee that the submission be incorporated in the transcript of evidence? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The document read as follows—

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

Mr Massey—Thank you. I am speaking to you in my capacity as chairman of the local community organisation, the St Lucia Residents' Association, and also as the coordinator of an amalgam of grassroots organisations that have mushroomed in our area in response to the threat posed by the proposed biotech facilities which are evidently part of the Queensland state government's initiative, the so-called Centre of Excellence in Biotechnology.

The St Lucia Residents' Association was formed over a decade ago as the St Lucia Residents' Environmental Protection Committee by local residents concerned at the ministerial rezoning of a parcel of land at the entrance to the University of Queensland by the then minister for everything, the Hon. Russ Hinze. We were alarmed that our rights and the provisions of the town plan of the City of Brisbane could be swept asunder and a private entrepreneur could blatantly benefit from a twofold increase in density of residential land.

Years of confrontation and a royal commission later—that is, the Fitzgerald corruption commission—we find ourselves in much the same position except that the political persuasions have changed and it is now the Labor Premier, Peter Beattie, who is undemocratically championing his biotech bonanza and foisting upon us an appallingly inappropriate cluster of high-tech research laboratories and their purported hundreds of spin-off incubator industries—all commercial enterprises—in the inner western suburbs of Brisbane. To us, this has shades of WA Inc., wagering our public moneys on the dubious new age science of biotechnology that for 15 years, despite massive investment, has hardly shown a profit anywhere in Australia.

The amalgam of grassroots organisations that has mushroomed in our residential suburbs in response to the threat is loosely coordinated as the Biohazard Action Alliance—and, believe us, we want action. We will not countenance the subjugation of our rights and expectations of sound planning principles with ridiculous proposals such as the CSIRO-University of Queensland joint building projects in the form of the Institute of Molecular Biosciences and the ancillary or satellite campus of the National Sciences Precinct mushrooming in your backyards like a science experiment gone wrong. For this, we have been denigrated and abused, scoffed at and ridiculed, with accusations of insanity.

But, in all this adversity and unwarranted attention, I can say that at the dawning of the 21st century and the centenary of our Federation there is much to rejoice at and be proud of in the local communities of mums and dads and mostly happy families that are still prepared to stand up and defend their democratic rights. It has been truly inspirational to see the various community organisations banding together as the BAA to confront this un-Australian onslaught of Big Brother in the form of the faceless bureaucracies at the various arms of the CSIRO, the Queensland Bioindustries Office, the Department of Primary Industries, the Department of State Development, the Department of the Environment et cetera and the University of Queensland. Not since the great Brisbane flood a quarter of a century ago have our communities been so united and determined in their quest. We will not give up until these facilities are relocated.

Our written submissions to your committee have been distributed to the CSIRO for their response and rebuttal, which to us seems curious and inequitable. The residents in their various community organisations are, for the most part, unfunded voluntary interest groups confronted by a plethora of bureaucracies that seem to have limitless resources to frustrate and intimidate our legitimate inquiries. We are very much a David in a struggle with Goliath, but, even then, our cause is just and our defeat not certain. Thankfully, we have not stood alone. Our local members in the Brisbane City Council, Councillors Judy Magub and June O'Connell, have encouraged our mobilisation and activism, championing our cause in the various bureaucracies, as has the Hon. Denver Beanland MLA, the state member for Indooroopilly.

In his capacity as the Attorney-General in a previous government, the Hon. Denver Beanland experienced the rage of an electorate that would not be silenced. The silly proposition of the Borbidge government to link the university to the city with the Briztram 'green bridge' brought it to the brink of extinction with a hung parliament. Mr Beanland's hitherto safe Liberal seat came within a few dozen votes of falling to an unknown Labor candidate. Indeed, Mr Beanland had previously seen the Goss Labor government fall with another transport debacle, the koala highway to the Gold Coast, so he has learnt his lesson well, and we appreciate his attention and support in this current battle.

Our federal member for Ryan, the Hon. John Moore MP, the Minister for Defence, also lives nearby. Despite a preoccupation with his ministerial responsibilities of finding a new department head and conducting Australia's key role in the United Nations peacekeeping operation in East Timor, he has had a close involvement with the biotechnology projects and has been kept informed of developments. But I would stress that we remain apolitical, not doing the bidding of any political party, as it would be fair to say that we cover the rainbow of political complexions, but we are steadfast in our stand against the biotechnology laboratories being built within our residential suburbs.

Indeed, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, the largest municipality in Australia and one of the largest in the world, has expressed his strong support, saying that 'Council will be taking a hard line on this issue' as, in his view, it is inappropriate for the university to consider planning issues only on its own site and not consider the amenity issues for the surrounding residential area. Councillor Soorley, on behalf of the Brisbane City Council, further contended that 'the university should have to apply and go through the normal planning processes, and council's legal opinion is exactly the same'.

The legal advice to the council is to the effect that, under the Integrated Planning Act, the proposed development is assessable development requiring code assessment because, one, the transitional provisions of IPA apply; two, the current town plan is a transitional plan for the purposes of the IPA; three, under the current town plan, the subject land is in the Special Uses (University) Zone; four, in that zone the proposed development requires an application for notification of conditions under than the town plan; and, five, public sector entity status, if applicable, does not appear to exempt the university from the transitional provisions.

In lay terms, the proposal should not be exempt for being attached to, or associated with, the university, and should be subject to normal planning requirements, as are any other developments in the city of Brisbane. Frankly, the plans to accommodate the 'high risk'

research laboratories in a residential environment were a wrong idea in the first place, and it is tragic that they could have progressed thus far without public scrutiny and the normal checks and balances. The Brisbane City Council has the full support of its residents in pursuing this matter, and we would seek to become respondents by election in any action to protect the rights of our citizens against these bullying tactics of the university and allied proponents of the schemes.

