



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Reference: CSIRO co-location with Queensland government on the ecosciences and health and food sciences precincts, Brisbane

MONDAY, 23 JULY 2007

BRISBANE

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**JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC WORKS**

Monday, 23 July 2007

Members: Mrs Moylan (*Chair*), Mr Brendan O'Connor (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Hurley, Parry and Troeth and Mr Forrest, Mr Jenkins, Mr Ripoll and Mr Wakelin

Members in attendance: Senator Parry and Mrs Moylan and Mr Brendan O'Connor

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

CSIRO Co-Location with Queensland Government on the Eco-Sciences and Health and Food Sciences Precincts in Brisbane

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Committee met at 1.32 pm

CHAIR (Mrs Moylan)—I declare open this public hearing into the proposed CSIRO co-location with Queensland government on the ecosciences and health and food sciences precincts in Brisbane. This project was referred to the Public Works Committee on 10 May 2007 for consideration and report to parliament. In accordance with section 17(3) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969:

- (3) In considering and reporting on a public work, the Committee shall have regard to—
- (a) the stated purpose of the work and its suitability for that purpose;
 - (b) the necessity for, or the advisability of, carrying out the work;
 - (c) the most effective use that can be made, in the carrying out of the work, of the moneys to be expended on the work;
 - (d) where the work purports to be of a revenue-producing character, the amount of revenue that it may reasonably be expected to produce; and
 - (e) the present and prospective public value of the work.

Earlier the committee received confidential evidence from CSIRO representatives. The committee will now hear evidence from CSIRO representatives.

[1.33 pm]

JOHNSON, Dr Andrew Kenneth Leonard, Group Executive, Environment, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

MOODY, Mr Trevor Laurence, General Manager, Property Services, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

ANKER, Mr Brian Andrew, Deputy Director General, Science, Technology and Innovation, Queensland Government Department of State Development

ROBERTSON, Mr Peter Charles, Principal Project Manager, Major Project, Project Services, Department of Public Works

ROEHRS, Mr Mark, Principal, Hassell Ltd

Witnesses were sworn or affirmed—

CHAIR—Welcome. I thank the witnesses for coming to meet us today, and I thank CSIRO for facilitating the committee's inspection of the proposed sites this morning. The committee has received a statement of evidence from CSIRO, and this will be made available in a volume of submissions to the inquiry. It will also be available on the committee's website. Does CSIRO wish to propose any amendments to its submission to the committee?

Dr Johnson—We wish to make the following amendments to the statement of evidence: paragraph 1, delete 'mathematical information systems' and substitute 'mathematical and information sciences'; paragraph 19, delete the number '19' and substitute the number '17'; paragraph 80, delete the number '1300' and substitute the number '13,000'; paragraph 125, delete 'Heritage' and substitute 'Water Resources'; paragraph 144, delete '2006' and substitute '2007'; paragraph 147, delete 'along with key trade contractors'; paragraph 174, eighth dot point, delete 'distributed Central'; and in annexure B, 'Associated drawings' there are some general changes: (1) remove nominated scale where relevant—bar scale is retained and (2) enhance the legend where relevant. I will tender these changes.

CHAIR—The document as tabled will be included in the statements of evidence. I now invite a representative from CSIRO to make a brief opening statement and then we will go to questions.

Dr Johnson—This proposal brought before the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Public Works is for the construction of two new joint research precincts in Brisbane that will enable the co-location of six CSIRO divisions and four national research flagships with the science capabilities of four Queensland government departments. A fundamental principle underpinning the co-location is the realisation of greater benefits to Australia, through the formation of new partnerships and the strengthening of existing partnerships to address the big sustainability challenges facing the nation.

The proposed CSIRO facilities will be an integral part of an ecosciences precinct at the Boggo Road Urban Village site at Dutton Park and a health and food sciences precinct at Coopers Plains.

CSIRO requires appropriately designed and equipped research facilities that will provide safe, healthy, effective and efficient working conditions for its staff. This staff undertakes a wide range of research that directly addresses national and industry priorities. R&D to be conducted at the Boggo Road and Coopers Plains precincts directly aligns with CSIRO's strategic objectives.

The proposed new precincts will provide facilities necessary for CSIRO to conduct leading edge scientific research. The design of the precincts reflects CSIRO's aspiration to provide an effective and efficient working environment that provides the flexibility and adaptability to meet present and future needs.

The proposed facilities will replace existing substandard, outdated and inefficient buildings at CSIRO's Cannon Hill, Indooroopilly and Cleveland sites. The precincts provide a unique opportunity to co-locate with Queensland government science agencies to generate strategic benefits. These benefits will be realised through increased scientific interactions collaborations, along with providing cost efficiencies through the sharing of equipment and resources.

The proposed precincts will accommodate approximately 1,200 Queensland government and CSIRO staff, of which 297 are staff from CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, CSIRO Land and Water, CSIRO Entomology, CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research, CSIRO Mathematical and Information Sciences, the CSIRO Science Education Centre and Food Science Australia.

