

Introduction

Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 6 December 2004 the proposal for proposed development of land for Defence housing at McDowall, 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 Defence Housing Authority (DHA).
- 1.2 The Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration, advised the House that the estimated cost of the proposed works was \$17.5 million. Subject to parliamentary approval, and it is intended the houses will be ready for occupation in November 2006.

Background

- 1.3 This proposal was referred to the Public Works Committee on 24 June 2004, but the reference lapsed when the previous committee ceased to exist with the prorogation of parliament on 31 August 2004.

¹ Extract from the *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives*, No. 8, Monday, 6 December 2004

Defence Housing Authority

- 1.4 The DHA was established in 1988 to provide housing and relocation services for Australian Defence Force personnel after it was discovered that low standards of accommodation were having a negative impact on Defence morale. The DHA aims to provide Defence personnel and their families with a standard of housing at least equal to that enjoyed by the broader community in which they live.
- 1.5 The DHA employs a variety of delivery methods to meet Defence accommodation requirements, including:
- construction off-base with a view to retention or future sale of the properties;
 - construction on-base as dictated by Defence operational or policy requirements;
 - direct purchase of established properties, with a view to retention or future sale; and
 - direct lease through the private rental market.

Site of the Proposed Work

- 1.6 The proposed development is to be located on a 4.32 hectare site at 946 Rode Road, McDowall, Brisbane. The site comprises four lots and was purchased by DHA in February 2003.

Inquiry Process

- 1.7 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

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- the present and prospective public value of the work.³

1.8 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in *The Courier Mail* on Saturday 15 January 2005. 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.

Inspection and Public Hearing

1.9 On 24 February 2005 the Committee visited 946 Rode Road, McDowall, Brisbane and inspected the site and environs of the proposed works. A commercial-in-confidence briefing on project costs from DHA and a public hearing were held in Brisbane later that day.⁴

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 Thursday, 24 February 2005 in Brisbane