It is unacceptable that the university should even contemplate a project of this nature and scale in this locality. There appears to be a culture in the administration which sees itself as above the law, a fiefdom looking down from the hilltop where the edge of their little world ends at the boundary line, rather as New Yorkers view anything off Manhattan Island as being of no consequence. Now the feudal rulers of this academic realm seek to construct a city wall of gigantic proportions in the scale of nearby Indooroopilly Shopping Town, slap-bang across the road from the peasantry on whom they are perfectly happy to turn their backs. They are affronted that those who fund and support their empire should even presume to inquire as to what is going on.

It was not until this month that the proponents even sought to validate their proposals by usurping a public protest meeting called by Denver Beanland to win the hearts and minds of the residents in a misconstrued community consultation. The joint building project is said to conform to the arbitrary height adopted for the university, being the parapet height of the main building. But this is not cognisant of the huge bulk—eight storeys and one-and-a-half football fields long—blocking the adjoining residential area from its preferred northerly aspects, its prevailing breezes and views. It does not respect the privacy of the residents from unwarranted observation of occupants of the proposed complex. Further, the outflow of exhaust flues from the research laboratories of CP1, 2 and 3 classification will necessarily drift into the surrounding neighbourhood putting the residents in the front line of any malfunction or disastrous escape of GMO bacteria or viruses.

The unintentional spread of the rabbit calicivirus from Kangaroo Island to engulf the whole country in a matter of weeks is a dramatic illustration of our fears being well founded, and it is not good enough for the proponents to contend that the labs are designed to code standards. At the very least there should be an adequate buffer zone of perhaps 10 kilometres between such high-tech labs and the surrounding residential areas.

You may ask my credentials for such bold assertions on matters of planning and development of high-tech research laboratories. I am an architect and a designer of three decades standing, a Fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, an Associate in Design Education of the Design Institute of Australia and practitioner in many parts of the world. I have previously taught architectural design to Bachelor of Design Studies and final year Bachelor of Architecture students at both the University of Queensland, School of Architecture and Town Planning and the Queensland University of Technology School of the Built Environment in Brisbane. I have been responsible for the design of major projects across the world, being the project architect on the Turner Simms concert hall at Southampton University and the Battersea riverfront redevelopment in London. I have been on the winning design teams for the Cyprus Government Centre in Nicosia and the Jubilee Sports Centre in Hong Kong.

CHAIR—Excuse me, Mr Massey, maybe you could wind it up because, if you want your other two representatives to make a statement, we have other witnesses to get through as well, so could you make a short statement to your submission. Thank you.

Mr Massey—Very well. In conclusion, we appreciate that the plans are well advanced, but we do hope that these serious concerns are able to be effectively addressed so that both the project proponents and the public are able to get the most appropriate facility for biotechnology research consistent with best town planning practice and the health and safety of the community and the surrounding environment.

The placement of these facilities in residential areas was always a wrong idea, and the promotion by gene tech organisations is having a drastically detrimental effect upon the image of biotechnology in Brisbane. We are keen to assist our scientists in finding a more suitable location for their laboratories. Such laboratories exist at Pinjarra Hills and at Samford on the outskirts of Brisbane, and at the Ipswich and Gatton campuses of the University of Queensland. Thank you.

CHAIR—Thank you very much. Dr Ridley.

Dr Ridley—Thank you. I would like to particularly address the question that there is no need for the CSIRO to place this facility in an inner city suburb of Brisbane. The CSIRO documentation which has been provided to me dated August 1999—their evidence—tells us that the CSIRO tropical agriculture and plant industry staff work in areas of research which include beef cattle, sugar, dry land cotton, grains, tropical and subtropical horticultural crops, orchard design and management, to name a few. These are a world different from the world of Professor Mattick who spoke very eloquently and emotively on the topics of the benefits of advances in medicine. The CSIRO intend to contribute $50 million—that is the proposal—to continue what they have already been doing which, we are told, is nothing new. So the CSIRO component of $50 million is being spent in an inner city suburb six kilometres from the central business district. I believe the committee needs to consider whether that is a wise investment of those funds.

The CSIRO's activities, we are told in their evidence, are broadacre farming activities. The CSIRO could not have found a location further remote from their clientele, their natural constituency, than inner-city Brisbane. Another point to be made in this same area is that we often hear from our parliamentary representatives about the need in rural Australia for decentralisation of employment and opportunity. The point was brought up earlier by Mr Hollis that Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Townsville have existing universities. They also have, we are told in the CSIRO evidence, existing CSIRO facilities. The question that needs to be answered is: if this is a facility for the 21st century, will rural people be allowed to participate in the new century? The CSIRO statement of evidence does not even address the question of location in other cities. It should. This is an act of negligence on their part in preparing their report.

The second point has been discussed by others, basically the problem that the city council has not approved this facility. We are told in the statement of evidence by the CSIRO that development on the UQ campus is not subject to a development application under the town plan for the City of Brisbane. From this we can infer that they believe they

can carry out construction in contravention to the Brisbane City Council town plan if they so desire. This is clearly an act which is not acceptable to local residents.

