

Introduction

Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 26 May 2004 the proposal to develop land at Lee Point in Darwin, NT, for Defence and private housing 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 Defence Housing Authority (DHA).
- 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 proposal, including headwork charges, civil works, contingency and professional fees, was some \$40 million. He added that, subject to parliamentary and DHA board approval, the works would commence in February 2005.

Site of the Proposed Work

- 1.3 The Lee Point site occupies 77 hectares of land at Darwin's northern fringe, approximately 1.2 kilometres from the Casuarina shopping centre and 16 kilometres from the CBD. It is bordered by the suburb of Wanguri to the South and the suburb of Tiwi and the Royal Darwin Hospital to the West.

¹ Extract from the *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives*, No. 165, Wednesday, 31 March 2004

- 1.4 The site was formerly owned by the Department of Defence (Defence) and is bordered by Defence land to the East and North.

Inquiry Process

- 1.5 The Committee is required by the Act to consider public works over \$6 million² 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.³
- 1.6 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in the *Northern Territory News* on Saturday 5 June 2004. The Committee also sought 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

- 1.7 On 19 July 2004 the Committee inspected the site and environs of the proposed works, and received a commercial-in-confidence briefing on project costs from the DHA and its consultants. A public hearing was held in Darwin later that day.⁴

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

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

4 See Appendix D for the official Hansard transcript of the evidence taken by the Committee at the public hearing on Monday, 19 July 2004 in Darwin.