

## Introduction

### Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 24 June 2004 the proposal to fit-out new leased premises for the Attorney-General's Department at 3-5 National Circuit, Barton, Australian Capital Territory, 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).<sup>1</sup> On 6 December 2004 the work was re-referred. The proponent agency for this work is the Attorney-General's Department (AGD).
- 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 \$23 million. Mr Slipper noted further that the new premises will facilitate the collocation of departmental functions within the Australian Capital Territory. He added that, subject to Parliamentary approval, the fit-out would be undertaken in conjunction with the construction of the facility and all works and fit-out will be completed by the end of 2008.

---

1 Extract from the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives, No. 184, Thursday, 24 June 2004

## Background

### The Attorney-General's Department

- 1.3 The Attorney-General's Department serves the people of Australia by providing expert support to the Government in the maintenance and improvement of Australia's system of law and justice.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.4 AGD is the central policy and coordinating element of the portfolio for which the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Customs are responsible.<sup>3</sup>
- 1.5 AGD's mission is to *achieve a just and secure society* by focusing on two outcomes:
  - an equitable and accessible system of federal civil justice; and
  - coordination of federal criminal justice, security and emergency management activities, for a safer Australia.<sup>4</sup>

### Site of the Proposed Work

- 1.6 The AGD fit-out is part of the re-development of 3- 5 National Circuit in Barton.<sup>5</sup>
- 1.7 The existing building on the 16, 700m<sup>2</sup> site will be demolished following the relocation of PM&C to 1 National Circuit.<sup>6</sup>
- 1.8 The new premises will provide for approximately 18, 000m<sup>2</sup> of office space and 400 car parking spaces.<sup>7</sup>
- 1.9 AGD intends to lease the new building for 15 years with two five-year options.<sup>8</sup>

### Inquiry Process

- 1.10 The Committee is required by the Act to consider public works over \$6 million<sup>9</sup> 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;

---

2 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 1.1.1

3 ib id, paragraph 1.1.2

4 ib id, paragraph 1.1.3

5 ib id, paragraph 2.1.1

6 ib id, paragraph 1.6.1

7 ib id, paragraph 1.6.4

8 ib id, paragraph 2.2.1

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

- 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.<sup>10</sup>
- 1.11 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in the *Canberra Times* on Saturday 3 July 2004. The Committee also sought submissions from relevant governmental 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

- 1.12 On Friday 6 August 2004 the Committee travelled to the 3-5 National Circuit site and inspected at first hand the scope and environs of the proposed works. A public hearing was held at Parliament House, Canberra, later that same day.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, Part III, Section 17

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix D for the official Hansard transcript of the evidence taken by the Committee at the public hearing on Friday, 6 August 2004 in Canberra