The CSIRO facilities will comprise modern research laboratories, laboratory support areas, services and equipment rooms, office accommodation, staff support areas, field operation support areas, storage, glasshouse facilities and a food manufacturing pilot plant. All of these will be shared amongst the participating CSIRO and state agencies. Amenity and support facilities, including a cafe, reception, seminar and meeting rooms, will also be shared with the Queensland government. CSIRO and Queensland government scientists will be co-located in laboratory and office spaces to optimise the potential for sharing of equipment and the exchange of ideas, providing economies in capital and operating costs as well as providing an environment for greater collaboration.

The ecosciences precinct at Boggo Road will comprise a new nine-level laboratory complex of three interlinked blocks, with a total gross floor area of 51,200 square metres of which approximately 13,000 square metres will accommodate CSIRO components. The health and food sciences precinct facilities at Coopers Plains will comprise three blocks connected to existing Queensland Health laboratories of which CSIRO will occupy approximately 2,700 square metres.

Various options have been considered in developing this proposal, including: do nothing; remain on existing sites and refurbish existing CSIRO facilities; consolidate on an existing CSIRO site; and the proposed option to collocate with Queensland government departments on the Boggo Road and Coopers Plains precincts. The solution now proposed to this committee has been evaluated as optimal to meet the CSIRO's needs.

Both precincts have been the subject of detailed environmental and heritage evaluations as part of Queensland government and Brisbane City Council processes. Consultation will continue to ensure that all environmental management issues are properly evaluated and addressed. The proposed works have been referred to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Water Resources, consistent with the requirements of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

The proposal will incorporate various initiatives to minimise the impact on the environment, including selection of materials of proven sustainable manufacture, together with various passive and active energy and water conservation measures. The estimated out-turn cost, excluding GST, for the CSIRO component of this proposal is \$85 million at March 2007 prices, inclusive of escalation costs, contingencies, all professional fees and authorities' charges.

Construction is planned to commence in early 2008 and is programmed for completion in 2010. Funding for the CSIRO component will be derived from the sale of the CSIRO sites at Cannon Hill, Indooroopilly and Cleveland, with the balance of funding from CSIRO capital funds. The proposed ecosciences precinct and health and food sciences precinct will be constructed and owned by the Queensland government. CSIRO's capital contribution will secure a 99-year lease within the facilities.

In developing this proposal, CSIRO, the Queensland government and its consultants have contacted all interested groups, including CSIRO staff and unions, and local authorities having statutory responsibility over the locality and services. Support for the proposal has been received from staff, government and industry organisations. The proposed design fully meets the CSIRO functional brief and conforms to the technical requirements of local authorities. It will be designed and constructed according to the Building Code of Australia, relevant Australian standards and appropriate laboratory codes.

The CSIRO believes that the completed facilities will provide an appropriate workplace that will stimulate and promote research and development activities. The facilities will greatly enhance opportunities for collaboration and the conduct of nationally and internationally significant research. The new facilities will provide a powerful statement about CSIRO's ongoing commitment to research and development in promoting industry profitability, managing Australia's unique ecosystems, adapting to climate change, ensuring biosecurity and improving human health.

The CSIRO is satisfied that co-location with the Queensland government science agencies in the proposed developments are the most appropriate, timely and cost-effective way to provide effective and efficient accommodation that meets CSIRO's research and development needs. It therefore submits the proposal to the committee for examination and seeks its endorsement.

CHAIR—Thank you very much.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Thank you for the submission. I apologise for not being able to inspect the sites this morning. I was unavailable. The submission from the CSIRO outlines the need for the project and that there are currently inadequate facilities to fulfil current and future needs. It also talks about the benefits of co-location and collaboration. Who actually proposed

the project and to whom? Did the state government or the Department of Public Works approach the CSIRO or was it the other way around?

Dr Johnson—It was the former, I believe. The project was initiated by the Queensland government and the CSIRO was approached.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—We heard earlier—and obviously I will not go to the detail of all that was put to us in the confidential hearing—that some form of agreement has been entered into between the CSIRO and, I assume, the Department of Public Works. Is that correct? Which bodies are the signatories to that memorandum?

Dr Johnson—The signatories are CSIRO and the state of Queensland.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Who is representing the state of Queensland in discussions? Is it the Department of Public Works?

Dr Johnson—It is the Department of State Development.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Is there a Department of Public Works in Queensland?

Mr Robertson—Yes.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Why are the two departments involved?

Mr Anker—The role of the Department of State Development is to coordinate the activity from a science led solution. The Department of Public Works is then responsible for the actual build and the state's ownership of the land.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—I heard there will be more discussions and hopefully some resolution to those discussions in the form of subsequent agreements, particularly around the management of the project and the management of the site beyond the completion of the project. I might direct this to you, Dr Johnson, and then to either one or both of the state representatives here today. Are you confident that all bodies involved in this project are able to resolve any outstanding differences and are you confident that there will be a process set in place that will successfully reconcile differences that might occur from this point on?

Dr Johnson—Yes, I am.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Mr Anker, I direct a similar question to you. Are you confident that the parties that are signatories to the current agreement and will be signatories to the subsequent agreements will be able to ensure that any differences will be resolved so that there will not be an impasse that cannot be properly resolved to ensure the construction of the project?

