



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

**Reference: Construction of a new chancery building for the Australian Embassy,
Vientiane, Laos**

FRIDAY, 27 MAY 2005

CANBERRA

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JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEE ON

PUBLIC WORKS

Friday, 27 May 2005

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

Members in attendance: Senator Forshaw and Mrs Moylan, Mr Brendan O'Connor and Mr Wakelin

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

Construction of a new chancery building for the Australian Embassy in Vientiane, Laos

WITNESSES

DAVIN, Mr Peter, Executive Director, Overseas Property Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade..... 1

HANCOCK, Mr Richard, Head, Project Management Services, Overseas Property Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade..... 1

McKAY, Mr Ian Stuart, Capital Works Manager, Multiplex Facilities Management..... 1

MORAN, Mr Philip John, Assistant Secretary, Property Management and Strategic Planning, Overseas Property Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade..... 1

RICHARDSON, Mr John, Assistant Secretary, Diplomatic Security and Services Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade..... 1

Committee met at 8.51 am

DAVIN, Mr Peter, Executive Director, Overseas Property Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

HANCOCK, Mr Richard, Head, Project Management Services, Overseas Property Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

MORAN, Mr Philip John, Assistant Secretary, Property Management and Strategic Planning, Overseas Property Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

RICHARDSON, Mr John, Assistant Secretary, Diplomatic Security and Services Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

McKAY, Mr Ian Stuart, Capital Works Manager, Multiplex Facilities Management

CHAIR—I declare open this public hearing into the construction of a new chancery building for the Australian embassy in Vientiane, Laos. This project was referred to the Public Works Committee on 15 March 2005 for consideration and report to the parliament. In accordance with subsection 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 the stated purpose of the work and its suitability for that purpose; the necessity for, or advisability of, carrying out the work; in carrying out the work, the most effective use that can be made of the moneys to be expended; where the work purports to be of a revenue producing character, the amount of revenue that it may reasonably be expected to produce; and the present and prospective public value of the work.

I welcome the witnesses. Thank you very much for the excellent private briefing and for the detailed costings. The committee has received a submission from the department. This will be made available in a volume of submissions for the inquiry and on the committee's web site. Does the department wish to propose any amendments to the submission it has made available to the committee?

Mr Davin—No amendments are proposed.

CHAIR—You might like to proceed to an opening statement.

Mr Davin—This submission seeks approval for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to construct a new chancery building in Vientiane for Australia's permanent mission to Laos at a cost of \$11 million. It is proposed that the chancery be constructed on vacant land acquired by the government for this purpose in 1997. A new building is required due to the significant shortfalls in security, space, functionality and amenity provided by the current offices, which are located in a converted factory that was first occupied as a chancery in 1961. The building has now deteriorated due to age and harsh environmental conditions. Despite normal maintenance, it is in a poor state of repair and would require significant expenditure to restore it to acceptable standards. In addition, the building no longer meets the requirements of a modern representational office. It has significant compliance deficiencies and does not meet the requirements of the Building Code of Australia and occupational health and safety regulations.

A comprehensive review of the embassy's accommodation requirements has identified a need for expanded floor areas, which cannot be accommodated within the existing building. Construction of a new, purpose designed building to meet the requirements identified in the detailed accommodation study has been assessed as the most cost-effective option to meet the need. The new premises will provide appropriate space, functionality and amenity for occupying tenancies, including the provision of appropriate security. It will be designed to meet the requirements of the Building Code of Australia and will incorporate appropriate occupational health and safety standards.

Construction of the new chancery building will cause minimal disruption to the operation of the embassy, as the existing facility will continue operation until the new facility is fully constructed and operational. Following completion and occupation of the new premises, the current chancery property will be sold. A preliminary design has been developed in consultation with occupying agencies. This has resulted in a schematic design concept that can be implemented within the approved budget. We have had preliminary consultations with local authorities in Laos on issues of planning and land use, and we expect further consideration of the issues once detailed design is complete and approval is sought for the works to commence.

This proposal will deliver a modern, fully functional and secure three-storey building to accommodate various Australian agencies, including the Australian medical clinic, the Australian Agency for International Development, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Defence and the AFP. Subject to parliamentary approval, construction is scheduled to commence in March 2006, with practical completion and occupation in May 2007. The out-turn cost of the proposal will be within the allocation of \$11 million.

