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Official Committee Hansard

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

**Reference: Development of a new collection storage facility for the National
Library of Australia**

FRIDAY, 13 AUGUST 2004

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Friday, 13 August 2004

Members: Mrs Moylan (*Chair*), Mr Brendan O'Connor (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Colbeck, Ferguson and Forshaw and Mr Jenkins, Mr Lindsay, Mr Ripoll and Mr Wakelin

Senators and members in attendance: Senators Colbeck and Forshaw and Mrs Moylan and Mr Brendan O'Connor

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

Development of a new collection storage facility for the National Library of Australia

WITNESSES

BOYLE, Mr Michael, Project Manager, Building and Security Services, National Library of Australia..... 2, 19

BROUGHTON, Ms Natalie, Senior Planner, National Capital Authority 13

BURN, Ms Margy, Assistant Director-General, Australian Collections and Reader Services, National Library of Australia 2, 19

HUDA, Mr Shamsul, Principal Planner, National Capital Authority..... 13

LINEHAN, Mr Gerry, Assistant Director-General, Corporate Services, National Library of Australia..... 2, 19

RAYMOND, Mr Michael, Associate Director, Property Services, KPMG, consultant to National Library of Australia..... 2, 19

SALTER, Mr Lawrie, Manager, Stack Services, National Library of Australia 2, 19

WEBB, Mr Colin, Director, Preservation Services, National Library of Australia..... 2, 19

Committee met at 12.28 p.m.

CHAIR—I declare open this public hearing into the development of the new collection storage facility for the National Library of Australia at Hume, ACT. The project was referred to the Public Works Committee on 24 June 2004 for consideration and report to parliament. In accordance with section 17(3) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, which concerns the examination and reporting on a public work, the committee will 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) in the carrying out the work, the most effective use that can be made of the moneys to be expended; (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. Yesterday the committee received a briefing on the financials and today we have had an opportunity to inspect the site. We will now hear evidence from the National Library of Australia.

[12.30 p.m.]

RAYMOND, Mr Michael, Associate Director, Property Services, KPMG, consultant to National Library of Australia

BOYLE, Mr Michael, Project Manager, Building and Security Services, National Library of Australia

BURN, Ms Margy, Assistant Director-General, Australian Collections and Reader Services, National Library of Australia

LINEHAN, Mr Gerry, Assistant Director-General, Corporate Services, National Library of Australia

SALTER, Mr Lawrie, Manager, Stack Services, National Library of Australia

WEBB, Mr Colin, Director, Preservation Services, National Library of Australia

CHAIR—Welcome. The committee has received a statement of evidence and two supplementary submissions from the National Library of Australia. These submissions will be made available in a volume of submissions for the inquiry and are also available on the committee's web site. Does the National Library wish to propose any amendment to its submission to the committee?

Mr Linehan—There were two submissions we did have. I am not sure whether they have been formally lodged. They are dated 12 August. I am not sure whether you were referring to those.

CHAIR—Let me check whether we have got those additional submissions. No, we have nothing dated 12 August. Do you wish to submit something in writing?

Mr Linehan—There are two lots of information we wish to submit in writing. The first is providing some in-confidence answers to some questions that were raised yesterday.

CHAIR—They can be provided to the secretary outside this process as they are confidential matters.

Mr Linehan—The other was to provide some supplementary information in respect of the site that followed some investigations that were undertaken post our submission. They relate to issues such as site services and design layout, including matters that were raised at the site inspection. As part of that, we wish also to table a revised design layout concept to give the committee an indication that it is our belief that it is possible to locate this facility on-site and meet all the conditions that are required.

CHAIR—Does the committee agree to accept those additional documents? There being no objection, it is so ordered. I now invite you to make a brief opening statement before we go to questions.

Mr Linehan—The facility for the National Library is one for which there is very much an urgent need for its construction. As part of looking at the various options available we did engage external consultants to assist us in the search. Following the advice and consideration of government we have identified a site in Hume as being the one most suitable to meet our purpose and we have, concurrent with the submission here, sought approval from the ACT government for the purchase of that site, subject to the approval of the Public Works Committee.

CHAIR—Thank you.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—I first say that I have not read in detail your submission. I was not originally intending to be here this afternoon but, given what has occurred, I have managed to get here. I refer to the land acquisition. Your submission states:

A preferred site for the proposed facility has been identified in Hume but is not yet purchased.

It goes on to say that the Library anticipates that the site will be acquired through a direct sale of land process and has applied to the ACT Land Development Agency for the direct sale of lease on the land conditional upon our committee approval of the works proposal.

The ACT Planning and Land Authority confirms that the direct sale of the site will require the support of the ACT government's Land Development Agency before a development application for the proposed facility can be accepted. Has the Library received any response from the Land Development Agency regarding the success or otherwise of its application for the direct sale of lease of the land? If so, what was the response?