Another point to be made is that expansion of this size is likely to severely reduce the quality of life for local residents. We have heard of the problems with the pressure of traffic. The committee has probably realised that we are located in a pocket on the river. You can see it in the large photograph there. There are two ways in: Sir Fred Schonnel Drive and Hawken Drive. The consequences of this large-scale excavation and material handling over a period of two, possibly three, years, with the disruption to those major arterial roads—the only ways of getting in and out of this pocket on the river—are horrendous. You may have witnessed the bumper to bumper peak-hour traffic coming to the university. This is not just the 9 o'clock phenomenon. This is a phenomenon which happens virtually on the hour, with the change of lectures. During the term, traffic is continuous. During the construction period, that would be mixed with heavy vehicles carrying rock and material.

The CSIRO statement of evidence also declares that the facilities will include bulk chemical and gas stores, animal holding areas, a 2,000-litre grease trap, isotope waste discharge and facilities for flammable liquids and toxic liquids. These are facilities which are appropriate to a site which is in the midst of a residential area. That is the conclusion of my evidence.

Mr Elliott—I live in St Lucia and have been living here for 30 years. I was a member of the university staff for about 30 years. I was a lecturer in public administration and planning and in politics, so I am quite aware of the internal workings of the university and of this suburb. I would certainly agree with most things which have been said, especially in the lack of consultation on this matter and the lack of information. The claim that the residents have been fully aware of what has been going on is ridiculous. This is completely untrue. The community has not been aware. I keep fairly well in touch with things, and I certainly have not been aware. For CSIRO, a body of that eminence, to say that they did not who to consult is absolutely unbelievable.

One of the things which bothers me—and I do wonder whether I am in Australia—is this pressure for immediate action, that things have to start in December. We hear about anonymous donors with $10 million available—and I am not sure what was said here and I would be very interested to read the transcript—and that if we do not act we will possibly lose this $10 million. What kind of country are we in? What kind of parliamentary democracy are we in if we have these kinds of suggestions? But this is typical of what has been going on with this scheme. I think that, if nothing else, this committee, in terms of the public interest, should just slow everything down so we can have real democracy and real participation and real information.

We are not getting the information; it is just not available. Some of it is difficult, I understand, because it is highly technical information. It was suggested by an earlier witness that this is a very popular area and it is not very controversial. But it is extremely controversial. He was using evidence from the United States but, if you look at evidence from Europe, it is quite different. There has been massive public agitation about this particular research area, genetically modified agriculture, food, and so on. I think the committee is aware of that.

The second major point I would like to raise is the site. The university and the CSIRO are suggesting that this site is essential. I have been in this university almost 30 years, and all of it is essential. Whether it is the dental school or the medical school or veterinary science or agriculture, this is always the same. They do not want to leave where they are. This is the very nature of organisations.

I would like to see comparisons made. The University of Queensland is one of the largest landowners in south-east Queensland. We know the need in this state. We know the needs in places outside of Brisbane. I find it very odd that two public bodies are putting forward this kind of case. I think this needs to be looked at very carefully on behalf of our people. We know about Ipswich and Gatton but the university has many other sites. I think the evidence of the case has not proved that it must be at this site.

As I say, I have been here for many years now, living in this suburb and in this community. The history of the university is not very good in many ways. It has not been a good neighbour. It has not been very good in the community. It is in a difficult position. You can just look at that photograph there. We have the river on three sides. Just take traffic as one example. We have been talking about the traffic for umpteen years and we have put new roads through, but it is impossible to do much about the traffic because of the river. I do not think there is any solution for the traffic. If you have got this massive new complex, it is going to be infinitely worse. I do not honestly believe there is any solution.

I know about buses—I use buses. Very often you cannot get on the bus because it is full of students. If you come here, maybe you can get on but you cannot get on at bus stops off the site. This is the kind of suffering and deterioration we have seen in the suburb due to the university.

Then there is the secrecy of the university. How many houses do they own? We have no idea. If you are a tenant of the university, can you actually give evidence to this committee? I am even rather fearful myself sitting here. You talk about the Brisbane City Council but the university is very powerful, extremely powerful, and a lot of people are very fearful. The Brisbane City Council has to be very careful what it does with the university. This is one of the largest communities in Queensland. As you know, it has even got its own postcode. It is a very large, very powerful, very secretive organisation with its own objectives. These are not necessarily the objectives of Queensland. These are not necessarily the objectives even for the university community. If you look at the voting records of the academic staff association, they have their own objectives. They are not open about this. Fair enough. This is the nature of large organisations; whereas we, as ordinary citizens, and with our parliamentary representatives here, have to be concerned with the public interest.

We know the history of large organisations, such as the tobacco industry who said for years that nothing was going to happen, and Minamatta disease in Japan. They always cover up and, I am afraid we do not know whether they are covering up or not. We are not the experts. I think we need a lot more information and we need to slow things down. I would like the committee, as our representatives, to get all this information and to slow things down so the ordinary folk here can understand what is going on. This business about starting in December is unbelievable. Thank you.

CHAIR—Do members have any questions?

Senator MURPHY—I have a couple of questions with regard to your submission. In terms of the dot points on page 1 of your submission, it is the information given to us by the University of Queensland that, indeed, the population of this campus will decline and not increase. The information provided to this committee by the University of Queensland and the CSIRO indicates that, indeed, the parking that is proposed for the development is for CSIRO parking only. If the population of the campus decreases, one would imagine that the university parking would better accommodate the problem that exists. If there is illegal parking that is a matter for local government to address.

With regard to the issue of the strategic planning and community consultation, that is an issue that we will take up. But in terms of the issues that relate to scientific work, I, for one, have to take at face value what we are told. We can question what we are told if we have other experts who come before the committee, but I hope you people understand that, from my point of view, we take at face value what we are told.

Dr Ridley—Are you allowed to ask for alternative proposals? Can you ask the CSIRO why they did not consider other universities as contributors? Is that information going to be made public?

