

Introduction – Report of the Public Works Committee of the 41st Parliament

Referral of Work

- 2.1 On 31 May 2007 the HMAS Creswell redevelopment, Jervis Bay Territory, 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 Department of Defence.
- 2.2 The Hon Peter Lindsay MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, advised the house that the estimated out-turn cost of the proposal is \$83.6 million excluding GST. Subject to Parliamentary approval, Defence plan to commence work in early 2008 with completion planned for mid-2011.²

1 Extract from the *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives*, No. 175, 31 May 2007.

2 See House Hansard for 31 May 2007.

Background

HMAS Creswell

- 2.3 The formation of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) in 1911, led to several sites being considered to determine a location for a Naval College to train its officers. In 1911 Jervis Bay was selected as a suitable site for the College, and construction began at Captains Point, Jervis Bay in 1913 with construction completed in early 1915. The first intake of students at Jervis Bay commenced in January 1915, with training continuing through the First World War.
- 2.4 Changes in Defence strategy at the end of the war led to a reduced requirement for naval officer training that led to the relocation of the College to Flinders Naval Depot in Victoria. By 1937, most of the buildings at Jervis Bay were leased to private individuals and companies and the site was developed as a tourist town. The return of the RAN College to Jervis Bay was the culmination of a successful campaign beginning in 1950, and the College was re-opened and commissioned as HMAS Creswell in February 1958.
- 2.5 HMAS Creswell as the site of the RAN College provides the RAN with basic, leadership, management and personal development training for Naval officers. As with other training establishments of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), HMAS Creswell provides a range of facilities in support of the training program including living in and classroom accommodation. In addition the base also supports naval activities conducted in the East Australia Exercise Area.
- 2.6 The Royal Australian Navy School of Survivability and Ship Safety (RANSSSS) provides training to equip sea-going RAN personnel with combat survival skills as well as the bulk of combat survival training to Fleet Units home ported in Sydney, and the majority of instructor and advanced combat survival training courses.
- 2.7 HMAS Creswell also provides and support facilities for RAN, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and Army training courses and operations.³

Location

- 2.8 The location of the proposed works is within the existing base boundaries of HMAS Creswell and the Jervis Bay Range Facility. The RANSSSS is
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3 Submission No. 1, paragraphs 4 – 8.

located at the Jervis Bay Range Facility approximately 5km south of HMAS Creswell. Both sites are located in the south-western corner of Jervis Bay, approximately 180km south of Sydney.⁴

Inquiry Process

- 2.9 The Committee is required by the Act to consider public works over \$15 million 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.⁵
- 2.10 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in the *Illawarra Mercury* on Saturday, 9 June 2007. 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 Hearing

- 2.11 On Friday 14 September 2007, the Committee inspected the site and environs of the proposed works. A confidential briefing from officers of the Department of Defence and a public hearing were held at HMAS Creswell, Jervis Bay Territory, later that day.⁶

4 *ibid.*, paragraph 31.

5 *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, Part III, Section 18 (8), Section 17.

6 See Appendix D for the official Hansard transcript of the evidence taken by the Committee at the public hearing on Friday, 14 September 2007 at HMAS Creswell, Jervis Bay Territory.