Mr Linehan—The Library has not actually received anything formally back. We understand it is a matter for consideration by the ACT government later this month.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—You do not expect to hear either way until the end of August 2004?

Mr Linehan—We understand that there are a number of processes to go through. We have not been provided with the specific detail but we understand that the issue is still progressing as we had hoped.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Do you know how late it could be before you know?

Mr Linehan—We understand we will be advised before the end of this month.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—There is a risk that the Library will not be able to purchase its preferred site, I suppose.

Mr Linehan—There remains a risk, which we were aware of at the start of the project as we had no site whatsoever.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Given that, what would the Library do if it could not acquire the preferred site for the construction of a facility? Have you considered contingency arrangements?

Mr Linehan—We have been talking to the Land Development Agency. Indeed, there are a couple of sites that were identified in Hume but the preferred site was much closer to the size that was required. There was another one that was 30,000 square metres, which I do not think there was an intention to subdivide. But if our application was rejected then we would need to reconsider, but we have no evidence to suggest that there is any objection to it at this point.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—That is obviously a very important part of all of this. If everything hangs on their approval, and we cannot be assured of that, then there is a great deal of uncertainty, I suppose, in this matter. Paragraph 32 of the NLA's first submission states:

... the proposed new facility will provide sufficient capacity until 2013, by which time it is anticipated that additional storage accommodation will be necessary.

It is anticipated that the proposed facility will become operational in February the year after next, leaving only seven years before new storage accommodation is required, at least based on the reasoning that has been put to us by you. Given that further storage will be required within only seven years of the completion of this project—that is assuming that the project will be completed in the manner proposed—is the current facility the most cost-effective solution for the Library's storage needs in the long term?

Mr Linehan—We believe that that is the case in the context that while we do not or have not sought such approval to extend the existing facility there will be some capacity to extend the facility and extend the storage of the material. We are also working with other cultural agencies about longer term arrangements across the portfolio. We need to consider further the very longer term storage requirements in that context.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—What other longer term arrangements have you considered?

Mr Linehan—The arrangements about larger facilities or different types of facilities have really been limited in the context as I mentioned that we do need to talk to other portfolio agencies and develop further our long-term collection storage plans and identify solutions in that regard.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—When you were devising or putting together this proposal, would there have been a view expressed that it would be better to find a facility that would enable storage for a much longer period? What constraints were placed on the National Library of Australia to go through what would seem to be, at least from my point of view, quite a short-term proposition?

Mr Linehan—There were no constraints placed upon the Library in preparing this submission. The issue was very much to meet an immediate need of the Library for additional storage space, but taking the longer term view we needed to draw in collection information from all of the other agencies. That is a matter of work in progress at the present time. We are working on a second stage of a portfolio storage plan to look at all those longer term requirements. I

would expect as part of that process that we may look at larger facilities and greater sharing of facilities.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Let us assume that you will get a favourable response in relation to the sale of land and a favourable response in relation to the plan for the construction. Given that there are some concerns about it not being in accordance with particular planning laws, how much further storage capacity does the site provide beyond what is being considered for construction now?

Mr Linehan—The size of the block of land is just over 13,000 square metres. The footprint that we are proposing is roughly 3,300 square metres. We understand the current development control plan provides for a 50 per cent footprint on the block of land, so we have capacity for roughly another 2,500 square metres of footprint, subject to other investigations. Potentially that could see us available for another seven years, although our collection storage requirements may differ slightly over those years and we need to consider the type of additional storage that we would require.

CHAIR—My questions also go to future expansion. I was looking through the options that you considered and, clearly, there were a number of options that you looked at in this arrangement. I must say I do not think I have seen anything which actually tells us whether other sites or areas were actually considered or why the Hume site was considered to be the most appropriate.

Ms Burn—Perhaps I can answer that. As you will be aware from some of the evidence we have submitted, we already have two repositories at the Hume site. One of the factors about the Library's collection is that, unlike many other cultural agencies in the portfolio, we are not primarily an exhibiting institution. It is a collection that is recalled for use by researchers, so there is a factor of needing to be able to retrieve a specifically requested item within a relatively short space of time to meet researchers' needs. Apart from the limitations on available land for a facility of this size—which Mr Linehan can answer more fully if you wish—there are great advantages to the Library in having repositories in the same area for reasons of efficiency of retrieval and the ability to meet the expectations of users with respect to how long they will have to wait for collection material to be delivered from off-site.

CHAIR—I was going to ask you about the difficulties you encountered in finding suitable sites under the conditions in which you are expected to operate.