Senator MURPHY—I am sure when you read the transcript of these hearings you will find that we endeavour to pursue the issues as best we can.

Mr Elliott—Normally, the green site is the cheapest way of doing things. This is not a green site. They have all this land and all these sites in various other places. In terms of public money and the cost of developing this site, as against another site, whether it is at Ipswich, Gatton or somewhere else, I would like to see the costs. It is not just the capital costs but the long-term costs. If there is an accident here the costs of that accident in this area and the costs of dealing with that accident are going to be infinitely greater. These are public costs that I am talking about and not university costs necessarily, as compared to green site development.

Mr HOLLIS—I do not know if you were here earlier when that was an issue that I pursued. I think my exact words were, 'Why this site and why not look at other sites?' The answer the CSIRO gave back to me was that it is not just the building but it is the collaborative interaction. This is an answer we often get in fields like this when we are talking about the shared facilities such as libraries and other things.

Senator CALVERT—Shared research facilities.

Mr HOLLIS—Yes, and the other research facilities and the interaction with other departments. That could well be an academic argument. We asked the question and we got the answer. We could ask CSIRO or someone else to come up with alternative costings but usually you find, whether it is short term or a long term, that the cost of a greenfield site, instead of being cheaper, is more expensive, especially initially because of all the other facilities that either have to be brought on the site or established. Often it is cheaper to build within an existing complex.

Mr Elliott—There is no room to expand here.

Mr HOLLIS—Again, read the evidence. I said it was a crowded site.

Mr Elliott—Over the 30 years that I have been here they are always talking about expanding. There is no way of expanding here. Just have a look at the situation at QUT at Garden Point.

Senator MURPHY—Can I just ask one question of your group which really goes to the question of all of the other groups. As we understand it, the biotechnology work that is currently being done here has been being done for some period of time. I am not sure exactly how long, but has there been any protest action with regard to the work that is being done at the university currently? Has your group embarked on any course of action to object to the work currently undertaken here at the university?

Dr Ridley—The university does not make us privy to the knowledge of the work that they are doing, especially if it is sensitive. They will tell us we can get a brochure or a prospectus of their combined research facilities, which is fair enough. They do not let any secrets out. Any sensitive research will be hidden.

Mr RIPOLL—My question is more about the statements that has been made by your group and a range of other groups about the high-risk laboratories and the potential accidents. I think Mr Massey also mentioned a 10-kilometre buffer zone. What are these high risks? We have no evidence before us and we have questioned CSIRO on this matter—the work they do, accidents, risk potential and so forth. What is your evidence to us that this is high-risk work, and what do you mean by high risk? What accidents have happened in the past?

Dr Ridley—The accidents which are high risk and dangerous would not be frequent. However, in Brisbane there have been accidents in university facilities and I can quote. There was an example at QUT. I am not sure whether the virus was Japanese encephalitis. Maybe you would like to check.

Mr RIPOLL—But that is not related to the work that is done here.

Dr Ridley—No, this is a university facility that I am talking about where students are involved and people are in training. This was an accident; it was a very serious accident. It was at Queensland University of Technology. It caused a lot of angst in Brisbane. I think the disease was Japanese encephalitis. They do not happen every day but, when they do, a lot of anguish—

Mr RIPOLL—What I am asking you is not in relation to what happens at other universities or other types of research. In relation to this site and the research that they are undertaking on this site, when you say ‘high risk’, what is the high-risk work that you are talking about here?

Dr Ridley—We are not privy to what is high risk. We will not be told.

Mr RIPOLL—So you are saying your statement is based on just something you are—

Dr Ridley—Our statement is based on what has happened, on what news stories we hear from organisations like QUT, another university in the same city using very similar sorts of people in similar sorts of conditions. That is all we have to go on. We are not told.

Mr RIPOLL—The reason I am asking you the question is to try to give you an opportunity to give us some evidence or some weight in what you say. I would say from your answer that you are not doing that because I am asking in particular about this site.

Dr Ridley—The past evidence is from other organisations. The one I have quoted is—

Mr FORREST—This is hearsay.

Senator MURPHY—But it involves different types of work. Hazards can occur anywhere in any type of operation. If you present a submission to us that makes a claim about the particular scope of development we are to consider, then we have to deal with it. We understand because we as a committee have dealt with many things, such as Lucas Heights, et cetera. You would be fully aware of the nature of the complaint there with radioactive materials. It is not something we treat lightly but, when we looked at Lucas Heights as we are now looking at this development, we had to deal with the issues that affect it. We cannot deal with issues that may have affected something else. What Mr Ripoll is asking you is what evidence you can present us with of high-risk operations being conducted in the current facilities and/or in the new facilities.

Mr RIPOLL—Or even the same work being carried on somewhere else—not something similar, but the same work. It is really an opportunity for you to say, 'The same work going on here or the past history here . . . ', because we have been told clearly there have been no accidents in the past 25 years and that there will be no accidents because the work they are doing is of a low grade in terms of risk potential and the work does not involve high risk.

Mr Massey—If I may answer the question in another way, we are lay people and do not have the scientific expertise. All we can draw upon is the information that we are given. We were informed that there were laboratories up to CP3 in the Institute of Molecular Biology building. There are a lot of CP1 and CP2 and there are two CP3 laboratories. We were also advised under the community consultation on the NSP project that there are CP4 laboratories up to CP4 at—or proposed for—that institution. When we read the documentation as to what CP1, CP2, CP3 and CP4 mean, I understand—and correct me if I am wrong—that CP4 is high risk to the individual and to the community. That sort of thing rings alarm bells in our ears. I believe CP3 is high risk to the individual and low risk to the community.

