

Introduction

Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 10 May 2007 the proposal for CSIRO collocation with Queensland Government on the Ecosciences and Health and Food Sciences Precincts, Brisbane, Queensland, 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. The proponent agency for this work is the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).
- 1.2 The Hon Gary Nairn MP, Special Minister of State, advised the House that the estimated total capital cost of the estimated completion cost for the two developments is \$375 million, of which the CSIRO component is \$85 million. Subject to parliamentary approval, it is anticipated that early packages will be let to allow site establishment works to commence in February 2008 for the Boggo Road site and at the same time for the main works on the Coopers Plains site.

¹ Extract from the *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives*, No. 167, 10 May 2007.

Background

CSIRO

- 1.3 CSIRO is Australia's premier research organisation which delivers science and innovative solutions for industry, society and the environment. CSIRO's primary functions are:
- To carry out scientific research for the purpose of assisting Australian industry, furthering the interests of the Australian community, contributing to the achievement of national objectives or the performance of national and international responsibilities;
 - To encourage or facilitate the application or utilisation of the results of scientific research; and
 - To carry out services and make available facilities, in relation to science.²
- 1.4 The proposed Knowledge Based Research and Business (KBRB) Project will house approximately 1200 scientists from the Queensland State Government departments of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Natural Resources and Water; and the Environmental Protection Agency with the CSIRO Divisions and National Flagships.³

Site Locations

- 1.5 The KBRB project proposes to have facilities in two locations in Brisbane. An Ecosciences Precinct at Boggo Road Urban Village, Dutton Park, will accommodate 754 State and approximately 260 CSIRO scientists and support staff including visitors and students. A Health and Food Sciences Precinct on the Queensland Health Scientific Services (QHSS) Campus at Coopers Plains will accommodate 153 State and 37 CSIRO staff.⁴

Ecosciences Precinct

- 1.6 The Ecosciences precinct is densely occupied by the proposed building which addresses the Boggo Road frontage with the ground level entry

2 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraphs 12 and 14.

3 *ibid.*, paragraph 2.

4 *ibid.*, paragraph 3.

from the north-west corner also opening onto the pedestrian spine to the west. The three blocks orientate to the north for optimal solar orientation. The three basement levels link the three blocks into an integrated whole. Space for a future block is provided at the southern end of the site.⁵

Health and Food Sciences Precinct

- 1.7 Site Planning has been driven by the optimal location of facilities for scientific, collaboration between QHSS and KBRB. Block 10 is linked at upper levels to Block 2 for direct sharing with QHSS chemistry groups and to access the QHSS shared facilities. Block 10 is opposite the entry to the campus and will be the most prominent building on the campus.
- 1.8 Block 11 as a semi-industrial building connects directly into Block 10 to facilitate ease movement between the pilot plant and office and lab facilities.
- 1.9 Block 12 connects with Block 8 virology labs to allow direct interface of the microbiology laboratories and containment facilities.⁶

Inquiry Process

- 1.10 The Committee is required by the Act to consider public works over \$15 million⁷ 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.⁸
- 1.11 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in the *Courier Mail* on Saturday, 19 May 2007. The Committee also sought submissions from relevant government agencies, local government, private

5 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 105.

6 *ibid.*, paragraphs 106-108.

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

8 *ibid.*, Section 17.

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.

Inspection and Hearing

- 1.12 On Monday, 23 July 2007 the Committee inspected the site and environs of the proposed works. A confidential briefing from officers of CSIRO and a public hearing were held at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, later that day.⁹

⁹ See Appendix D for the official Hansard transcript of the evidence taken by the Committee at the public hearing on Monday 23 July at the University of Queensland, Brisbane.