Mr Linehan—We did also consider Fyshwick and Mitchell within the ACT. For the reasons identified by Ms Burn regarding the suitability of the location for our existing facilities, there were other issues about cost and access arrangements that made Hume the preferred site.

CHAIR—Can you briefly explain the cost and access problems in Fyshwick and Mitchell?

Mr Linehan—I will seek some assistance from Mr Raymond, but certainly the cost of land at Fyshwick was at much higher rates than identified at Hume.

CHAIR—Can you tell us the differential?

Mr Linehan—I do not have that.

Mr Raymond—It is approximately \$20 a square metre on average—

CHAIR—Higher in Fyshwick?

Mr Raymond—Yes.

CHAIR—What about Mitchell?

Mr Raymond—Mitchell is on a par with Hume but other issues of accessibility came into the equation. In terms of cost, Mitchell and Hume were similar.

Mr Linehan—We identified that no suitable sites were available in Hume. That is when we approached the Land Development Agency to look at which sites would become available in the future. They agreed to look at the option of bringing forward this site, which would not otherwise have gone for sale or lease until 2006.

CHAIR—I notice that you make reference to re-examining storage at the Parkes site of the Library and rearranging things to get greater efficiency in the current storage arrangements there. However, the committee is aware that the Library called for tenders several years ago for the development of a storage facility, and one of the options, I think, was to develop underground storage on the current Parkes site. From what I can see, that has not been looked at as an option. Can you explain a little about that for the committee?

Mr Linehan—Very early on, as part of the consideration of additional facilities, we did consider a range of options such as another facility next to the Library precinct, as well as the possibility of some underground storage, but I think the cost of both of those precluded it from being considered any further.

CHAIR—Can you give us some indication again of what the differential would be? I imagine it would be considerable. I think it is useful to have that on record. I know you will not be able to give accurate information, but do you know what the estimates were?

Mr Linehan—We do not actually have the figures, but I think they were deemed to be so high that it was dismissed almost out of hand without much further consideration. In the original planning arrangements for the National Library, in the grander vision, there was scope for buildings on either side that would roughly fit in with the style of the Library building. We looked at it in that context, but it would have been a very grandiose warehouse so we did not pursue that option.

CHAIR—Going back to the issue of the preferred current site, when we had a look at it earlier today we talked about the plot ratio—or site cover, if you like. You mentioned that a mezzanine floor somewhat reduces the available footprint on the land. So, although you say there is potential for 2,500 square metres additional to what you are proposing, would it be realistic that you would get that additional 2,500 square metres if you include a mezzanine, or might that be reduced somewhat?

Mr Linehan—Following the discussions this morning, we have revisited the wording of the development control plan and we sought some clarification from the National Capital Authority on whether the wording meant ‘floor area’ or ‘footprint’. The advice was that it actually meant ‘footprint’. So the mezzanine levels would not count towards that.

CHAIR—That clarifies that point. Thank you very much.

Senator COLBECK—Mr Boyle, going back to the land acquisition and the current state of the site you mentioned this morning, I understand you discussed that the road had not been made and that it would be completed in conjunction with the construction of the facility. How do you see it impacting on the construction? Will any special access requirements be required by you or imposed on you by the authority with respect to environmental controls, coming off and going onto the site?

Mr Boyle—The advice we have had is that, during construction and after the facility is built and operating, we have to take all environmental concerns into account in our design. We have to prevent any contaminated run-off exiting the site during construction. There is provision in our design for storage of rainwater. We are looking at a retention basin for storm events. We will certainly incorporate the full range of ecologically sustainable development principles in the design and operation of the facility.

Senator COLBECK—I think you misunderstood what I said, so I will have another go. I am talking about there being a road construction going on concurrent with the construction of your facility. In my experience that would have to be disruptive to the project, so you will obviously need some alternative access to the site. I would like to know the issues you have with that. With the weather we have had here recently, mud is not likely to be a real problem, although it could be on a construction site. Debris coming on and off the site and in and around the construction of the road could also be an issue. I wonder how you are going to deal with those issues.

Mr Linehan—There are two parts to the question. The first part is that the site is essentially a corner block, and the existing road is within a few metres of Tralee Street. The second part is that we are having negotiations with the Land Development Agency about the timing of the construction of that road and the alternative arrangements that may be needed. It would be true to say that, because we are only at the conceptual design stage, we are not sure at this point what the impact would be by not having the road completed during the construction time.

Senator COLBECK—Will you need special permission for alternative access to the site? Looking at the drawings, your access is off the new road. Are you going to need special permission for construction access?

Mr Linehan—We believe that the new road will be ready at the time our facility is completed. However, it is still subject to further discussions with the Land Development Agency. We are waiting on further advice from them about their proposed timing arrangements. As this site was not originally going up for lease until 2006 there still are a few issues of that type that need to be sorted through.