Mr Anker—I am totally confident that we will be able to reach agreement on the final versions of the documentation at hand. We have collectively been working on this project for some time now. I believe that we would have identified any issues to date had there been major stumbling blocks and I do not believe there were any.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—But the Department of Public Works will be the contract manager—is that right, Mr Robertson?

Mr Robertson—Yes. The understanding at the moment is that the Department of Public Works will be the facilities manager responsible for maintenance of the building fabric.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Does that mean you have oversight of the construction? I am just trying to get a handle on who will be looking after the day-to-day construction and who will be responsible for—

Mr Robertson—The Department of Public Works is the construction authority for the state of Queensland. The principal of the building contract that will be formed in the future will be the state of Queensland through the Director-General of Public Works, and public works representatives will be responsible for the management of the contract throughout its progress.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—How do you envisage the CSIRO playing its role in order to protect its own interests in that particular process?

Mr Robertson—I feel that a set-up similar to what we have been carrying on through the design processes will be in effect, where we have structured committees involving the state, Public Works, State Development and CSIRO, who obviously have a guiding role within the conduct of the contract.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Dr Johnson, do you feel confident that there is enough agreement in place to ensure that CSIRO's interests will be properly looked after in the current arrangement?

Dr Johnson—Yes, I do. I reinforce Mr Anker's comment that there is a longstanding history of cooperation between CSIRO and the state, supported by appropriate committees and governance mechanisms. I am absolutely confident that there will not be any impediments moving forward.

Senator PARRY—I will continue on the same theme. We did go into some of this in the confidential briefing so, without mentioning figures, which is quite important, I just had a quick look through the memorandum of understanding and it mentions lease documents. Have they been completed or drafted?

Mr Moody—The memorandum of understanding is really for the planning and design of the facility. As we stated in the earlier briefing session, a formal project agreement is close to finalisation, which will extend the project agreement through design and construction phases. The project agreement also makes reference to two other agreements, one being a building management agreement and the other being a lease agreement. Both of those will be in place prior to completion of the facility, and that will govern the ongoing operations and leasing arrangements for the facility.

Senator PARRY—The MOU also states that the terms of the project agreement will be completed by 2006. Are we running behind?

Mr Moody—Yes, we are.

Senator PARRY—The Coopers Plains site, which we did not have an opportunity to see today, has existing state government infrastructure. Could you describe the condition of the existing state government infrastructure in terms of maintenance and possible next refurbishment or what the whole-of-life aspect of the current state government buildings is?

Dr Johnson—That is for our colleagues in the Queensland government.

Mr Robertson—The Queensland Health Scientific Services complex is in reasonably good condition. It has a programmed period for maintenance and capital replacement as required. It is undergoing some extension and upgrade to services at the moment, but it comes under Department of Public Works maintenance arrangements and it is a fully maintained government asset. It is a critical asset to the state, and it is maintained as such.

Senator PARRY—What is the age of the facility?

Mr Robertson—They started construction of QHSS in the late eighties, so it is, I suppose, 25 years. There have been gradual additions to the complex since then. I do not have the date of when the last building was completed but there has been continuous progress since the early eighties.

Senator PARRY—The early or the late eighties?

Mr Robertson—I would have to get back to you on that. I suspect it was around 1984 or 1985 but I would need to get that confirmed.

Senator PARRY—Will there be any cost to the Commonwealth in doing additional work which would be regarded as maintenance work or capital improvement to the existing state facility in the proposed development?

Mr Robertson—Certainly not. The whole structure of the health and food sciences precinct at Coopers Plains has been as a stand-alone facility, and it will have self-contained maintenance and ongoing costs quite separate from the existing facilities.

Senator PARRY—If the Commonwealth leaves before the end of 99 years, which I understand is the term of the lease, does the infrastructure that the Commonwealth has invested in remain the property of the state of Queensland?

Mr Moody—The project agreement will have clauses in it which cover the relationship if CSIRO withdraws. I think from memory that there is a five-year vacation period.

Senator PARRY—I noticed that the MOU mentioned that the state could, after a 30-year lease, give five years notification of withdrawal. I did not read anything about the Commonwealth. I have only had a cursory glance, but it seemed to be one-sided. That is why I was interested in the lease documentation.

Mr Anker—The relevant section of the MOU, which you probably have access to, says that if the state ceases its ownership of the Boggo Road ecoscience precinct or ceases to use that precinct principally for ecoscience research, CSIRO may surrender the Boggo Road ecoscience precinct lease and, if it does so, the state will be liable to pay CSIRO reasonable compensation interest for the surrendered component part. That might give a bit of comfort that we will be dealing effectively, efficiently and also equitably with the partner.

Senator PARRY—Thank you. The state or Commonwealth can answer this question. Does the University of Queensland or any other university within the state of Queensland have any financial interest in this arrangement?

Dr Johnson—It does not.

Senator PARRY—There is obviously a keen research interest. Will the Commonwealth provide to the University of Queensland or any other state university any reduction in fees, any incentive or anything that will go back to the Queensland universities?

