

## Introduction

### Referral of Work

- 1.1 On 1 June 2006, the proposal for the provision of Facilities for Troop Lift Helicopter, RAAF Base Townsville, Queensland, was referred to the Public Works Committee for consideration and report in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969* (the Act).<sup>1</sup> The proponent agency for this work is the Department of Defence (Defence).
- 1.2 The Hon Gary Nairn MP, Special Minister of State, advised the House that the estimated cost of the proposed works was \$20 million. Subject to parliamentary approval, the works would commence late this year, with completion expected in early 2008.

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<sup>1</sup> Extract from the *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives*, No. 104, Thursday 1 June 2006

## Background

### RAAF Base Townsville

- 1.3 The 5<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment (5 Avn Regt) is located in the south western precinct of RAAF Base Townsville which is approximately seven kilometres from the Townsville CBD.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.4 RAAF Base Townville is maintained for the defence and surveillance of the northern areas of Australia and the base will remain operational under current long term planning.<sup>3</sup>

## Inquiry Process

- 1.5 The Committee is required by the Act to consider public works over \$6 million<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>
- 1.6 The Committee called for submissions by advertising the inquiry in *The Townsville Bulletin* on Saturday, 1 July 2006. The Committee also sought submissions from relevant government agencies, 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.

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2 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraphs 2 and 10

3 *ibid*, paragraph 3

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

5 *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, Part III, Section 17

## Inspection and Public Hearing

- 1.7 On 18 August 2006 the Committee visited RAAF Base Townsville and inspected the site and environs of the proposed works. A confidential briefing from the Department of Defence and a public hearing were held in Townsville later that day.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix D for the official Hansard transcript of the evidence taken by the Committee at the public hearing on Friday, 18 August 2006 at the Mercure Inn, Townsville, Qld