Senator COLBECK—So you are not sure whether you need to get permission for alternative access to the site during construction, given that the two will be under construction together?

Mr Linehan—We are not sure exactly what we will need. As I mentioned, there is an existing road that runs by the side of the block, which is Tralee Street. We may be able to arrange for access through there to the site.

Senator COLBECK—With respect to your construction envelope, you talk about an insulated wall panel. Is that, essentially, a cool store type panel to provide for a constant internal environment?

Mr Boyle—That is certainly one option. There are a number of products available. We are looking at reinforced concrete. There is some innovation in some lightweight concrete products that have very good insulation properties. Our intention is to go to the market, to a design consultant, and outline our functional requirements. We will ask that they allow for as high a degree as possible for innovation in design and new technologies and that they come up with a solution that will meet our requirements.

Senator COLBECK—So those sorts of issues are still to be dealt with, with respect to the design. How does that impact on your overall budget process? In that context, you would obviously have a unit type price that looks at the different elements of the construction, and it would be broken down into those elements. Do you see that being a constraint on your design?

Mr Linehan—It would come up in an overall cost-benefit analysis of what was being proposed. Obviously alternate designs would need to be considered in a monetary context.

Senator COLBECK—Are there any restrictions with respect to the planning scheme on any of the options that you are looking at? Are there any controls or requirements under the planning scheme for finishes that might constrain that?

Mr Boyle—Certainly the development control plan, which is in force in this part of Hume, stipulates colours for external facades and finishes—matching roofs and walls and so on. So, yes, we will certainly be complying with that.

Senator COLBECK—Has that all been taken into consideration in your costings?

Mr Boyle—Yes, that is correct.

CHAIR—Going back to compliance with the development control plan, I note that when you first submitted to us there were three issues which were inconsistent with the DCP, and these included the setback, which you have now addressed, and we accept that. Another was the future extensions—again, we have just discussed that—and that has been satisfactorily addressed, now that we know that the footprint basically will not change with the mezzanine floor being added. One issue that I do not think has been addressed is the gable end of the building that must face the street. Would you like to make some comments about how you see that being resolved?

Mr Linehan—Certainly. I should say in terms of the future extensions that what we had there was indicative only, so we would need to comply with the requirements as set out in the development control plan. In the context of gabbling, we understand that there is facility for discussion with the National Capital Authority to talk about whether that requirement can be varied, and that will be subject to us negotiating with the NCA and the appropriate land and

planning authority within the ACT. On the other side, we understand that, if we had to undertake gabbling, a very much back-of-the-envelope figure might be in the order of \$30,000.

CHAIR—So you have already factored that in?

Mr Linehan—For instance, if we have to change that planning arrangement, it may come from some of the contingency funds that we have available.

CHAIR—I want to raise a couple of other issues. Given that our national treasures will be deposited in this facility, can you tell us what measures have been taken for fire protection and security?

Mr Boyle—With regard to fire protection, the building will be built to the Building Code of Australia standards. The building code sets out the requirements for buildings. There are various categories of buildings. The mezzanine level in part of the building is in a different category to the open warehouse part of the building. They have different requirements. There is the possibility of looking at fire isolation between those two areas, which would come up with different options for fire-engineered solutions.

CHAIR—Has that been factored into the cost? It can add to the cost.

Mr Boyle—Yes, definitely.

CHAIR—And on security?

Mr Linehan—As we have mentioned, we have existing facilities out at Hume. Without going into specific details of the security arrangements, we would be looking at things such as high fences around the area. We have security alarms systems and we have some other off-site security arrangements as well. In a broad sense, we would be looking to mirror the arrangements we have out there at the current time.

CHAIR—Yesterday in the private, confidential briefing a matter came up about sprinkler systems being used in the building and what impact they might have on the treasures that are being held there. For the *Hansard*, would you like to repeat what you told us yesterday about that.

Ms Burn—Certainly. I should say that obviously the material that we select for storage, while important for research use, tends not to be the nationally significant material, which is all retained on the Parkes site. The material that is in repository storage at the moment is older material, mostly overseas material. In the new repository we plan to store newspapers, which are very important—particularly the Australian newspapers, which are part of our heritage. Hence the environmental and security conditions do need to be adequate to enhance and preserve the long-term life of those materials.

I said yesterday—and I think Mr Webb can expand on this—the material that it is proposed to go out into the store is all paper based, as is the case with our current store. Paper material is primarily composed of water and in fact responds very well to water—the properties of paper and the impact of water on paper are well known—in the event that some incident triggered the

alarms. I think it is appropriate if Mr Webb, as our preservation expert, talks specifically about water and paper.