CHAIR—Thank you very much. At the outset, can I say how much the committee also appreciated the department setting out the options that were canvassed in order to come to a decision on where the new chancery would be built. It helps us in our deliberations. My first question concerns the zoning approvals at paragraph 14 of your submission. I notice that, given that Vientiane does not currently have building regulations or standards, you intend to apply Australian standards and guidelines to this project. I thought it would be worth while asking you some questions about the special climatic conditions of Vientiane and whether the Australian building standards meet the requirements for a building in the particular climatic conditions of Vientiane. Would you like to make a comment on that?

Mr Davin—To the broadest extent possible, we are going to apply the Australian building standards but, where there are local conditions that would be better managed by a change to that, we will incorporate that in the design. I might defer to my colleague for a more detailed response to that.

CHAIR—Can you tell us what the climatic conditions are like and whether they are very different to, for example, tropical areas or wet areas in Australia? In addition, what are you doing about that in terms of the building?

Mr Hancock—They are very much like Darwin and the north part of Queensland. We have also worked in the area before, of course. We have developed in Hanoi, if you recall, and other places in South-East Asia where there are similar tropical monsoon seasons and a lot of heavy

rain. Our designers will take into account all of the characteristics of a hot and steamy climate. We have done that successfully before, and we will continue to ensure that our design carries forward as necessary.

CHAIR—We are aware of the Hanoi development, but did Hanoi have building standards?

Mr Hancock—No. We used Australian standards there.

CHAIR—So you have quite often faced that situation in the past—where there have been no specific building standards, you have more or less had to use Australian design and do some adaptations.

Mr Hancock—That is right.

CHAIR—Would you tell us of the particular issues with Vientiane's climatic conditions?

Mr Hancock—It has very heavy rainfall and a long monsoon season. It has a dry season, which is much easier to manage. We are aware of mould growth on the outside of buildings, so we take great care to mitigate the growth of mould. Airconditioning is a difficulty because of the high humidity. You have to pretreat the air before it goes through the main airconditioning of the building, so we ensure we do that. There is a general infestation of rodents, insects and things like that in the tropics, so we also take great care to ensure that nothing can get inside the building. There are a range of aspects that we look at to ensure that we have a building which is secure against these weather conditions and that the machinery and plant can cope with the conditions, such as rainwater runoff.

CHAIR—With heavy rains and obvious flooding, are there any particular issues in relation to this site that require special attention—drainage, elevation of the building or provision of particular gutters to take the water from the roof?

Mr Hancock—No. We always raise the ground floor level of these buildings to ensure that we stay above any known flood level. If there are sufficient statistics to tell us what the 100-year flood levels might be, we take those into account. However, we will raise the building so that we are well above any flood level that we can anticipate. We have oversized drainage. We always do that in the tropics because of possible blockages and that kind of thing. We ensure that our gutters and downpipes are oversized, plus there is overflow from the roof in case the drainage does get blocked, so the water just falls onto the ground. I think we have in Australia very good designers who take care of the situations of heavy monsoon and all the aspects that are associated with heavy tropical conditions.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Paragraph 15 makes reference to the acquisition of a vacant site in 1997. I assume that is the site upon which this construction is being built.

Mr Davin—That is correct.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—It talks about a reciprocal arrangement which provided for, I assume, some equivalent land for the Lao embassy. How does that work? Is that a standard sort of arrangement between countries?

Mr Davin—It is to the extent that, where we are able to achieve some mutual advantage by doing a land exchange, we will. In this particular instance, the Lao were able to make this block of land available to us and we had a block of land identified for them in Canberra, so it was reciprocal. That being said, there is still a commercial element to these transactions. We still purchase the land, but it is made available under reciprocal arrangements. There is a title of restriction on the land. Whilst we hold it in freehold, it is for the purposes of a diplomatic construction.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Can you give me indications—and perhaps confidentially something in detail to the committee—in relation to that? There is either a net loss or profit in the reciprocity of exchanging land, unless it is cost neutral, which I think would be rather coincidental. I will ask you for some detail on this. At some point, could you give me a costing—and I understand that it is going back a little while—on the swapping of real estate between the two nations and whether we did better or worse as a result of that arrangement.