Mr RIPOLL—You have just said that there were no CP4 and only two CP3, which is what I said earlier in a question to one of the other groups, who then said there is CP4. My understanding is that there is no CP4. We will come back to this question with CSIRO, but my understanding is that there currently is no CP4 and there is no intent for CP4.

Mr Massey—Under the community consultation on the NSP—and perhaps my colleagues in the Long Pocket Concerned Residents Group may answer this more effectively than I could.

Mr RIPOLL—Are you talking about this site here?

Mr Massey—The natural sciences precinct is the allied campus.

Mr RIPOLL—We are talking about this site here. We are talking about this project.

Mr Massey—We were told under this community consultation on the NSP that there would be experiments carried out at this site that would be transferred to the other site for field testing.

Mr RIPOLL—Who told you that?

Mr Massey—That was the coordinator of the community consultation. It was a young lady called Meryl, I think. She has since left the organisation.

CHAIR—Mr Massey, in your submission you acknowledge that these laboratories are CP3 classification. You mention Long Pocket in relation to CP3 and CP4 laboratories but not this particular one.

Mr Massey—Yes.

Mr FORREST—I have some sympathy with the witnesses. You are dealing with a standing committee of the parliament and sworn evidence. We must deal in facts, not hearsay. If you have assertions to make, they have to be substantiated. We are not unsympathetic to the position you are putting but that is the message we are trying to relay to you. All I would like to know is your addresses. You obviously live somewhere nearby.

Dr Ridley—I live in Boomerang Road, St Lucia. Are you in Dell Road, Mr Massey?

Mr Massey—No, I am in 146 Macquarie Street, St Lucia.

Mr FORREST—What about you, Mr Elliott?

Mr Elliott—I am at the same address but in a different apartment.

Mr FORREST—In other words, you are a fair way away.

Mr Elliott—We are five minutes walk from here.

Mr FORREST—I have one question to Mr Massey, because he is the author of the contribution we had from Biohazard. That submission makes an assertion about possums at Long Pocket about which there have been other points made in the evidence. It makes the point that the state's largest fruit bat colony on Indooroopilly island is nearby. Could you

give evidence as to anything that we have already heard not being correct in respect to what happened with the possums, and how you can connect that with the bat colony?

Mr Massey—The information which we get we dig up however we can. We have had a freedom of information search on the community consultation of the NSP. I must say that we are private individuals that have jobs to do and things to do other than research the NSP and the community consultation. Whilst the evidence we give is to the best of our ability and in good faith, we read things in the paper. It was widely reported in the paper that the possums at Long Pocket had eaten genetically modified bacteria out of a dish and had to be destroyed.

Mr RIPOLL—You do not want to believe everything you read in the paper.

Mr FORREST—We have had sworn evidence that this did not happen.

Mr Massey—I accept that. We are just giving the information as we see it. It is very difficult for us to delve into these matters, as you seem to be able to, to get to the bottom of some of these things, but these are concerns for the community. True, you cannot believe everything you read in the paper. Perhaps you cannot believe much at all of what you read in the papers, but they are the sorts of sources that we have for our information which we give in good faith.

Mr FORREST—No substantiation, just hearsay. You cannot offer us any more to substantiate—

CHAIR—We are going to have to wind up because we do have a plane that we have to catch and we have another group to get through. We have two groups—we have to call the CSIRO again—so if there are no further questions I would like to thank you and call the Long Pocket Concerned Residents Group.

[4.50 p.m.]

BYTH, Dr Andrew Lindsay, Secretary, Long Pocket Concerned Residents Group

WILSON, Mr Allan Bruce, Chairman, Long Pocket Concerned Residents Group

EMERSON, Mr Scott, Residents Against Intensive Development

CHAIR—I welcome you on behalf of the committee. The committee has received submissions from the Long Pocket Concerned Residents Group dated 9 October and 18 October. Do you wish to propose any amendments?

Dr Byth—No.

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

The documents read as follows—

CHAIR—I would invite you to make a brief statement.

Mr Emerson—I will make a few brief comments, then I will let Dr Byth and Mr Wilson speak and comment on some of the questions that have been raised by the committee and answers given by some of the witnesses today.

One issue obviously clear from today's evidence was the timing of this project. As you heard from the CSIRO earlier today, their plan was for this project to begin in December, that is, for the earth to start moving in December. But in terms of that environment assessment, it is still in draft form, and the evidence given today was that it would not be ready in terms of its final capacity for another month. That would take it into December, so their environmental impact assessment will be done at about the same time as the bulldozers are moving in.

Clearly, this is part of the problem with the consultation process we have seen so far with this project. The CSIRO and the university have been completely lacking in consultation.

CHAIR—Mr Emerson, I will make a point here, because it is relevant. Despite the program that the CSIRO have for this development, nothing can actually happen until this committee has given its report to the parliament, so I would like to put your mind at ease there.

Mr Emerson—Madam Chair, I appreciate that. Thank you very much. However, the point I was making was that CSIRO's plans were for them to have work beginning in December but their planned environmental assessment was to be completed at about the same time. There was no attempt to have the assessment done well ahead of any planned work.

CHAIR—Point taken.

Mr Emerson—Another point was made on the site of campus. We have heard sufficient evidence today about the ability to site this project in other campuses in other sites around Australia and Queensland. I cannot go into the benefits. You have heard ample arguments, I am sure, from CSIRO regarding the suitability of the Gatton campus, Ipswich campus and other university sites by other universities—Rockhampton, Townsville, Toowoomba—which all have university and CSIRO facilities. I am aware that the committee had a site inspection at the university today and an inspection of the Long Pocket site as well. However, being associated with this university as a student, as a local resident and a casual staff member, I can tell you that there are numerous other sites on the campus where this project could be sited, not on the one site that you were shown.