Mr Webb—We are quite experienced in dealing with paper and water fire-suppression systems. The alternatives, as I understand them, introduce another range of problems. Most of them work better in a smaller environment—a smaller, closed vault—where there are no staff working. So there are some practical constraints there. As I said, we are fairly familiar with dealing with the problems of wet paper. Generally speaking, the kinds of material that would be stored would be damaged by sprinklers, but it would be damage that we could deal with. I am sure it comes down to risk assessment: on the balance of assessing the risks, it seems to be the best solution.

CHAIR—In terms of environmental sustainability, I notice that, at paragraph 70 of your first submission, you talked about energy efficiency and ecologically sustainable development. But it was of a provisional nature, I felt. Given that the Commonwealth has a strong commitment to minimising energy use and reducing greenhouse gases, could you give the committee a guarantee that the Library will use the highest possible standard of ecologically sustainable development, with particular emphasis on the energy efficiency of the building.

Mr Linehan—It certainly is the intention of the Library to ensure that that happens, of course having regard to the various collection requirements to maintain the required controls.

CHAIR—Are you consulting with the Australian Greenhouse Office to ensure that you meet the highest possible standards?

Mr Linehan—We have listed the Australian Greenhouse Office as an agency we will be consulting with as part of that, yes.

Senator FORSHAW—I apologise that I was not here earlier. I have a couple of issues to raise which I hope have not been dealt with already. I note that the main submissions you have listed are from eight Commonwealth and Australian Capital Territory government agencies that discussions have been held with or are planned to be held with. Who have discussions been held with so far? Who are discussions yet to be held with? Can you also identify any of the key issues—other than ones that have already been spoken about?

Mr Linehan—Firstly, we have spoken with the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, as the home department for the portfolio, on all the arrangements. We have had liaison with the ACT Land Development Agency about the availability of the block and various service requirements. We have had preliminary discussions with Environment ACT on some of the issues such as tree locations et cetera. There will be further involvement with Environment ACT as we move into the planning stage. We have had discussions with the National Capital Authority to talk further about the development control plan in the area. We intend having discussions with the Australian Greenhouse Office to deal with the issues that we just discussed. With regard to the ACT Electricity and Water Corporation, I am not aware that we have actually had any discussions with that agency at the present time. We have had a number of discussions with the Commonwealth Department of Finance and Administration regarding funding. Also, they will be involved in terms of the direct sale of the lease.

Senator FORSHAW—I have one other issue—and this has come up in other projects in the ACT area—and that is the situation with the local construction industry and availability of labour from the local work force. What is the situation in respect of this project? You state that you anticipate it will generate a limited amount of short-term employment. Do you think there will be any difficulties in obtaining the relevant subcontractors and contractors?

Mr Linehan—We have not identified any difficulties at this stage. I suppose we will be casting our mind further to that as we move through the tender processes. Indeed, we would imagine that would be part of the submissions that would be put forward.

Senator FORSHAW—It is just that we hear quite regularly about pressures and that it is actually at pretty near full capacity.

CHAIR—Somewhere in your submission I noticed that in terms of your future needs you were using a figure of two per cent as the annual increase. Was this an average or is the amount of material that requires storage increasing by two per cent per annum? Using that criterion as a guide to your future needs, is that a flat figure or is it likely to escalate?

Ms Burn—It is an average figure. Obviously, different parts of the collection grow at different rates. Just to give you an example, archives and manuscripts grow at quite a large rate when the records of a large organisation are taken in, for example. As part of our stack planning, we keep very detailed data on the growth rates of parts of the collection because of the need to be able to accommodate materials for efficient and safe retrieval within the main building and at our repositories. There are, as you will be well aware, changes in publishing with, for example, very much more government publishing now being online. So we are seeing some reduction in the physical production of paper based materials in some areas of the collection. But we anticipate that that two per cent growth rate is a reliable indicator in terms of the medium- to long-term stack planning that we do. We will continue to do the detailed recording of growth to see if there should be any changes or indeed if there are further changes to publishing and the creation of documentary records that impact on that growth rate.

CHAIR—Obviously, the reason for the question is to ensure that your forward planning is based on a reasonably accurate—as accurate as you can be; I realise it is an imprecise science—determination of the future need.

Ms Burn—The Library operates under legislation which mandates that it collects the published record of Australia. Of course, over the years of the Library's operation we have come to know what the published output of the nation is. It is not big, and there would be no reason to expect that that would change significantly in a way that would create increased demands for storage—perhaps it may slightly reduce them, although there is no sign that paper is diminishing. Similarly, in the other areas of our collection, we have not fundamentally changed the scope of our collection in all the years of operation of the Library. So there is no reason for us to believe that the trends that we have observed over the whole of the history of the Library and indeed over the current planning periods and our projections will cause us any problems in that regard. We do have confidence about our understanding of how our collection grows, how it is likely to grow and what the implications are for storage of the collection into the medium- and longer-term future.

