

Introduction

Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 31 May 2007 the proposal for the RAAF Base Amberley Redevelopment Stage 3, 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 Department of Defence (Defence).
- 1.2 The Hon Peter Lindsay MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence informed the House that the estimated out-turn cost of the proposal was \$331.5 million, plus GST. Subject to Parliamentary approval construction will commence in early 2008 and finish by late 2011.

Background

- 1.3 RAAF Base Amberley has been used for military operations since 1938. The American Air Corps comprising of approximately 2,000 personnel

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

were stationed at the Base during the 1940's. The site became a major RAAF bomber base following World War II, with *Lincoln* bombers originally based at the site, followed by *Canberra* bombers.

- 1.4 During the post war period, a major realignment of the main runways was undertaken, with *Wirraway*, *Vampire* and *Meteor* aircraft stationed on-site during the 1950's. During the Vietnam War the base was again used by the United States military. Additional accommodation and working facilities, including a runway extension, were constructed in the late 1960's and early 1970's.
- 1.5 In 1963 Australia commenced its procurement of F-111's, with the first six aircraft arriving at RAAF Base Amberley on 1 June 1973; the twenty-fourth aircraft was delivered on 31 October that same year. Since the arrival of the F-111s, the construction and upgrading of facilities has been ongoing at the Base – including two major developments between 1999 and 2007.²

Site of Proposed Works

- 1.6 RAAF Base Amberley is located approximately 8 km west of the City of Ipswich, at the western edge of the Brisbane Metropolitan Area. The site of the proposed works is Commonwealth owned and Defence controlled.³

Inquiry Process

- 1.7 The Committee is required by the Act to consider public works over \$15 million⁴ 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 Appendix C. Submission No. 1, paragraph 3.

3 *ibid.*, paragraph 19.

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

- 1.8 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in *The Weekend Australian* and the *Brisbane Courier Mail* 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

- 1.9 On Tuesday 24 July, the Committee inspected the proposed site and environs of the proposed works. This was followed by a confidential hearing attended by officials of the Department of Defence on the costs of the proposed RAAF Base Amberley Redevelopment Stage 3 project followed by a public hearing both of which were held at the Ipswich International Hotel, Ipswich, Queensland.⁶

5 *ibid*, Section 17.

6 See Appendix D for the official Hansard transcript of the evidence taken by the Committee at the public hearing on Tuesday, 24 July 2007 held at the the Ipswich International Hotel, Ipswich, Queensland.

