



## **Public Works Committee releases \$287 million report**

The Parliamentary Public Works Committee has released a report giving the green light to \$287 million worth of infrastructure investment for Western Australia, Victoria and the ACT by the CSIRO, Defence, the Australian Federal Police and the Australian War Memorial.

Chair of the Committee, Mark Butler MP, said that the Committee had inspected the sites of the proposed developments and heard from the agencies proposing the works and, in some cases, the local community. 'These projects represent a major boost to regional economies,' Mr Butler said, 'the Committee has investigated each project thoroughly and is confident that each one is necessary.'

In Western Australia, the CSIRO plans to build the 'world's most effective survey radio telescope,' for international research in astronomy. The Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP) Radio Telescope will invest \$111 million in the Geraldton Area and provide a focus of international astronomers. The Public Works Committee found that there are benefits to ASKAP proceeding but also recommended that there be more certainty in land negotiations before the CSIRO enters construction contracts.

Defence is investing \$41 million at Puckapunyal Base in northern Victoria to improve training and office facilities on the base. The Committee found that these upgrades are badly needed and will significantly improve facilities on the Base.

Major investments were also approved for the ACT. With an investment of \$115 million, the fit out of the Edmund Barton Building in Barton will restore this heritage-listed building and provide for the headquarters of the Australian Federal Police. The Committee was assured that this investment will meet the AFP's current and future needs as well as providing a childcare centre and a café, completing the original architectural vision for the building.

The Committee has also found there is need for a \$19 million investment in the Australian War Memorial to restore the Eastern Precinct and provide for a National Service Memorial. This project will improve traffic flows around the building by providing bus parking and an underground public car park as well as providing a new café and lawn area, restoring the vistas to the Parliamentary Triangle.

The Public Works Committee has recommended to Parliament that all four projects be approved.

**NB** the Public Works Committee is neither involved in the tendering process nor the awarding of contracts. Enquiries on those matters should be addressed the proponent agency.

**For interview:** Contact the office of the Committee Chair, Mark Butler MP on (02) 6277 4414.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works investigates all major infrastructure spending proposals by Commonwealth agencies. **For further information** on the role of the Committee, membership recent on ongoing inquiries, please visit the Committee website <http://www.aph.gov.au/pwc> or contact the Committee Secretariat on 02 6277 4636.