Senator COLBECK—I have a couple of questions on the procurement process that you are looking to implement. You have listed five possible outcomes; have you settled on anything specific at this point in time?

Mr Linehan—Not at this stage. We are probably favouring a design and then build arrangement but we have not quite settled on which one at this point.

Senator COLBECK—So one or two of the five probably?

Mr Linehan—I am struggling to find the reference, but I think it is options 1 or 2.

Senator COLBECK—With regard to your selection criteria for your consultants—and I note the discussion earlier with respect to consultation with the Greenhouse Office—is one of the selection criteria experience or qualification with respect to environmental sustainability in design and/or construction?

Mr Linehan—We will have something within that. While we are not necessarily limited to using the Commonwealth procurement guidelines, my understanding is that for the larger projects there are such requirements within there—I may be corrected on that—but it is certainly an area that we will be including in our tender process.

Senator COLBECK—If it is not something you had in mind it might be something you could consider anyway.

CHAIR—Thank you. There are no other questions.

[1.13 p.m.]

BROUGHTON, Ms Natalie, Senior Planner, National Capital Authority

HUDA, Mr Shamsul, Principal Planner, National Capital Authority

CHAIR—Welcome. It is a busy day for you here today. The committee has received a submission from the National Capital Authority. The submission will be made available in a volume of submissions for the inquiry and it is also available on the committee's web site. Do you wish to propose any amendment to the existing submission?

Mr Huda—No.

CHAIR—I invite you to make a short statement before we proceed to questions.

Mr Huda—The Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act allows the authority to set special requirements in the National Capital Plan where such requirements are considered desirable in the interests of the national capital. There are special requirements for approach routes. Monaro Highway is an approach route to the national capital. The sites that front Monaro Highway, within roughly 200 metres from the centre line of Monaro Highway, are on land that has special requirements under the National Capital Plan. That means that any development that happens on that land will need to be in accordance with the development control plan and that that development control plan is to be approved by the National Capital Authority. Among other things, the development control plan definitely needs to reflect the relevant provisions of the Territory Plan, which is the ACT government's planning instrument.

A development control plan was prepared for that industrial land use precinct, which includes the subject site, in 1994. Our consideration of this particular proposal, including all the comments that we have provided in our submission, has been based on the current provisions of the DCP. In planning process terms, the site is territory land and is located outside a designated area, which means that the ACT Planning and Land Authority are the responsible planning authority for dealing with the approval of development applications. In their consideration of any development application for that particular site, they would have to make sure that not only is it consistent with the Territory Plan, which is their planning instrument, but also that it is consistent with the development control plan that the authority have approved. If there are provisions that the particular proposal does not meet, then they can ask us to review those particular provisions—which we have done quite often—and if we think it is right then we amend the DCP. Amending the DCP is a very straightforward process. It is all within the authority, in a sense. I will leave it at that and leave it open for questions.

CHAIR—You would be aware that there have been a couple of issues of concern. One is the 10-metre setback from Monaro Highway. Today the committee has received an amendment to the submission that was originally made by the National Library showing that they have reconfigured the building on the site to meet the setback requirements. I do not know whether you have seen the reconfiguration.

Mr Huda—We have been advised about it. I think if it meets the 10-metre setback requirement then there should be no other issues with regard to that particular aspect of the provision of the DCP.

CHAIR—How firm is the National Capital Authority on the setback arrangements as to the highway?

Mr Huda—Given that the site is reasonably large in design terms for the facility, the 10-metre setback is not an onerous requirement on the development as such. The variation that we saw in the proposal was very minor and something that the Library could easily adjust—it was not as if the setback was five metres and they had to set it back another five—and that is what they have done, so I think on that particular aspect we should be certainly holding on to that requirement as such.

CHAIR—There have been some issues as to perhaps a future extension of stages 2 and 3 on the site and as to the requirement to maintain a site cover of 50 per cent. How strict is this requirement?

Mr Huda—There are certain provisions which are part of the Territory Plan and are very difficult to change in a sense unless you go through a process of varying the Territory Plan, and the DCP needs to reflect what is there in the Territory Plan. My discussion with officers in the ACT Planning and Land Authority indicate that the site coverage is not a provision that is in the Territory Plan as such, so in a sense if you want to review the site coverage provision and all of that then there is less of a hurdle. It is more like sitting down with the ACT planning authority and working out what would be a sensible coverage for a site. We need to be mindful of the fact that the DCP was prepared and approved about 10 years ago, so we would be very happy to look at that particular provision.

CHAIR—So what you are telling us is that it is not set in concrete.

