

Parliamentary Paper
No. 270/1977

The Parliament of the
Commonwealth of Australia

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND
CONSERVATION

Fifth Report

Being a report that the Committee has
been unable to complete its Inquiries

*Brought up and
ordered to be printed 2 November 1977*

The Commonwealth Government Printer
Canberra 1978

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr J. C. Hodges, M.P. (*Chairman*)

Mr M. Baillieu, M.P.

The Hon. G. M. Bryant, E.D., M.P.*

The Hon. M. H. Cass, M.P.

Mr P. S. Fisher, M.P.

Dr H. A. Jenkins, M.P.

Mr B. D. Simon, M.P.

Mr I. B. C. Wilson, M.P.

Mr J. R. Cummins (*Acting Clerk to the Committee*)

MEMBERS OF MARINE OIL SPILLS SUB-COMMITTEE

Mr J. C. Hodges, M.P. (*Chairman*)

The Hon. G. M. Bryant, E.D., M.P.

Mr B. D. Simon, M.P.

Mr P. Bush (*Clerk to the Sub-committee*)

* Mr Bryant replaced Mr M. J. Young, M.P. as a member of the Committee on 14 October 1976.

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

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REPORT ON UNFINISHED INQUIRIES

Urban Environment Inquiry

1. On 9 September 1976 the Committee resolved to inquire into and report on: the extent to and manner in which the development and implementation of Commonwealth Government policies and programs influencing growth and change in Australian cities and towns there are mechanisms which recognise
 - the need to have regard for effects on the urban environment; and
 - the need for co-ordination between departments and instrumentalities of the Commonwealth and other levels of Government.
2. Submissions were invited from persons and organisations with an interest or knowledge of the subject matter of the inquiry. Over seventy submissions were received and 110 witnesses gave evidence to the Committee either in a personal capacity or representing Commonwealth and State Governments and instrumentalities, academic and professional institutions, instrumentalities and municipal associations and private companies.
3. Commencing on 7 March 1977 twenty-two public hearings were held and nearly 2500 pages of evidence were taken.
4. Final public hearings were held on 25 October 1977 and the drafting of the Committee's Report was about to commence.

Oil Spills Inquiry

5. On 24 February 1977 the Committee resolved to inquire into and report upon 'the adequacy of arrangements to prevent or deal with oil spills in Australian waters'.
6. In response to nation-wide advertising thirty-nine submissions were received from State and local government bodies, the oil industry and other sectors of private enterprise, environmental action groups and private citizens.
7. The Committee, and a Sub-committee which was subsequently appointed on 18 August 1977 to continue the inquiry, held six public hearings in Canberra and Perth and conducted inspections in Sydney and at Barrow Island in Western Australia.
8. At the time the Sub-committee reported to the full Committee that it had been unable to complete its inquiry, 449 pages of evidence had been taken from seven witnesses and it was considered that another four days of public hearings and five days of inspections would be required to complete the taking of evidence.

Recommendations

9. The evidence taken during the Committee's inquiry into the Urban Environment reveals serious inadequacies in the perception of Commonwealth departments and agencies of the impact of their decisions on the urban environment. The Committee uncovered a number of major policy areas where mechanisms to facilitate co-ordination are either absent or totally inadequate.
10. Although the Committee's inquiry into marine oil spills is at an early stage the evidence taken to date and submissions received justify a continuation of the inquiry.

11. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that:

- (a) *the Committee be re-established in the new Parliament with Terms of Reference similar to those of the Committee appointed during the Thirtieth Parliament;*
- (b) *the Committee established in the new Parliament resume the Inquiries into the Urban Environment and Marine Oil Spills; and*
- (c) *the Committee established in the new Parliament have the power to consider and make use of the evidence and records of the Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation appointed during the Thirtieth Parliament.*

J. C. HODGES
Chairman

November 1977