It was mentioned by the CSIRO and university that a number of sites were considered, but their argument for this site was that it fitted in with what the university's plan was. It was not that other sites were not suitable. It just fitted in with what the university decided was suitable. If you have a look at the maps and the photograph behind you, you will see ample spaces in numerous places around that campus where a complex of this size could be built, not on the buffer of this university.

Another question was raised by the committee regarding the size of this building—the seven storeys. It is on university grounds; that was made clear. However, is that saying that the university could put anything on its university grounds in the light of that argument, anything that could impact on local neighbours, whether it is incredibly noisy, whether it has light pollution or involves traffic pollution? It should not be the case that the university should be allowed to do that, to impact on residents. A building that is seven storeys high will have a major impact on local residents. I am not opposed to a building on that site. There are buildings there already. What local residents are concerned about is the size of this building and the nature of what is going on in that building. A building of seven storeys should not be built on the buffer of this university. Build it within the grounds of the university, but further away from residents near the university.

I will just go back quickly to that issue of parking. There were a number of figures mentioned; the university mentioned figures. To make it clear in terms of the numbers, at the moment there is a site there which caters for 285 personnel. The new complex will cater for 750 personnel but with parking for 220. That means there is an extra 400. The university says it already has space for that. Why is there already such congestion? Why is there already such a demand on parking? If the university already has space, there should be ample room now. But that is not the case.

Finally, I will point out about the possums in Long Pocket. I accept the evidence of CSIRO, but if you live in St Lucia, possums are a common problem. They get into your roof. You cannot sleep at night. You call in Peter the Possum Man but he does not come and kill the possum. He just takes the possum out of the building. He puts some wire up to stop the possum getting in, and that is the end of it. Why did CSIRO have to kill a colony of those possums? It should have put in a better grille or something else. It seems very strange that possums had to be killed, and this was done secretly. It was not done with the knowledge of local residents. I am not allowed to kill possums. I am not allowed to kill brush turkeys that dig up my garden. CSIRO did that for some reason. Peter the Possum Man takes the possums away and says to put up a grille. CSIRO killed those possums. I do not understand why they needed to kill those possums.

Dr Byth—I will cut down my talk to a few points. I find it personally insulting that the University of Queensland and the CSIRO regard us as inferior to their footballers and athletes. If we look at this large aerial photograph, there are all these green areas which could easily house not only this complex but also the NSP, which you have seen at Indooroopilly. They could co-locate the two.

Mr HOLLIS—They do not have car parks in those areas.

Dr Byth—To get around that, you can put the garages on the first floor and then start the building. They could locate the NSP right there next to the IMB. It would still be within 100 yards of where they are talking about now.

Mr Emerson—There are a number of sites not on the flood plain that are empty.

Dr Byth—It could be put on the northern side of the university where that big green area is near the brown oval at the top centre. It would be on Sir Fred Schonell Drive, which is a

four-lane highway. Why stick this right up against the residential area when it has a better access way across the other side of the campus?

I wish to submit a document that is under review by GMAC at present over the possum cull. I am prepared to put on sworn evidence that Dr Heij told me at a meeting with Bruce Wilson and John Massey that the possums broke in and gnawed on a Petri dish of genetically modified bacteria. These are her words to me and they are in the document of 16 September. They were killed because of this contamination. She thought it was the right thing to do to stop the spread of contamination in these possums. This is currently before GMAC and I have not heard back from them. They are reviewing it. We are demanding to see the institutional biosafety records of this incident. We have written to the health minister as well. I think it is very serious and I think Dr Heij has changed her mind because of the repercussions of this. I think that is the nicest way to put it.

Finally, there is massive public opposition to this, as you can see from the signs down the streets. Each sign is a political statement from each resident in Indooroopilly and St Lucia that we are drastically and seriously against this and the whole community need to know that. The public consultation we have had with the NSP has been absolutely lacking. They spent $52,000 of taxpayers' money to McCalls PR Company which had an initial assessment and told the state government that the majority of our residents were in favour of the NSP.

Three weeks later we submitted to state government, via Mr Denver Beanland, a petition totally opposing the NSP with well over 1,000 signatures—I forget the exact figure—from a community of 638 households. How can a PR company get it wrong to that degree unless they have a preset agenda that they are ready to provide a report in favour of their employers? If you go ahead with a public relations assessment along the lines of the NSP, I think you will get exactly what we have got, which is anger and frustration.

The public just cannot accept it. It has actually driven us against these projects, and that is why we are here. We have had such a raw deal over the NSP. When you come back over the NSP, you will see people demonstrating outside. There is very strong feeling against it.

Mr Wilson—I have lived here for 44 years. Indooroopilly is a beautiful place to live. We live on Handel Street, a little dead-end street just before you come to the NSP site. It is 80 metres long, and everything was dandy until 1998 when all of a sudden the street filled up with 26 cars, and 26 cars in 80 metres is a bit upsetting. We suddenly realised we had St Lucia disease.

Early this year we heard, through Denver Beanland's public meeting, of the establishment or the organisation of the NSP. We went along and we were given a choice of three developments of the site. It is the oldest trick in the business. A salesman will always do this. He will not ask you if you want it; he will ask you which one you want. People who were foolish enough to comment on one or another, and favour it, were written down as being in favour of the development. That is how the result came out that Andrew was talking about. It was unfair.