Mr Davin—We will have to take that on notice. I can tell you what we paid for the land that we obtained in Laos, and that was \$472,000. That is my recollection of what the land cost. The actual allocation of land in Canberra is not an activity that this agency has any role in. It is managed outside of our authority. Our protocol branch has an interaction with the mission, but the National Capital Authority actually identifies the land in Canberra and negotiates the terms of transfer. We have an overarching arrangement—we call it a reciprocal agreement—whereby in providing the land in Canberra, which all missions have access to, we seek to have the host country do the same for us in their country. It is a pity it does not happen everywhere.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—So it is simply an exchange of parcels of land—there is no money.

Mr Davin—No, it is not an exchange in that sense. It is a commercial transaction. We charge the Lao for the land that they take up here and they pay annual rent for it, and we pay, on usually fairly commercial terms, for the land we take over in Vientiane. It is more a matter of us not being out in the market having to compete for the land. It has been made available to us, but it is a commercial transaction.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—I was not sure from the way that was written.

Mr Davin—I am afraid there is no standard to it. We have been trying to negotiate land in many countries for many years without any success, despite the fact that they have had access to land in Canberra.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—In this instance I thought it would probably be more expensive for the other country.

Mr Davin—It was not a straight swap. It was a facility more than anything else.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—I would still be interested to know what the selling price was of the land given for the Lao embassy—how much that cost that country.

Mr Davin—We can certainly find that out and give it to you.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—What is the size of the current chancery? I know you say that it was a factory, it was refurbished and now it is run down. What is its size?

Mr Davin—That current building is somewhere around 800 or 900 square metres. There are some other sites that we operate from. That is another problem with Vientiane: there are three sites we work from.

Mr Moran—In actual fact, the existing chancery is now too small for all of our operations, so we have taken over space in the old British chancery. The British are no longer represented in Vientiane, so AusAID operates out of part of the old British chancery, which is directly across the road. The medical clinic is also at the rear of the old British chancery site. Across the road from that British chancery site we also have a house which we use as a workshop for our facilities management operation, and there is a library there as well. At the back of the British chancery we also lease the old British head of mission's residence.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—When do those leases expire?

Mr Moran—The HOM residence and the chancery site is on a ground lease to a Lao national, and it expires at the end of 2006. We have been talking to the British for a number of years about what to do with that. One of our options was to acquire that site, but we discounted that simply because it could not meet security requirements. At the moment we are looking to do a six-month extension. Mr Davin was recently in England talking to the FCO, and we are making some follow-up contacts in terms of some holdover in that particular location, but it is uncertain—the British themselves are uncertain of exactly what tenure they have there under existing Lao law.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—The lease expires at the end of next year, and you are talking about extending to midway through 2007?

Mr Moran—Yes.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—That has not been resolved yet, though, in terms of that offer.

Mr Moran—I think at the moment we are progressing discussions with the British, but it is complicated by the fact that the ground lease is to a Lao national. We are going through the British, but we are waiting for a response from them at this stage. If we have a situation where that is not possible, we will make temporary arrangements. We have a number of houses around Vientiane where we can make some short-term arrangements.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—You are in three different places at the moment.

Mr Moran—Yes, we are using three sites.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Do you know the estimation or the aggregation of square metrage of those three sites?

Mr Hancock—I think it is 1,010.

Mr Davin—The approximate total of those sites is 1,000 square metres, and we are going to a building with a net lettable area of 1,300—gross 1,600.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—What is the need to increase the size? It is probably clearly outlined in the presentation or submission. Could you for the record at least indicate why there is a need for an increase of 60 per cent?

Mr Moran—I think the overall increase is from about 1,000 square metres to about 1,300 square metres.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Why does it say 1,645?

