

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2010

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Outcome 2, Program 2.2

Topic: ASIO Headquarters – National Capital Authority

Question reference number: F98

Type of Question: Written QoN

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 July 2010

Number of Pages: 2

Senator Bob Brown asked:

Following on from questions asked at the February 2010 estimates hearings about the new ASIO headquarters being built in the Parliamentary Triangle:

- a) Exactly what date were the mass and height of the building first revealed to the NCA?
- b) If the NCA suggested alternative sites for the ASIO building, where were they and by what criteria were they dismissed?
- c) On what date did the NCA relax the height guidelines for the building from 25 metres to 33 metres?
- d) What reasons did the Department of Finance give the NCA for dismissing its concerns about the height of the building?

Answer:

- a) After the National Capital Authority (NCA) was presented with the Department of Finance and Deregulation's (Finance) recommendation from the analysis of the site options in November 2005, the NCA was briefed on the proposed mass and height of the building as the concept design for the building was developed from late 2007 to mid 2008. The NCA was formally presented with this design just prior to providing its in principle support for the design on 25 June 2008.
- b) The NCA initially advised Finance that it preferred two of the other sites considered in Finance's options analysis. These two sites were the Defence carparks on either side of Kings Avenue adjacent to the Russell roundabout. After considerable discussion the NCA agreed to work with Finance and ASIO to progress the development of Finance's preferred site on Constitution Avenue. The other two sites were considered inferior because they were not large enough to accommodate the building and its security requirements; would take longer to develop because they required a realignment of Kings Avenue and the replacement of the Defence carparks; and using them for the ASIO building would have been inconsistent with the NCA master plan for the Russell precinct.

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- c) The NCA did not relax the height guidelines for the ASIO building from 25 metres to 33 metres. The ASIO building is still required to remain within the 25 metres height limit with the exception of minor protrusions agreed by the NCA.

- d) The only concern expressed by the NCA about the height of the building occurred in early 2009 when the NCA rejected a proposal for the building to marginally exceed the 25m height limit to accommodate a particular roof design. Finance was required to modify the design to ensure compliance.