Dr Johnson—There is nothing going back directly to the university. Of course, it is within CSIRO's broader strategic interest to collaborate with the universities, and in particular we have an important role in the national innovation system in the training and development of scientists through joint supervision of students. Without doubt, there will be students located in both precincts but they will be enrolled through the University of Queensland, Griffith University and other universities. They will be physically located on either of these precinct sites. That would be the only material connection that would occur there. As part of our collaboration we would make space available—it is quite a routine thing—but otherwise there is no other material interest.

Senator PARRY—In paragraphs 35, 36 and 37 of the submission that CSIRO made to the Public Works Committee there is information about four options that are being considered for the proposal, and you have opted for the option that you are proposing to us today. I would like to ask about an unwritten fifth option: is there any chance that CSIRO could co-locate the facilities that exist here that are substandard to any other location in Australia? I know that option is not palatable to the Queensland dynamic but we need to be satisfied that we are not wasting resources and duplicating facilities.

Dr Johnson—The answer to that is no, and the principal reason is that we believe a very important part of conducting successful research and development is to have our scientists as close as physically possible to the issues they are addressing. Most of the research that is going on here is directly addressing priority issues that are geographically located within the Queensland region. We do not believe it is the most effective or efficient deployment of our staff to be servicing the needs of north eastern Australia out of any other location.

Senator PARRY—Does any other location within Australia handle matters that are handled here, or does Queensland have some unique aspects of research?

Dr Johnson—The answer is both. There is certainly CSIRO staff in other laboratories around Australia who from time to time will work in Queensland as appropriate and as the project demands require certain skill sets that they have. The issue we are dealing with here is that we are attempting to bring together the combined scientific talents of both the Queensland

government and the CSIRO staff to address national issues that happen to manifest here in the Queensland context.

Senator PARRY—Earlier this morning when we inspected the abattoir site at Cannon Hill there was an indication that that was going to cease. It is good to have that on the record. I understand that that is a diminishing arm of that institute, anyway. Is that correct?

Dr Johnson—That is correct.

Senator PARRY—If you do need any abattoir facilities there will be no need to duplicate or rebuild?

Dr Johnson—No.

Senator PARRY—Paragraph 140 of the submission indicates that there is support from the Premier—and the Deputy Premier, whose electorate this falls within so I imagine there would be strong support from the Deputy Premier. Has there been any opposition from any person? It is indicated in one of the annexures that there has been wide consultation with members of parliament and community groups. Has there been any group whatsoever that is opposed to the proposed developments?

Dr Johnson—I will ask Mr Anker to comment specifically. To the best of my knowledge there has been concern expressed primarily by one group only, which is the parents and citizens of the Dutton Park School, which immediately adjoins there. I will ask my colleague from the state to address that.

Mr Anker—A key component for Boggo Road is also the urban renewal that will occur there as a result of the Boggo Road Urban Village so there is an element of heightened community interest in what that will deliver the community in that general area. Generally there has been excellent support for what has been identified today as the parts of that village, which includes not only the science precinct but also a residential component and a commercial precinct. That coupled with a major bus-rail interchange and connectivity through the Eleanor Schonell green bridge to UQ actually activates an area that has sat there since the jail closed in about 1998. The community has been expecting and looking to government to show some leadership there and deliver a solution for what has been a vacant site for a number of years. There has been some interest expressed about the heritage jail component, and I am sure we are sensitive to whatever development may occur as a result of that. There is an existing group that run, for want of a better term, ghost tours in that facility. We are tuned into those sorts of things as we develop through. The particular interest has been: will it cause disturbance during construction and what does it mean for the school close to there? We have been able to work closely with the school and other community groups through the public consultative process as well as through other mechanisms to keep them fully informed. There has been letter drops, newsletters and public meetings.

Senator PARRY—Has that allayed the fears or concerns?

Mr Anker—I believe it has to a great degree. There is a requirement that the public look to that development as it occurs to ensure that commitments given today are maintained.

CHAIR—I would like to go to a few questions on the building itself. I am sure that members of the committee would agree with me that we are pleased to see the attention that has been paid to making these buildings environmentally friendly, and the sustainability in both energy conservation and water. But there are a few questions. At paragraph 134 you have outlined some of these measures. In terms of the building itself, in paragraph 132 you talk about ‘direct digital building management’ and ‘external monitoring and control’ and also ‘daylight compensation lighting control systems’. For the public record could you perhaps explain what they mean in terms of energy conservation?

Mr Roehrs—‘Direct digital control’ refers to the building management system and that is a computerised system that allows direct control of all of the service systems within the building. It means that all of the elements in the building can be fully programmed to be switched on or off to monitor energy consumption. We can fine tune all of the systems within the building to their optimal operability. There will be several thousand of these control points on all of the systems within the building and that gives us an enormous capacity to tailor and manage the energy.

CHAIR—Have you made a comparison between the situation if you did not put these measures in against what happens when you do use these measures in a building? Is it able to be quantified?

Mr Roehrs—I can give you an example. If a typical fume cupboard, of which there are many in this building, was left running at all times it would consume something like a typical domestic household’s energy consumption per annum, so one of the key energy savings is to make sure that the fume cupboard sashes are actually lowered and controlled and that alarm systems go off if the sashes are left open, we can make a very significant reduction in that sort of energy consumption. That obviously depends to a certain extent on the user interface but that is an example of how we can make very significant energy savings by putting systems in place to assist.