Mr Moran—Sixteen hundred is the gross size of the building. In actual fact, the net lettable area the agencies will occupy is closer to about 1,300. That is still a sizeable increase; you are right. But again bear in mind that we have been operating in a makeshift operation where we have made do, so the accommodation is not exactly first class. We have tended to—particularly, say, with the DIMIA operation—squeeze more people into areas than we normally would. We now have an opportunity to put in place a first-class facility. The agencies have all basically come back to us through a negotiation process and through a scoping study that we do as a prerunner to our budget submission. So the areas that are basically in the proposal are the areas that have been specified and agreed to by the agencies based on their existing requirements but also based on future growth for a number of these agencies. Other agencies like the AFP and Defence have also indicated to us a need to have a presence there, and there is some capacity there to expand their operations in future as well.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—How will this leave the staff to be located in terms of measuring the amount of room they have per capita, the workstations they have?

Mr Moran—I think there is a standard approach. I might ask Rick to talk about that one in terms of allocation of space.

Mr Hancock—There are no standards used anymore in the overseas estate for office sizes, but we use a series of rough standards for office space, for workstation space. At the moment our offices are between 14 and 22 square metres for A-based staff. They always have a lockable office, for obvious reasons. Workstation areas are around about 10 square metres a person plus circulation plus storage and all of the usual requirements that you need to function in an office. They are roughly the guidelines we use.

Senator FORSHAW—I pick up on your comment at 17.6 regarding the construction materials and the ones you have identified there. There are quite a few different types of material that are not readily available in Laos or not of appropriate quality. That presumes that a fair amount of material will have to be imported.

Mr Davin—That is correct, yes.

Senator FORSHAW—Could you expand on that—in particular, is there a preference for Australian sourced product? What process would you go through? If some of this is confidential—

Mr Davin—No.

Senator FORSHAW—you can provide it later. Is that something that may be decided or be part of the tender that comes from the company as distinct from a particular requirement that the department would set as to Australian content?

Mr Davin—Perhaps I could just elaborate there. I think the base materials that will be used in this building—the concrete, the terracotta tiles for the roof and the render—will be available locally. Other materials will need to be imported. Most of that material is likely to be imported through Thailand, we expect. We will be specifying in our tender documentation certain qualities in terms of the building services that will have to meet Australian standards. So it is more than likely that some of that equipment and material will be brought in from Australia because naturally that would meet the requirement rather than trying to shop around elsewhere. The tender documentation will not require Australian material per se, but it will set Australian standards that may lead to that outcome.

With regard to some of the finishes inside the building, we are looking to include some Australian material as features, but we have not specified that yet. This is an early stage of our design. It is possible we may use some Australian stone as a feature in the entrance and we may use some Australian timbers. That will be a requirement of the tender documentation. But that is more of a finishing. I think that is about as much information as I can give.

Senator FORSHAW—What about the fit-out? Is it the same principle?

Mr Davin—Yes.

Senator FORSHAW—Who makes that decision? Is that a DFAT decision, or do each of the agencies have an ultimate say in that aspect?

Mr Davin—No. The agencies would outline what their requirements are and we would provide that, so it is a uniform look through the chancery.

Senator FORSHAW—That is what I assumed.

Mr Davin—And it is a more economic way to do it, obviously.

Senator FORSHAW—So the management of the fit-out for each of the different agencies is essentially centrally managed.

Mr Davin—That is correct. We will manage it on their behalf and in accordance with their requirements but with a common finish.

Mr WAKELIN—I trust the Mekong is fairly friendly?

Mr Davin—As Mr Hancock outlined, it is a difficult climatic environment, and our specifications and design work will pay due regard to that. We are looking at the usual features you can incorporate in a building to offset that. For instance, we will have overhanging eaves, which will hopefully prevent some of this mould.

Mr WAKELIN—I was out for a few minutes and this question may have already been asked. With flooding, I presume there is some variation in the water levels.

Mr Davin—That is true. As Mr Hancock outlined, we will build up to make sure that we do not have that problem, but it is a severe monsoon period.

Mr WAKELIN—Once every 100 years or something. It is really a multipurpose building and there will be various agencies. You would end up literally with 100-plus people working, wouldn't you, in a building like that—200 perhaps with all the various agencies and not just DFAT.

Mr Davin—The occupation of the building is likely to be about 40, so it will not be such a big office. That is what we anticipate. I suppose it will be larger than that because AFP and Defence have indicated that they will come into the new building. That comes back to this size issue. One of the reasons it is larger is that we will have two new agencies that are not currently represented there plus support staff, and the Australian medical clinic we discussed earlier will be larger.