We formed a committee and we went along and met with the NSP. We did not get much info, then we went again and did not get much more, so we started writing to politicians, bureaucrats, everyone we could think of. We got letters back in 'Hirsch and Schagen speak', as we call it—the style of Dr Hirsch and Frank van Schagen is complete in every letter we got. Therefore, we realised that the propaganda machine had worked too well, we were not getting anywhere, so we had to resort to freedom of information.

With this building, we found out about that because we went to see the university about their involvement in the NSP and then they told us about this building, this wonderful laboratory, that was going to be built as though it was a fait accompli—'There is no doubt about it, we are starting in December. We are knocking down the old laboratory and we will start building in the New Year.' That was a bit of a shock. However, it was said that they had absolutely no connection with the NSP, that that was somebody else. On 6 October there was the first public meeting about this new laboratory block. It was astonishing. There was not even a lot of people there; hardly anyone knew. I talked to an old solicitor friend of mine who lives in Carmody Road and he was not even aware the meeting was on, he was not even aware that the building was being built.

As you heard before, the public relations history or efforts of CSIRO and the university are appalling. We have been allotted the role of mushrooms—and I think you know that a mushroom grows in the dark and is fed on bull droppings. That has been our role, but we have not accepted it; we have gone to freedom of information. Our concerns here are that the IMB would not be acceptable under the town plan or the Integrated Planning Act were it any other organisation. It is only because it is the university that they reckon they can get away with it. Our objection is that it is simply too large, it is too near residences and the community has been ignored.

The second thing is the parking. I had to come here in a taxi. There is no way you can get a park around this place. I would still be walking if I had come over in my car. Mr Moody of the CSIRO advised us, as someone said before, that there are 220 car park spaces planned and they are all for the CSIRO—220 out of 750. Where do the extra 500 go? Drive out and park in front of those mugs over in St Lucia—they do not matter. I suppose I can only be thankful it is not in front of our place at Indooroopilly, but that will come if this whole thing goes ahead.

With regard to the traffic, Dr Hay says the population will be reduced. In all the years I can remember, the population of this university has never reduced, and it never will. I do not believe Dr Hay. I believe that as long as the demand for education exists, filling all the satellite universities in Queensland as well at present, we are still growing here, and it still will grow. This will mean just another several hundred cars a day coming to this place. The traffic, the parking are great problems.

With regard to the hazards, they are talked down by CSIRO and by the university, but when you do look into it they are there. For instance, we have been assured at odd times that they are only going to be handling plant genes and that the risks are all very low. I wonder how any learned doctor can, in this day and age, foresee what opportunities will arise down the track a bit. Do you mean to say that any of these wise men are going to refuse to undertake investigation involving animals or bloodsucking insects just because someone

made a placatory remark now saying, 'No, no, it is all right, residents, it is only going to be plant genes, no animals.' I do not believe them. I think if the opportunity arises they would be foolish not to accept it.

For all these reasons, we believe that this building should not be built in a crowded university in a residential area. Let me move on a little—

CHAIR—Mr Wilson, we are going to have to get you to—

Mr Wilson—I will try to be quick. I really will. The CSIRO's Dr Heij and Dr Hirsch at the site over there say that the NSP site is essential to the IMB. They plan PC3 and PC4 laboratories over there, and quarantine greenhouses PC3 and PC4. This is fact. I have the freedom of information documents with a plan showing exactly 600 square metres in the entomology department of PC4 laboratories at Long Pocket. I do not know if they will be bringing that stuff back and forth, but I guess the idea is they are supposed to be communicating.

Through the freedom of information documents we found that they are aspiring to build on the riverside reserve because they are running short of space. They wanted to bulldoze the rainforest. The rainforest contains Austramyrtus Gonoclada, which happens to be a protected tree. There are 125 in the world and there is one in that rainforest, so they were not allowed to do it. As they were not allowed to bulldoze the rainforest, Dr Shaw said there had to be another floor on their building. That was going to raise it above the limit.

CHAIR—Mr Wilson, we are now getting into the area of the NSP facility, which is really not relevant to what we are doing. The committee has to go to Darwin and we are on a tight time frame.

Mr Wilson—I will be quick, but it is very relevant.

CHAIR—I did say 10 minutes and it has now been 20 minutes.

Mr Wilson—You are kind.

CHAIR—Would you please wrap it up. Thank you.

Mr Wilson—The area is too small. They are planning to use outside the fence for parking. They are trying to find room for one commercial partner, Alchemia Pty Ltd. They want 2,500 square metres. Also, they were negotiating with the BCC last June to increase the traffic rating, not the physical shape of the road, the traffic rating, so that they would be approved.

You can understand that we have lost a lot of patience and spent a lot of time. The current situation is that the Cunningham laboratory is to be razed in December. On page 153 of our documents it says the labs at Long Pocket need refurbishing. On page 152 it says: 'Do we refurbish or demolish?' On page 151 it says: 'table of disablement of the lab.' In other words, the place is a wreck over there. The place is going to be wrecked here. This is an unbelievably propitious time for both of these establishments to find their way onto one

site where they could live in harmony, in safety, security, economy of movement, and with room to grow. There is no room to grow here and there is no room to grow at Long Pocket.

Professor Mattick, the Prince Charming of the university, has told us that this is the third wave, the biggest industry to hit the world yet. If we are going to stifle the thing by jamming stuff into little stuffed up sites now, we are not doing the right thing. We should be putting it in a place where it can grow so that we do not have the awful expense of shifting it all out down the track.

CHAIR—Thank you very much.

Senator MURPHY—Dr Byth, you made a statement with regard to the issue of the possums and contamination. I understood you to say that Dr Heij made a comment. Was that in front of other people?