CHAIR—I think this is important to have on the public record because the government has a very strong commitment, as I am sure the opposition does, to making sure we do everything possible to reduce energy consumption and thus greenhouse gas emissions. It is important for government buildings to lead in this respect. That is why as a committee we put a fair emphasis on that, and I think it is helpful for the public to know just what the energy saving by using these measures is.

Mr Moody—CSIRO have been installing building management systems in all of our more recent buildings and the energy savings we are generating can be of the order of 15 to 20 per cent. The reason is that it gives us the ability to operate the building within different degrees of temperature and humidity within the building so we can tailor it to ambient conditions. The savings are related to the extent of people’s tolerance in terms of hot and cold conditions in the building in trying to achieve those savings. But they are significant and it is something where we get a payback in a very short time frame because of the energy savings that come from that.

CHAIR—I think it was when we did the Newcastle building that the Newcastle council gave us very impressive figures of their retrofitting of public buildings. I thought you may have had

some definitive figures on that. Can you tell us a little bit more about the daylight compensation lighting control systems?

Mr Roehrs—We are using a range of different systems within the building. Some of them will be motion detection activated. In other words, if someone has moved through a space and there is no further activity for a certain period, the lights will switch off. There are other systems where, particularly in relation to office spaces on the perimeter of buildings where light levels are at an acceptable level, light switches will switch off automatically. So there are a range of different electronic systems related to lighting, depending on the location within the building, which will control and modify the energy consumption through lighting to match the optimal lighting conditions.

CHAIR—You also refer at paragraph 134 to the selection of materials with low volatile organic compound emissions and those of a proven sustainable manufacture. Can you, for the public record, give a little bit more information on why this is important?

Mr Roehrs—There is now quite a considerable body of evidence that indoor air quality has a significant effect on the wellbeing of the occupants of buildings. So we are increasingly focused on trying to make sure that the materials that are used have minimal off-gassing in relation to compounds that might affect health—for example, avoiding materials like PVCs and using things that use aromatic solvents, for example, that improve the air quality and contribute to sustainability. So we are looking for products that are not going to be using rainforest timbers and the like.

CHAIR—We have of course just heard quite a lot of public debate over the ABC buildings here and public health concerns. So obviously these are pretty important matters, and that takes me to some questions in that some of the operations going on in this building will be of a hazardous nature in terms of materials being used. For example, you need fume cupboards and so on. Can you tell us what measures you have taken to protect both people working in the building and those in the exterior? If there is a need for fume cupboards then presumably there will be airborne discharges. Can you tell us how you are proposing to manage those?

Dr Johnson—I can answer that, Madam Chair. You are correct: fume stacks will be constructed at both the ecoscience precinct site and the food science site. I can assure the committee that their design will meet all regulatory requirements for such. The exact specifications of those fume stacks are still being developed and we will be undertaking detailed plume studies to minimise any impacts of those.

CHAIR—Could you make sure that you further advise the committee on those measures as they are being developed?

Dr Johnson—Sure. I can also assure the committee that there will be no harmful substances discharged from those fume stacks whatsoever and that all air quality standards will be met.

CHAIR—What kinds of hazardous materials will you be catering for?

Dr Johnson—There are obviously a range of things that are possible. All contaminated waste and normal routine waste that is generated from laboratory buildings will be contained in secure

facilities on site that will meet all regulatory requirements. That waste will be disposed of by approved contractors. Any airborne contaminants, further to my previous answer, will also be contained using filter systems and such which, again, will meet all regulatory requirements to ensure that any hazardous substances will not be discharged.

CHAIR—Is it likely that there could be soil and water contamination as well?

Dr Johnson—There will certainly be soil and water materials on site, but, as in my previous answer, we believe we have the measures in place to make sure that they are contained on site and that they exit the site with the appropriate protocol.

CHAIR—I apologise for jumping around a bit with my questions, but as we are working over several sites it is difficult to get continuity. In terms of the hazardous materials and the sites you are vacating, what measures are being taken to make sure that any hazardous areas are properly remediated before those properties are disposed of?

Mr Moody—As a matter of course, before we dispose of any site, we undertake environmental audits. We have had preliminary audits, or stage 1 assessments, carried out on each of the three sites we are planning to sell. The extent of contamination on those sites is something that can be readily dealt with on each of them. We do not see it as a problem in meeting all the environmental standards prior to disposal.

CHAIR—So there will be some checking of this prior to disposal?

Mr Moody—There will be a second-stage environmental audit which will determine what remedial action needs to be taken, but our first-stage audit indicated there was minimal contamination on the site.

CHAIR—So you can assure the committee that all those necessary steps will be taken to make sure the existing sites that are being disposed of will be remediated and that any new construction will incorporate measures to ensure that the buildings are safe?

Mr Moody—Yes.

CHAIR—In that regard, I imagine that in your buildings the fire risk would be quite high. Can you, Mr Moody, or Mr Roehrs explain to the committee what measures have been taken and who has been consulted to ensure fire safety and appropriate evacuation procedures? You have quite a lot of people working on these sites. Can you explain to us what is happening there?