Mr WAKELIN—And DIMIA and AusAID.

Mr Davin—Yes. Somewhere between 40 and 50, and the relationship with Laos is strong.

Mr WAKELIN—Including the local staff.

Mr Davin—That is right, including the local support. I should say that there are another eight to 10 support staff who provide the sort of facilities management, the driving services and whatever else.

Senator FORSHAW—This may be in your submission, although I cannot find it. Can you give us a bit of an idea of the time line? What do you anticipate the period of construction through to occupancy is?

Mr Davin—We expect to commence construction, subject to approval, in March 2006. I think we were saying completion would be May 2007. We can give more detail. We have various estimates of the various design periods but, in summary, that is about how long we see it taking—something like 14 months. We start in March 2006 and we finish in May 2007, so it is about 14 months.

Senator FORSHAW—Again, this may be confidential; I do not know. When would you proceed to dispose of the other property? I assume you have to keep occupancy of the existing building right to the end of construction.

Mr Davin—That is correct. We will certainly be testing the market and talking to local agencies. It is not a sophisticated real estate market. One of the issues that the British have since they withdrew is that they cannot dispose of their assets there under local Laos law. Part of that is that they do not have the title documents. Is that correct, or is it more complex?

Mr Moran—The title documents go back to the Kingdom of Laos and there have been successive changes in ownership requirements which they have to sort out.

Mr Davin—But we do not anticipate those difficulties with our own sale.

Mr Moran—I think we would be looking to plan a disposal in, say, the year 2007-08. We need to get approval from our senior executive and the department of finance, so we will put it in our strategic plan for that period.

CHAIR—Following on the time line for construction, I notice at 26.1 of your submission you have had quite a few meetings with different authorities in Vientiane. How are those discussions progressing and do you anticipate any delays as a result of those discussions?

Mr Davin—No, our advice is that we do not anticipate any particular difficulties in working through these approval processes. The Lao are very positive about the development and I am sure if there are any difficulties with local authorities we will be able to overcome those quite quickly. There is nothing in particular about this building which on the face of it would concern local authorities, and our preliminary discussions have all been quite straightforward.

CHAIR—Given that there are no standards there, will you be submitting technical drawings and the architectural plans to these authorities? What is the process there? What do they require of you?

Mr Davin—I am not sure that we would say there are absolutely no standards. I think there are requirements in terms of the basic services.

CHAIR—I was referring to the building standards that we were talking about before.

Mr Davin—We will be submitting the detailed design drawings to the authority there that has been identified as appropriate to sign off on those.

CHAIR—Urban planning?

Mr Davin—The Vientiane Urban Development and Administration Authority are the appropriate people.

CHAIR—The DHU.

Mr Davin—Yes.

CHAIR—We were also talking about having local materials and so on. Is the local industry geared up to be able to deliver the project on time?

Mr Davin—Yes, they are. We are not entirely sure how many of those particular trades, particularly the skilled trades, would be procured locally and how many might come in from Thailand or elsewhere. But certainly the project will be deliverable.

CHAIR—Is there a high level of development at the moment in Vientiane?

Mr Moran—Not specifically.

Mr Davin—There are not cranes over the skyline.

CHAIR—It is not like Beijing or Shanghai at the moment?

Mr Davin—It is certainly not like that.

Mr Moran—Definitely not. To put it in perspective, there was a lack of any sort of commercial leasing options there. There simply are not buildings that would meet standards or our security requirements. So the leasing option, although looked at, was never a serious option. It really is a place that is developing. Most of the development there is probably in residential. From our perspective, there are lots of residential options available when we are looking to lease there, but there is not a lot of commercial development. That said, it is still progressing—probably in a similar vein to, say, Phnom Penh in Cambodia.

CHAIR—Quite frankly, in Western Australia the builders are telling me they cannot take on any new projects for 12 months. That is driving up costs as well as delaying projects. I am interested to know what is happening in Vientiane in relation to the building industry and whether there is a likelihood that costs will be driven up or delays will ensue as a result of activity.

