

Introduction

Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 21 August 2003 the proposal to develop off-base housing for Defence at Queanbeyan, New South Wales, was referred to the Public Works Committee for consideration and report to the Parliament in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969* (the Act)¹. The proponent agency for this work is the Defence Housing Authority (DHA).
- 1.2 The Hon Peter Slipper MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration, advised the House that the estimated cost of the proposed works was \$12 million. Mr Slipper noted further that, subject to Parliamentary approval, construction would commence in February 2004 with an expected completion date of November 2004.

1 Extract from the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives, No. 114, Thursday, 21 August 2003

Background

The Defence Housing Authority

- 1.3 The DHA was established in 1988 to provide housing and relocation services for Australian Defence Force personnel, after it was discovered that low standards of accommodation were having a negative impact on Defence morale. The DHA aims to provide Defence personnel and their families with a standard of housing at least equal to that enjoyed by the broader community in which they live.
- 1.4 The DHA employs a variety of delivery methods to meet Defence accommodation requirements, including:
 - construction off-base with a view to retention or future sale of the properties;
 - construction on-base as dictated by Defence operational or policy requirements;
 - direct purchase of established properties, with a view to retention or future sale; and
 - direct lease through the private rental market.

The Site

- 1.5 The site of the proposed development is located at 20 Furlong Road, Queanbeyan, NSW. The site is bound by Furlong Road to the south, McCrae Street to the east, and the Queanbeyan Race Course to the north and west. It is roughly triangular in shape and measures some 3.78 hectares in area.
- 1.6 Prior to its purchase by the DHA in 2003, the site served as a pitch and putt golf course. The site was natural bush land until the construction of the pitch and putt course in 1991.
- 1.7 The site also contains nine detached townhouses along Furlong Road, which have been leased by DHA since 1992.

- 1.8 The site lies within the Queanbeyan City Council planning area and is zoned Residential. This zoning permits all forms of housing, subject to Council consent.²

Inquiry Process

- 1.9 The Committee is required by the Act to consider public works over \$6 million³ and report to Parliament on:
- the purpose of the work and its suitability for that purpose;
 - the need for, or the advisability of, carrying out the work;
 - whether the money to be expended on the work is being spent in the most cost effective manner;
 - the amount of revenue the work will generate for the Commonwealth, if that is its purpose; and
 - the present and prospective public value of the work.⁴
- 1.10 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in the *Queanbeyan Age* on Friday, 19 September 2003. The Committee also sought submissions from relevant government agencies, local government, private organisations and individuals, who may be materially affected by or have an interest in the proposed work. The Committee subsequently placed submissions and other information relating to the inquiry on its web site in order to encourage further public participation.

Inspections and Public Hearing

- 1.11 The Committee travelled to the site and inspected at first hand the scope and environs of the proposed works. A public hearing was held in Queanbeyan on Monday, 3 November 2003.⁵

2 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraphs 8.1 – 8.3

3 *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, Part III, Section 18 (8)

4 *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, Part III, Section 17

5 See Appendix D for the official Hansard transcript of evidence taken by the Committee at the public hearing on Monday, 3 November 2003 in Queanbeyan.

