

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Establishment of inquiry

1.1 On 5 September 2000, the Senate resolved to refer the following matter to the Committee for inquiry and report by the last sitting day in March 2001 (29 March):

- a) the importance and value of the Western Australian Army Museum and the Fremantle Artillery Barracks;
- b) whether the Fremantle Artillery Barracks is the most appropriate and suitable location for the Museum;
- c) the reason for the disposal of the Fremantle Artillery Barracks;
- d) the disposal of the Fremantle Artillery Barracks and the probity of the disposal process;
- e) how the Australian Defence Organisation (ADO) decides whether property is surplus to requirements and the management or disposal of surplus property;
- f) sale and lease-back of ADO property; and
- g) any other matter related to the above-mentioned issues.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.2 The Committee advertised for written submissions in the national press on 12 September 2000. To date, the Committee has received 53 submissions, most of which relate to the proposed sale by the Department of Defence of the Artillery Barracks, Fremantle. However, some submissions also deal with the more general issues outlined in items 5 and 6 of the terms of reference or raise issues relating the sale of other defence properties. A full list of the submissions received by the Committee is contained in Appendix 1. Written submissions have been placed on the Committee's Internet site [www.aph.gov.au/senate_fadt]

1.3 On 18 October 2000, the Committee inspected the Artillery Barracks at Fremantle, which includes the Army Museum of Western Australia. The Committee also inspected the proposed site for the relocation of the museum at Hobb's Hall, Irwin Barracks, Karrakatta, Perth.

1.4 Following these inspections, the Committee conducted public hearings at the Barracks on 18 and 19 October 2000. Evidence was taken at these hearing from

witnesses invited by the Committee to appear and, during open sessions, from interested members of the public.

1.5 A further day of public hearings was held in Canberra on 10 November 2000. A list of the witnesses who appeared at the three days of hearings is contained in Appendix 2.

1.6 The Hansard transcripts of evidence taken at these hearing are located on the Parliament House Internet site [www.aph.gov.au/hansard/].

Scope of this report

1.7 In planning its inquiry, the Committee was concerned that the inquiry should not cause unnecessary delay to the resolution of future of the Artillery Barracks, Fremantle. The Committee therefore decided to concentrate on issues relating to the Barracks early in its inquiry and to report on those issues as soon as practicable.

1.8 This Report therefore focuses on the issues outlined in items 1 to 4 of the terms of reference. The Committee will be conducting further hearings early in 2001, which will focus on the broader issues identified in items 5 and 6, including consideration of further case studies contained in the written submissions, prior to tabling a final report for the inquiry.

Acknowledgements

1.9 The Committee wishes to thank all of the people and organisations who made written submissions, gave evidence at hearings or contributed in some other way to the inquiry. The Committee would like to acknowledge particularly the assistance given by the Army Museum of Western Australia Foundation and Defence during the Committee's inspections and hearings in Western Australia.