Mr Roehrs—Certainly. The flammable chemicals that are held on site fall well within the guidelines for laboratory projects. We are following part 10 of Australian Standard 2243 in terms of how those flammable goods are managed and distributed across laboratory floors. The loadings are relatively low compared to what the capacity could be under those guidelines for a building of this type. Nonetheless, fire safety is a very important part of what we do. We have been consulting with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service as well as with our building certifier in relation to the Building Code of Australia. We also have active consultation occurring with the occupational health and safety representatives of all of the agencies to make sure that we have compliance in safety and egress procedures for the building.

CHAIR—We did notice the high level of attention paid to occupational health and safety on the last visit that we made to Indooroopilly, so thank you for that. There are two other issues before we go back to one of the others. One is in relation to access to the building for people with a disability. What provision has been made for that?

Dr Johnson—To ensure equitable access for all persons with disabilities, all buildings will be designed to meet the requirements of the relevant Australian standards and the Building Code of Australia. We are using the term ‘barrier-free access’ and I refer you to paragraphs 135 and 136 of our statement of evidence which I believe should give you a statement on what we will be doing.

CHAIR—Thank you. Given the number of additional people who will be moving to these two sites, what is being done to ensure appropriate traffic management on both sites—the ingress and egress and other issues around traffic management?

Dr Johnson—There are two responses to your question. At the macro level, I inform the committee that, as a general design philosophy on the site, we are trying to minimise the number of vehicles actually entering and exiting the site to a bare minimum. Our estimate at this point in time is that there will be only 174 vehicles on the site, and they will all be work related and required for field equipment and so on. There will be no parking for staff members on site because we believe, as an ecoscience precinct, we should be able to walk the talk.

Given that the precinct is immediately adjacent to major bus and rail interchanges, we need to show leadership here and minimise the number of vehicles entering and leaving the site every day. Obviously, the type of disruption that comes with having 1,200 folks on site is a potential concern to residents as well. At a macro level, the whole philosophy of the site is to minimise private vehicle access to the site. Of course, there will be individuals who will need private access from time to time and there will be a small reservoir of capacity there for people under particular circumstances; there will be visitor parking. Within the greater precinct at Boggo Road, there will be a two-hour parking area—a traffic controlled area—around the site again to minimise impacts on local residents. But overall the philosophy is about the use of public transport onto the site.

CHAIR—Returning briefly to the environmental issues, you mention here at paragraph 134 that there will be water saving devices and the collection of roof rainwater. Can you explain to us in a little more detail what amount of water you anticipate collecting and how far it will go to make the site reasonably sustainable in water?

Mr Roehrs—One of the big problems we have in Queensland at the moment with water is that, no matter how much water storage you have, you are not going to store enough. We are looking at significant volumes of water storage on both the Coopers Plains site and the Boggo Road site. We are looking at around 420,000 litres of storage for Boggo Road. We are still determining the exact storage amount for Coopers Plains, but it is probably in excess of 300,000 litres of storage. We are proposing to use that for a variety of activities on the site. Not only will we be collecting rainwater but also we are collecting the water that is required for testing the fire apparatus in the building—which, on its own, constitutes 250,000 litres a year—as well as our recycling of the RO waterways. We are looking at, wherever possible, focusing on water

consumption in terms of not only savings but also capture of whatever sources we can on the site.

CHAIR—I must say that we are very pleased to hear it. We have been having some robust discussions with other agencies about this particular subject and are glad to see you leading the way.

Senator PARRY—I am very intrigued with the parking. I suppose that means that corporate salaries will incorporate a pushbike now and not a car.

Dr Johnson—I will be taking the train and I am looking forward to it.

Senator PARRY—Very good. This would have to be the smallest number of car parks for a facility of that size that I have heard of. This is probably a design or management question, but can the greenhouses on the top of the Boggo Road precinct design be located on the ground? I have two reasons for asking this. It seems unusual to put greenhouses on the top of a building and there is the possibility of damage through cyclonic or storm activity, which could shoot them over the side as well as, equally, the contents of those buildings—and that is apart from the danger of debris. It is a design issue for the greenhouses. Why are they on the top rather than on the ground?

Mr Roehrs—The key characteristic of a greenhouse for research purposes is that it needs 100 per cent solar exposure, so they need to be able to get full solar exposure from first thing in the morning until late in the afternoon. That should not be impeded by trees or other buildings. In fact, the greenhouses that you saw at Indooroopilly have a major problem at the moment because eucalypts overshadow them. To get consistency in your research results, you need that constant and regular sunshade input. For that reason, with the proposed density of activity that occurs at the Boggo Road site, it is not possible to put them on the ground because they will be overshadowed by adjacent buildings.

Senator PARRY—Would they have been placed on the ground if you had the space? Would that have been the first preference?

Mr Roehrs—If you have the space, yes. But late afternoon shadows are so extensive from adjacent buildings that you really need to be almost in a rural area to effectively put in place that sort of facility. The roof space becomes a very effective way of doing that. We have one horizontal datum for the greenhouses. Obviously, we will be subject to wind loads, but the benefit of being higher is that we will probably get less debris up there than we would if we were down at ground level, where you are exposed to trees and other low-flying debris. In some ways it will be a more protected environment on the roof, but it will have slightly higher wind exposure.

