

Introduction

Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 24 June 2004 the proposal to construct a new east building for the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, ACT 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 On 6 December 2004 the work was re-referred. The proponent agency for this work is the Australian War Memorial (AWM).
- 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 \$11.6 million. Mr Slipper noted further that, subject to Parliamentary approval, construction would commence in February next year and be completed by March 2006.

Background

The Australian War Memorial

- 1.3 *The Australian War Memorial Act 1925* established the AWM as a national memorial to those Australian men and women who have died while on active service. In 1980 the AWM's functions were redefined to reflect the Memorial's role in commemoration, as a museum and as a research centre housing a rich and diverse collection of seminal events in Australian history.²

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

2 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 8

- 1.4 Since its opening in 1941, the AWM's main building has been modified and extended on several occasions to accommodate the Memorial's growing collection and to provide space for new exhibitions.³
- 1.5 Several years ago, the AWM commenced a gallery development program in order to revitalise its dated galleries. Stage 1 of this process, which included the upgrade of galleries and facilities in the heritage-listed main building, is now complete.⁴ Stage 2 of the program involves the construction of a number of new facilities, including the proposed new East Building which allows for the redevelopment of the Post 1945 Conflicts galleries.⁵

Site of the Proposed Work

- 1.6 The proposed East Building will be located approximately 35 metres east of the heritage-listed main building, with its centre line on axis with the Administration Building, which is some 42 metres west of the main building.⁶
- 1.7 The East Building will be designed so as to be unobtrusive and it will therefore be sited below natural ground level.⁷

Inquiry Process

- 1.8 The Committee is required by the Act to consider public works over \$6 million⁸ 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.⁹
- 1.9 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in *The Canberra Times* on Saturday 3 July 2004. The Committee also sought
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3 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 8

4 ib id, paragraph 3

5 ib id, paragraph 9

6 ib id, paragraph 33

7 ib id, paragraphs 37 - 46

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

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

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

- 1.10 On Friday, 13 August 2004, the Committee visited the AWM and was provided with a thorough briefing on the scope and environs of the proposed works. Following inspections, a public hearing was held at Parliament House in Canberra.