Mr Huda—It is not. But what is there is a term called plot ratio, which is to do with the total floor area. I think there is a plot ratio of one to one, which means that if the site is about 13,000 square metres you can build up to 13,000 square metres in floor space terms. If you take a site coverage of, say, 50 per cent, which means your float plate would have to be, say, 6,500 square metres—half of it—and you have two storeys of it, then you can easily have your 13,000.

So, looking at the functional requirements of the storage, it might be that, within the 10-metre height requirement, you would be able to build a certain part which is a two-storey mezzanine and the other part which is your total 10-metre height because of storage requirements. Even if you maintained the 50 per cent site coverage, that could give you something in the order of 9,000 to 9,500 square metres of GFA, which is a reasonable amount, and I think that should meet the Library's requirement. But, as I said, we can work around it and we should be able to come up with something.

CHAIR—Thank you for clarifying that.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—It would seem that you are confident that those matters outstanding can be resolved. Where to from here? Do you now sit down with the Library and work through those unresolved matters?

Mr Huda—The roof pitch—the gable end—is the other outstanding matter, and that is one provision that we have been thinking of amending. We would need to start discussions with the ACT Planning and Land Authority on that. I am hopeful that we will be able to change that.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—So how far apart are you? In what way do you differ? In other words, where does the proposal contravene accepted practice?

Mr Huda—Personally, I think that the need to have a gable end facing the Monaro Highway is one requirement that, in the light of the recent development that has happened in the Hume industrial estate, we would be quite happy to review and amend. We have not had that discussion with the ACT Planning and Land Authority at this point, but some very preliminary views that we have received from their planners indicate that they would be quite happy to look at that particular aspect of it as well.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Are you sitting down with the Library soon to resolve that? Even if this problem is resolved, will there be a delay in the process?

Mr Huda—No, I do not anticipate any delay on that at all.

Senator FORSHAW—I want to explore a little bit further the issue of the setback. How did the authority come to discover or find what you say is an inconsistency? What is the process that has taken place here that led you to find that inconsistency?

Ms Broughton—The authority was provided with the Public Works Committee submission that the National Library had put in. While reviewing that, taking into account what the DCP provisions were, the three items of inconsistency were noted.

Senator FORSHAW—I thought that would be the answer, which leads me to wonder—and maybe we will hear about it in reply—how that could have occurred in the first place. Wouldn't you provide the sorts of details that should be available to various agencies, developers and others to get it right in the first place?

Mr Huda—I do not think we were approached—

Senator FORSHAW—It is not a criticism. I am trying to understand why this is even an issue.

Mr Huda—Sure. Usually, when Commonwealth agencies need advice on planning matters which involves the National Capital Authority, we do provide them with all relevant information, be it the provisions of the National Capital Plan or a development control plan that they need to be mindful of. In this instance, for that particular site and the proposal, the first time we had a chance to look at it was in the Public Works Committee submission.

Senator FORSHAW—That is what I thought.

Mr Huda—We had some earlier discussions as part of the Library’s site selection process when they were looking at different sites. We certainly gave some initial views about which site would be appropriate. In saying that, we looked at the land use policy issues and whether the kind of use that the Library was considering was consistent with the land use policies that are allowed. The industrial land use site which is the suggested site definitely meets the land use requirements. We are quite pleased that a site has been identified for that function.

Senator FORSHAW—In section 4 of your submission you state that the setback is a development control plan requirement of 10 metres. The proposal was for less than 10 metres. The last paragraph of your submission says:

Revision to the design of the facility may be required for it to comply with the DCP.

The chair has indicated that we have had a revised proposal brought to our attention. What is the ACTPLA?

Ms Broughton—The Planning and Land Authority.

Senator FORSHAW—The last paragraph goes on:

However, the Authority in consultation with the ACTPLA will review the DCP with a view to accommodate one or more of the inconsistencies as appropriate.

I want to clarify that. I appreciate it may not be an issue now in reality, but do I take it from that that, by exercising some discretion, it would be possible to approve a setback that is less than 10 metres—though I am not suggesting you would—or could be no approval for anything less than a 10-metre setback?

Mr Huda—Based on my knowledge of the two plans—the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan—I believe that there is discretion. Neither of the plans say that it has to be a minimum of 10 metres. Ten metres was based on a study that was done for that particular precinct which said that 10 metres would be an appropriate setback for a development fronting an important approach route. There is definitely discretion there if we need to apply it. If we decide to change it, it should not be a rigorous process to change it as such. But that is something that we would have to review and decide.

Senator FORSHAW—I appreciate that. Thank you.

Senator COLBECK—I have a question initially about the development control plan—from the perspective of a grumpy old builder who cannot help himself when he sees something that looks a bit dodgy. I refer to the classification section roof pitch and where it says that the gable end of the building ‘shall face the street’. You mentioned before in your evidence that, under the plan, your expectation was that the gable end would face the Monaro Highway. Yet the plan says the gable end of the building shall face the street. In my view—as I said, as a grumpy old builder—I would find that a difficult thing to actually achieve on this site when it is bounded on three sides by streets. That would mean a lot of gables would have to be plonked onto the building.