Dr Byth—In front of Dr Michael Hirsch, Bruce Wilson and John Massey, who has spoken previously, and me. We were in a meeting with Dr Heij at her office on 16 September. I remember we nearly dropped over backwards, as we were not expecting her to give us this bombshell which we could use in the media. I am prepared to swear to it that she said that one of them had gnawed on a Petri dish of genetically modified bacteria and they had to be killed because they were contaminated. You just do not forget that sort of thing. It nearly floored me. You can ask Michael Hirsch.

Senator MURPHY—It is important because it is a very serious allegation.

Mr Wilson—We do not question that the people at the CSIRO did the right thing. I am sure that in their judgment that was necessary.

Senator MURPHY—Mr Wilson, I interrupt you, because we have had sworn evidence that it was not the case. You have made a claim against a person who was part of that sworn evidence. That is why I asked you the question. I would want you to be certain of what you are saying.

Dr Byth—That is why I put it in the sworn statement. We are asking to see the institutional biosafety records, which should have all the documents of why the possums were killed, how many there were and what they ate. Why can't we see those documents? Dr Heij would have them.

Mr RIPOLL—Are you saying that she said it was genetically modified bacteria? We have also been given evidence that there are no genetically modified organisms on that site.

Dr Byth—That is what I honestly recall. That is all I can say.

Senator MURPHY—Mr Wilson, were you the other person who was there?

Mr Wilson—I would have described that as a bacterial culture. I was not necessarily aware that it was a GMO.

Dr Byth—That is what I recall.

Mr Wilson—But I am not surprised, because the conversation was buzzing around this sort of thing. Nevertheless, the possums ate a portion of the bacterial culture in a jar that had been broken by the possums.

CHAIR—Dr Byth, what was the report you were referring to that you wanted to get hold of and you couldn't?

Dr Byth—GMAC have each institution which is doing any biological research set up an institutional biosafety committee. They have to report on all breaches of biosafety records within their institution and send all the records back to GMAC. We want to see these documents. Why aren't they public knowledge? Why hasn't Dr Heij brought them in and put them on the table and said, 'There are my diary notes of what happened on that day'? Where is it all? It is her word against mine. That is what you are saying. But I am saying this is what I heard and what I remember.

Senator CALVERT—I do not know whether Queensland possums are different to Tasmanian possums. I have had a lot of experience with brush possum removal. I can tell you that, if you take them away from their habitat, they are territorial and they will come back. If you take them far enough away, they will die anyway. So, unfortunately, if you have real problems with possums in houses, the national park rangers in our area take them away and euthanase them. That is the normal process in Tasmania. It may be different up here.

Mr Emerson—In Brisbane, it is slightly different. They relocate them here. You are not allowed to kill them. CSIRO is arguning that they got through a vent. Why not just put a better grille up in the vent?

Senator CALVERT—We saw the vents.

Senator MURPHY—It is a very important part of the evidence that we are receiving here with regard to whether or not the possums were contaminated. We have been given evidence by CSIRO and university people that it was not the case, but Dr Byth is saying that he understands that Dr Heij said that it was the case. Mr Wilson, you say that you think it was something different. Who else was there?

Mr Wilson—It was a bacterial culture.

Dr Byth—Bruce says it is a bacterial culture. I remember 'genetically manipulated'; he does not. But we are in agreement that she said that they ate bacterial culture, which she has denied.

Senator MURPHY—Thank you, that is all I need.

Mr Wilson—I would not condemn the CSIRO for doing what they did, because I do not know why they did it. I sure would like to know. The point we are making is that today's scientist are no smarter or less smart than tomorrow's scientists. If today's scientists, who are responsible and dedicated men down there at Long Pocket, can make a mistake, then

mistakes will be made here and at other laboratories and greenhouses in the future. We are making the point that no-one is perfect. If you put hazardous operations in residential areas you can expect that eventually something will happen. We just want to forestall that.

CHAIR—Are there any other questions? Thank you very much. Given the late hour and the number of questions that the committee would like to put to CSIRO, the committee has decided to call CSIRO at another time. Therefore, we will adjourn this particular meeting.

Mr FORREST—Before we adjourn, for the benefit of CSIRO—they can check the *Hansard*—I would like to say that I want to see some further evidence from them to help explain their stand on alternative sites. What is wrong with Pinjarra Hills and Sandford? I want to question the issue of dynamite during construction. I want to see views like the photomosaics from the Dell Road intersection there. I would like to see the legal opinion that the CSIRO claims it has of the town planning obligations of the university. If there is a legal opinion, I want to see it tabled. Reference has been made in evidence about accidents and a situation in respect of Japanese encephalitis. There is an outrageous statement in the evidence about the length of the building—one and a half football fields—and I am wondering which code of football. Assertions about parking have been made of 220 places for 750 staff. I would like to know the nature of the public meeting process: how was it advertised and were the local residents advised of the house address? I would like to have confirmation of the possum situation and a further explanation of why the large areas shown as green on the flood plain are not acceptable sites. That will save us wasting time at our next hearing.

CHAIR—Since I am sure many of the committee members have similar or other questions to ask, I propose something we have done in the past, which is to put our questions to CSIRO for answer at our next hearing so that we get through it expeditiously. As there are no further questions, I would like to thank the witnesses who have appeared before the committee today and who assisted with inspections this morning. I also thank committee members, Hansard and the secretariat.

It is proposed that correspondence that has been circulated to members of the committee be received, taken as read and incorporated in the transcript of evidence. Do members have any objections? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

The documents read as follows—

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

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

Committee adjourned at 5.18 p.m.