Mr Davin—No, we are not going into a boom period there. The building we are designing is not a particularly complex building. We are keeping it appropriate to the environment, so it will not be a difficult building to maintain.

CHAIR—Your submission states at point 17.22 on the hydraulics:

The medical clinic is provided with a basket catchment facility in the drainage line to facilitate removal of incompatible material.

Can you explain to us what a basket catchment facility is? I presume there is medical material that needs to be removed that is incompatible with the system.

Mr Davin—I think it is a facility which is required under the disposal of hazardous materials, but I defer to Ian.

Mr McKay—It is an interceptor in the drainage system to pick up those chemicals that come through from the medical facility which you would not want to put into the normal disposal system, similar to most industrial facilities that have those sorts of things. However, I am not familiar with the specific detail of a basket catchment facility.

CHAIR—But it is to separate out those materials that could not go into the normal drainage system.

Mr McKay—Exactly.

CHAIR—Are they reliable?

Mr McKay—As we have said, the Australian standard applies across this project, and the Australian standard specifies the requirement for medical facilities and the disposal of waste from medical facilities. We will comply with that standard.

CHAIR—Can you tell us about the occupational health and safety requirements in the building and the facilities for people with a disability? On the occupational health and safety side, could you include for us a short overview of the fire safety provisions in the building—evacuation and so on?

Mr Hancock—It will be a fully compliant building under the Australian codes and standards and the disability act. There will be a lift, which will be a stretcher lift. There will be two staircases. There will be the usual disabled toilets, and there will be ramps where required up to the front entry. There will be no steps where people need access. From a global viewpoint, it will be a fully compliant building for disabled purposes, including furniture and fittings, which will be imported from Australia. In respect of fire safety, it will be in accordance with Australian standards. It will have full thermal smoke alarm systems, hydrants, fire extinguishers and the usual range of alarms, bells, voice alarms and evacuation procedures. As far as the design is concerned, it will be fully compliant with Australian standards for both OH&S and fire safety.

CHAIR—How many ingress and egress points in the building will there be?

Mr Hancock—I recall that there are three on the ground floor. I will look at the drawings.

CHAIR—Given the current security environment and requirements—and Mr Richardson may want to respond to this—how do you balance the need for rapid movement of people out of the building in an emergency with the need to keep entrances secure from people perhaps wanting to come in from the outside?

Mr Richardson—There are reasonably simple ways by which you can secure doors so that they are openable only from the inside and are intruder resistant or forced entry barriers externally. A number of these are incorporated into the design as emergency exit points.

CHAIR—How many people will be working in the building?

Mr Davin—Somewhere between 40 and 45 in the longer term, and there will be visitors.

CHAIR—I guess it is not a huge number to have to evacuate in the case of an emergency, as buildings go.

Mr Davin—We have put the public access areas on the ground floor. Whilst we will probably have substantial visitor numbers at any time, they are on the ground level and of course would have easy exit from there.

CHAIR—Given that I think somewhere in your submission you note that it is in an area where there are other buildings and people in occupancy, how are you planning to manage the noise, dust and other problems during the construction period to minimise disruption to the neighbours? Is there a consultation process taking place with neighbours to discuss those issues?

Mr Davin—We have not engaged with any of the neighbouring properties to date, but we expect to get advice and indeed instruction from the authorities as we go through this planning approval. Although we are not aware of any particular restrictions on hours or access by trucks, or those sorts of controls, we will once again be applying quite high standards of access onto and off the site. All of the workmen who are there will be identified by a security pass, we will obviously comply with any requirements for restricted hours or access and we would use normal dust mitigation processes. But, inevitably, with a building like this there will be quite noisy and disruptive concrete pours and things like that. As I say, we will comply with whatever the local requirements are, but we will be relying on some advice from those authorities. We are not aware of any obligation to actually consult neighbours directly.

CHAIR—But you would want to be good neighbours—

Mr Davin—We certainly would, yes.

CHAIR—and ensure there is minimal disruption.

Mr Davin—Yes. The building once again has a large setback on all sides, which may mitigate some of the inconvenience. We are not building right on the road, so we will not disturb pedestrian or vehicle traffic, hopefully.

CHAIR—There being no further questions, I thank you for appearing before the committee today.

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 9.31 am