Senator PARRY—How does that affect the safety aspect and the design of the greenhouses? Can you still effectively get a decent greenhouse and make it safe and secure?

Mr Roehrs—Yes, you can. All systems will have a wind speed design capacity that we will design to. The higher risk greenhouses will be of very substantial construction to make sure that their integrity is maintained in storm events and depending on the level of security that will

reduce accordingly. However, we will be designing structural systems for the wind load characteristics and similarly the glazing systems used will also be designed to withstand hail and wind events.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—I refer to paragraph 105 where, in the final sentence, it says:

Space for a future block is provided at the southern end of the site.

That may be a very innocuous sentence, unless it means that there is a likelihood of some construction that would be involved subsequent to this project. Is there something that CSIRO or indeed the state government is envisaging occurring beyond this project to utilise that space?

Dr Johnson—Certainly from the CSIRO's perspective there is nothing planned in the foreseeable future. I believe the intent of that paragraph is merely just to inform the committee that, should demand for CSIRO's work necessitate additional staffing levels over and above the capacity in the building currently, there is flexibility on the site.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—So that space is the space that you are leasing?

Dr Johnson—No, it is a separate space to the south of the building.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—So in other words it is not under the lease?

Dr Johnson—No, it is not.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Can I refer you to paragraph 138, childcare provisions. It says:

The Queensland Government supports establishment of a private sector childcare centre within the Boggo Road Urban Village.

It makes the point:

No childcare facilities are located on the Queensland Health Scientific Services campus.

That does not go a long way to saying what is likely to occur with childcare services but, whilst there is in principle support from the government, is there any intention by either the Queensland government or CSIRO to have a private sector provider lease an area of the site?

Dr Johnson—I will let the Queensland government answer for itself but with respect to CSIRO's position on child care, it is our understanding that child care is a permissible use on the site. Under the material change of use application that the state has made with the Brisbane City Council, it is an allowable use on mixed use sites such as the ecosciences precinct. So our perspective is that any provision of child care on that site will be the responsibility of the private sector and we support that. The social amenity and impact assessment report that was prepared for the MCU application identified approximately 12 facilities offering childcare services including before and after school care, vacation care and long day care in the suburbs immediately surrounding the ecosciences precinct. Our belief is that the market will respond to

the need. There are 12 facilities in the immediate surrounding area and our view is that there will be ample opportunity for staff members who have children requiring care to take advantage of local facilities.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—How do you know that, other than as indicated—

Dr Johnson—A social and amenity impact assessment report was done as part of the project.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Has that looked at not only the number of service providers but also their vacancies?

Dr Johnson—Yes. Again I stand to be corrected here, but I believe that it has looked also at the demographic of staff members who are likely to occupy the site.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Have you surveyed your own staff on their need for childcare provision?

Dr Johnson—Yes, we have. We have also undertaken a survey on transport needs.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Just generally, in your opening statement you talked about consultation with staff.

Dr Johnson—Yes.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—What form of consultation occurred?

Dr Johnson—We have undertaken three core forms of consultation. We have a staff newsletter that briefs staff on the conduct of the project as it is undertaken. Senior colleagues, some of whom are present here today, and I have undertaken personal briefings of staff as the project has proceeded. There is also a CSIRO project control group, which I chair, which contains staff representatives and which has, as a permanent member, a representative of the CSIRO staff association; so the union is formally represented on that control group. I should also add that in the design process there has been very heavy engagement from staff in the design of the layouts of laboratories and office spaces. Staff working groups have been working with the architect, for example. So those folks who are very important stakeholders in this process are having a say in how the thing will operate.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Again I might be better informed about this if I had been here this morning, but can you see any downsides to the location? Clearly, overall, on the face of it, it would appear that the objectives will be fulfilled: the synergies providing benefits that do not currently exist and, of course, having more up-to-date advanced facilities. But are there any downsides? For example, is there any staff disruption—and you may not be able to avoid it—which, in the end, will still be a problem even though not to the degree as would prevent you from proceeding?

Dr Johnson—My experience in these things—I am sure your experience is the same—is that there will always be some element of staff disruption. What we are seeking to do at the moment is to minimise that. As I said before, we have undertaken a transport study to try to better

understand what might be the impact on travel times and staff movements—just as an example. I do not sound very excited today because I have one foot in the grave.

Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR—Metaphorically speaking.

Dr Johnson—Metaphorically speaking, yes. But my view of this project is that it is truly unique and very exciting. An opportunity, such as this, to bring together so much of CSIRO with our colleagues in the state does not come along very often. In fact, such opportunities do not come along. This is the first time in nearly 20 years of work in this sector that I have seen such an opportunity.

The other upside for me on this project is the fact that, through some vision of and leadership by our colleagues in the state agencies, this proposal is part of a much bigger picture of science innovation investment here in Brisbane. With the linkages with the University of Queensland all the way up through the Griffith University, the Princess Alexandra Hospital, the Queensland University of Technology, Kelvin Grove Village and the Royal Brisbane Hospital, this will be a globally unique set of research and development investments in the spine of Brisbane. CSIRO feels that, as an institution that sees itself as a global leader, it is very important to be part of that. Overall, my view is that the strong benefits this project brings will offset the inevitable impacts.

Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR—Just going back to the inevitable, because I guess that is what I was referring to, I think I am making the right assumption too that there is a net gain, and you have put it quite well. I just wonder what those problems are. Do they include, for example—and you can refute some of them—problems with moving from locations that allow for car parking to locations that allow for no parking?

Dr Johnson—Yes.

Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR—If you live in a particular part of Brisbane, it might well be that getting on a train is a wonderful thing, but some who live in the outer suburbs of Brisbane might find that less wonderful. I am thinking of those sorts of issues.

Dr Johnson—I consider that to be the sole area of staff concern, moving forward, and it is really localised to one of our sites, which is at Cleveland. Those of you who are familiar with Brisbane would know that Cleveland is approximately 30 kilometres from the CBD. Staff down there have basically had a nice community life at the beach and we are asking them to move up to a CBD location. There is no doubt that for some—but not all—of those staff, there will be a material impact on them in terms of their travel time to work. So we are working closely with them to look at options for how we might address that.

Mr BRENDAN O’CONNOR—That may include impacts on their families—in balancing family, picking up kids et cetera.

Dr Johnson—Correct. There are all those sorts of things. So we have quite openly recognised that this is a challenge. We realise it is a point of sensitivity for a number of staff down there, and it is occupying a significant amount of focus for the project team as to how we address that particular issue, recognising that for some folks it is going to come down to a matter of choice as to whether they want to commute. But, wherever possible, the organisation has given an

undertaking to those staff that we will assist them. Likewise, for some staff, who live in the far western suburbs, one of the joys and hassles of having a river like the Brisbane River is that it does not give direct access. Again, we are investigating opportunities for staff to commute as far as here and then connect with the public transport system across the Green Bridge and through the tunnel. So, you are right, there are those issues. But I can give the committee my assurance that we are treating them seriously and that we are working with staff. We have three years, with your blessing, to get these issues in hand as best we can.

CHAIR—These questions probably go more to Mr Anker or Mr Robertson. Has a managing contractor been appointed yet?

Mr Robertson—No, not as yet. We are looking at going to tender in August, with a managing contractor formally entering into a contract early in the new year, around February, to construct the building.

CHAIR—Have expressions of interest been called for?

Mr Robertson—Yes, there have been. There was a two-stage expression of interest process undertaken. The first stage was a briefing to industry and a general registration of interest in respect of a number of capital works projects that the Queensland government is putting out to the market in the near future. Only those companies which pre-qualified under what we call our PQC system—which is a pre-qualification for tenderers to be able to tender for government work—were eligible for consideration. The second stage was a formal expression of interest allowing contractors to target projects that suited their capability and capacity and their business. Each contractor was required to provide a formal submission against set criteria. An evaluation panel within DPW was formed to assess the submissions. I might add that what DPW was doing was selecting contractors across a range of major projects which are on our forward program at the moment. The final tender list will be determined based on the assessment of the earlier expression of interests that we had some time ago. I am anticipating that we will have a tender list of emerging contractors by around August to September.

CHAIR—For the public record, what is the project delivery time line?

Mr Robertson—We intend to start construction in February 2008 and complete around August 2010, which is a period of some 2½ years for the ecosciences precinct. The health and food sciences precinct will start at the same time, in February 2008. However, it has a year less of construction time, so we are looking at completion in mid-2009.

CHAIR—When does CSIRO propose to move? What is the anticipated date of decanting people from existing buildings?

Mr Moody—The Coopers Plain complex will be completed in 2009. Immediately after that is completed, we will be relocating our staff from Cannon Hill to the Coopers Plain site. In a similar way, if August 2010 is the completion date for the ecosciences precinct, we will then move our remaining people from Indooroopilly, those from QBP who are coming across and those from Cleveland. That will be from August 2010 or immediately or soon after completion.

CHAIR—Are you confident that the time lines can be met?

Mr Moody—In our experience—the state is probably more experienced in what happens in Queensland—certainly we believe that the time for completion for the scale of the project is realistic.

CHAIR—I think Queensland like Western Australia probably has a fairly robust building program. Is this creating difficulties in completing projects on time and on budget?

Mr Robertson—It certainly has not to date to my knowledge. I am confident that those times are quite reasonable for the scale of the projects that we are anticipating at the ecosciences precinct and the health and food sciences precinct.

CHAIR—I asked the question because this committee has in the past seen quite a number of projects come in late and therefore experience cost blow-outs. We want to be reasonably assured that there are realistic contingencies and we will not be seeing cost blow-outs in the project.

Dr Johnson—I think you were given that assurance in the in camera session.

CHAIR—I would like to thank all the witnesses who appeared before the committee today.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr O'Connor**, seconded by **Mrs Moylan**):

That, pursuant to the power conferred by section 2(2) of the Parliamentary Papers Act 1908, this committee authorises publication of the evidence given before it and submissions presented at public hearing this day.

Committee adjourned at 2.37 pm