

Introduction

Objective

- 1.1 The main objective of the Committee's visit to Christmas Island was to inspect public works on the island that have been approved in the recent past or are to be referred to the Committee in the near future, and to receive updates and briefings about particular projects with a view to reporting back to Parliament.
- 1.2 The Committee has noted the increase in population on Christmas Island, particularly irregular maritime arrivals and the Commonwealth agency staff dealing with those arrivals, and sought reassurance that public infrastructure development and investment is keeping pace with need.

Program

- 1.3 The Committee visited Christmas Island from 7-10 June 2011. The Committee spent a full day with officials from the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government (DRARDLG), and inspected various sites for the Christmas Island New Housing Program, the wastewater treatment plant, the power station and the Australian Federal Police headquarters. The Committee was informed about key planning and design initiatives under consideration.
- 1.4 The Committee also had a full day with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, and inspected the facilities at three immigration detention centres.

Report format

- 1.5 Chapter 2 of this report examines particular issues that the Committee felt need to be addressed, with some issues requiring immediate attention. Appendix A provides an overview of the Committee's briefing and inspections program.

Acknowledgements

- 1.6 The Committee gratefully acknowledges the following people for their efforts and contributions in making the Committee's trip to Christmas Island a success:
- Mr Brian Lacey, Christmas Island Administrator;
 - Mr Gordon Thompson, President, Christmas Island Shire Council;
 - Mr Kelvin Matthews, Chief Executive Officer, Christmas Island Shire Council;
 - Ms Belinda Moss, Assistant Secretary, Territories West, Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government;
 - Mr Liviu Mihov-Nicotodis, Director Capital and Procurement Policy Section, Territories West, Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government;
 - Mr John Carter, Manager Indian Ocean Territories (Power Authority), Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government;
 - Ms Megan Lalley, Project Manager - Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade), Water Corporation.
 - Mr Cameron Owen, Project Manager - New Housing Program, GHD Pty Ltd.
 - Mr Steve Ingram, Assistant Secretary, Detention Infrastructure Branch, Department of Immigration and Citizenship;
 - Mr Scott Matheson, Regional Manager, Irregular Maritime Arrivals Operations, Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Christmas Island);
 - Mr Chris Linton, Detention Operations, Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Christmas Island); and
 - Mr Alfred Chong, Resident Manager, Phosphate Resources Limited.

- 1.7 The Committee wishes to thank the staff at each facility visited, and in particular, wishes to thank staff and clients at North-west Point, Construction Camp and Phosphate Hill detention centres who spoke with Committee members.