Ms Broughton—That street refers to the Monaro Highway, in that instance.

Senator COLBECK—The street means the Monaro Highway?

Ms Broughton—Yes.

Senator COLBECK—How do you reconcile that with the drawing where the streets bound the plan area? Would there be an expectation that there would be a gable facing Shepherd Street?

Mr Huda—No, not as part of this DCP. If the ACT government as part of the design and siting process requires a gable end to face Shepherd Street, that would be up to the ACT Planning and Land Authority to make that judgment, but there is no requirement as such.

Senator COLBECK—Are we looking at two documents superimposed on each other in this circumstance?

Mr Huda—Yes. Because the site is territory land, outside a designated area, the territory would have to take it through their process under the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 to deal with the development application for approval. Territory, in considering such a development application, would have to make sure that it complies with the Territory Plan provisions. Because the site fronts the Monaro Highway—it is on the Monaro Highway—there is an added requirement that they would have to make sure that the development also meets the requirements of the DCP. So they have these two plans which they have to be mindful of when considering development applications.

Senator COLBECK—So what document would I go to as a developer, a builder or a designer that says it has to face Monaro Highway? The words ‘Monaro Highway’ do not appear within the context of that requirement under the development control plan, so how would you know that?

Mr Huda—I note your point. I think that as part of the review we will clarify that particular aspect of it, that it means Monaro Highway.

Senator COLBECK—We talked earlier about site access issues during construction. Can you give us an indication of what controls might be in place with respect to site access during construction, particularly given that there will be road construction adjacent to the site where the designated site access is? What requirements, permits or approvals are required for alternative access if that is required?

Mr Huda—The requirement for building the road and what standards the road would have to meet would have to rely on the ACT government’s requirements essentially because it would be an ACT government road. That includes if there is a need to have access from Monaro Highway. If you are talking about construction access, obviously it is a temporary access and Roads ACT, which is part of the ACT Department of Urban Services, usually administers that aspect of the decision basically on whether or not to allow construction access from a major thoroughfare. Our involvement would be with regard to Monaro Highway if there is a proposition for a permanent access, which is a designated area and requires an approval from the authority. But that is not what we are considering here. I would say there would definitely be a solution when

you go and have a chat with Roads ACT to facilitate access for construction, which is a very common thing.

CHAIR—Thank you very much. You have given us an excellent overview of the requirements and helped us out on a number of matters that were somewhat confusing to committee members. We will now recall witnesses from the National Library.

[1.32 p.m.]

RAYMOND, Mr Michael, Associate Director, Property Services, KPMG, consultant to National Library of Australia

BOYLE, Mr Michael, Project Manager, Building and Security Services, National Library of Australia

BURN, Ms Margy, Assistant Director-General, Australian Collections and Reader Services, National Library of Australia

LINEHAN, Mr Gerry, Assistant Director-General, Corporate Services, National Library of Australia

SALTER, Mr Lawrie, Manager, Stack Services, National Library of Australia

WEBB, Mr Colin, Director, Preservation Services, National Library of Australia

CHAIR—I remind the National Library representatives that they are still under oath.

Senator FORSHAW—The issue I want to raise may have covered in your opening submissions when I was not here. I am interested to ascertain how it was that the original proposal goes forward without a 10-metre setback. You heard the questions I asked of the authority on an issue arising where they see a submission to this committee and then they say, ‘Hang on, this is inconsistent with the 10-metre setback requirement under the DCP et cetera.’ Why did that happen?

Mr Linehan—It is in one sense a difficult question to answer.

Senator FORSHAW—I will take that as a compliment.

Mr Linehan—We did outsource part of this function and obviously there has been an error. I cannot explain why the error occurred. I think in the context of making the information available we also recommended that our submissions as part of this process be made available to the National Capital Authority, which would have been done. There was no hidden intent behind it.

Senator FORSHAW—I appreciate your frankness and I understand that the issue has now been addressed. I suppose it just struck me that here we have a major authority and a major government agency or facility and what appeared to be a mistake made that could have been avoided. If it has been solved, I am happy. It may mean that people need to be a little more focused on understanding the requirements. If individuals do this at councils, they get into all sorts of hassles in getting their plans approved—and ‘hassles’ was not a pun.

CHAIR—As there are no other questions, before closing I would like to thank all the witnesses who have appeared before the committee today. To everyone who assisted us with our inspections and the private briefing we had yesterday, thank you very much.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Brendan O'Connor**):

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 1.35 p.m.