

31382 REPRESENTATIVES Tuesday, 25
September 2001

Public Works Committee

Reports

Mrs MOYLAN (Pearce) (4.34 p.m.)—On behalf of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works I present the 11th, 12th and 13th reports for 2001 of the committee relating to the new freight and passenger facilities at Rumah Baru on West Island Cocos (Keeling) Islands; the redevelopment of residential areas at Royal Military College, Duntroon, ACT; and the Defence Intelligence Training Centre at Canungra, Queensland.

Ordered that the reports be printed.

Mrs MOYLAN—by leave—On behalf of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works I would like to make some brief comments on the three reports I have just tabled.

Freight and passenger facilities at Rumah Baru

The first report I have tabled relates to the construction of new freight and passenger facilities at Rumah Baru on West Island, Cocos

(Keeling) Islands. Historically, freight handling and passenger transfer on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands have been characterised by many logistical and environmental problems. While West Island bound containers are more numerous than those for Home Island, the direct transfer of containers to West Island is not possible due to the lack of suitable freight facilities. In addition, containers need to be partially unloaded on Home Island

to reduce container loads. This is because there is insufficient capacity on the barge to transport containers one at a time across the lagoon to West Island.

The existing passenger jetty is located at the north-eastern end of West Island and is in

a very exposed position. This results in unsafe

passenger transfers during high wind and heavy swell conditions. The preferred solution proposed by the Department of Transport and Regional Services is to construct

an offshore island at Rumah Baru on the eastern side of West Island, which would be connected to the shore by an access bridge. The island would be linked to deeper water in the lagoon by a dredged channel of approximately 400 metres in length. The works in this proposal will allow freight containers to be towed directly from a supply ship to the offshore island at West Island without the need for containers to be reduced in weight. The proposal will also improve the safety, efficiency and reliability of freight and passenger facilities.

During its inspections, the committee was able to observe at first hand the hazardous nature of freight and passenger handling operations and procedures. The committee has formed the view that there is an urgent need for the provision of new freight and passenger facilities on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Accordingly, the committee has recommended

that the works proceed as a single stage project at a cost of \$16 million.