



Australian Government
Department of Finance and Administration

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Ms Vivienne Courto
Inquiry Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee on
Public Works
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Courto

I am writing in response to the recent submissions from the Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce, 20 October 2003 and the Hon. Wilson Tuckey MP, Member for O'Connor, 22 October 2003, regarding the current Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works inquiry into the proposed respecified Christmas Island Immigration Processing and Reception Centre (IRPC).

Unfortunately, due to the time constraints with these submissions being lodged after the 3 October advertised deadline, and the need to provide a timely response to the Committee, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive response to all the issues raised in the submissions. However, the following provides some initial comments on the broad issues raised:

Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce (CICC) Submission

- Finance is pleased that the CICC supports the construction of the IRPC and appreciates the key role they play within the Christmas Island community. While visiting the Island in June 2003, the Minister for Finance and Administration, Senator the Hon. Nick Minchin and senior Finance officials met with representatives of the CICC and Finance will continue to engage the CICC and other key stakeholders throughout the life of the project.
- Finance understands the potential economic impact this project could have on the Island and the CICC's enthusiasm to see the project proceed as quickly as possible. However, due to the reduction in the numbers of unauthorised arrivals the Government took a policy decision in February 2003 to alter the scope and timing of the project. This revised timing allows a more traditional delivery method including fixed price contracts and a more expansive design phase. As a result, the completion date of the project is now scheduled for the first quarter of 2006, which allows a

longer, more sustained construction period. It still remains Government policy to construct an IRPC on Christmas Island.

The Hon. Wilson Tuckey MP, Member for O'Connor Submission

- The concept design for the project has only recently been completed and many aspects of the final design, materials that will be used and from where they will be sourced, are still to be considered and finalised. When reviewing these issues, factors that will be considered include: value for money, Australian Government procurement policies, compliance with quarantine and building standards and ensuring that Australian businesses are not disadvantaged by the tender processes.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the issues raised in these submissions, and we are happy, if required, to expand on any of these issues for the Committee at the upcoming Public Hearing.

Yours sincerely

Tim Wise
Assistant Secretary – Branch Manager Major Projects

22 October 2003