

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
1968—Parliamentary Paper No. 149

*Joint Committee on the
Australian Capital Territory*

**Report on the Desirability of
Establishing in Canberra
a Municipal Type Market for
Fruit, Vegetables and
Farm Products**

*Brought up and
ordered to be printed 23 October 1968*

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CANBERRA: 1968

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

1. The Committee was appointed for the life of the 26th Parliament by Resolutions of the House of Representatives and the Senate on 7 March and 8 March 1967 respectively. It was first appointed by Resolutions of both Houses of the Parliament on 8 November 1956 and re-appointed in succeeding Parliaments.

2. The duties of the Committee are to:

- (a) examine and report on all proposals for modifications or variations of the plan of lay-out of the City of Canberra and its environs published in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* on the nineteenth day of November 1925, as previously modified or varied, which are referred to the Committee by the Minister for the Interior; and
- (b) examine and report on such other matters relating to the Australian Capital Territory as may be referred to the Committee by the Minister for the Interior.

3. PERSONNEL OF THE COMMITTEE—March to October 1968

Chairman: Senator I. A. C. Wood¹

succeeded by

Senator J. E. Marriott²

Members: Senator R. C. Cotton³

Senator D. M. Devitt

Senator the Hon. Sir Kenneth Morris, K.B.E., C.M.G.⁴

Senator E. W. Prowse⁵

Senator J. P. Toohey

Senator Dame Ivy Wedgwood, D.B.E.⁶

Senator R. G. Withers⁷

Mr F. M. Daly, M.P.

Mr J. A. England, E.D., M.P.

Mr E. M. C. Fox, M.P.

Mr J. R. Fraser, M.P.

¹ Resigned from Committee 16 May 1968.

² Appointed to Committee 2 May 1968; elected Chairman 17 May 1968.

³ Resigned from Committee 2 May 1968.

⁴ Term as Senator expired 30 June 1968.

⁵ Appointed to Committee 19 August 1968.

⁶ Appointed to Committee 16 May 1968; resigned from Committee 21 August 1968.

⁷ Appointed to Committee 21 August 1968.

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SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee's *principal* Recommendations are summarised as follows:

Municipal Type Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market

- (1) That there is no justification for the establishment of a municipal type wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra at the present time.
- (2) That, whilst the proposal to establish such a wholesale fruit and vegetable market is supported, changing trends in marketing could require a substantially greater population than 250,000 persons in Canberra and the region to sustain such a market.
- (3) That a survey of the economic viability of a publicly owned wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra should be carried out by the National Capital Development Commission or a competent firm of business consultants when the population of Canberra and region reaches 200,000.

(For the full Recommendations in respect of the establishment of a wholesale market, please refer to paragraph 51, pages 9-10.)

Permanent publicly owned Retail Fruit and Vegetable Market

- (1) That a permanent publicly owned and administered retail market for fruit and vegetables should be established in Canberra as soon as possible.
- (2) That, during the initial stages, sales of fruit and vegetables only should be permitted.
- (3) That, initially, the number of stalls should be limited to twenty.
- (4) That, preference in the initial allocation of up to eight of the total number of stalls should be given to vendors operating at the special selling area.
- (5) That no wholesale distributor of fruit and/or vegetables should be eligible to be granted the lease of a stall.
- (6) That one stall only should be leased to any one person.

(For the full Recommendations in respect of the establishment of a retail market, please refer to paragraph 62, pages 12-15.)

The Siting of the Permanent Retail Market and any Future Municipal Type Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market in Canberra

- (1) That the area of land in the suburb of Fyshwick adjoining the lease of Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Distributors Pty Ltd and bounded on the north by the Canberra/Queanbeyan railway line, on the east by a

straight line drawn from the junction of the Canberra/Queanbeyan railway line and Jerrabomberra Creek to the point in Mildura Street where that street turns in a southerly direction and on the south by Mildura Street be reserved for a future municipal type wholesale fruit and vegetable market.

- (2) That the adjoining area enclosed by Dalby and Mildura Streets and a line drawn parallel to but 425 ft north-east of Canberra Avenue be the site of the permanent retail fruit and vegetable market.
- (3) In recommending separate but adjoining areas for the retail and any future wholesale markets, the Committee recognises that some time in the future, some adjustment of the boundaries of these two areas, within the total recommended area of approximately 35 acres, may be necessary.

(Both areas are shown in the map included as Appendix II to the Report.)

The Possible Establishment of Additional Retail Fruit and Vegetable Markets in Canberra

That the National Capital Development Commission should examine the possibility of establishing additional small retail markets for fruit and vegetables in future new towns within the Canberra metropolitan area.

(The full Recommendation is contained in paragraph 65, page 16.)

The Future of the Special Selling Area

That the special selling area for vendors of fruit and vegetables should remain until a permanent retail fruit and vegetable market is established.

(The full Recommendation is contained in paragraph 69, page 16.)

Amendments of the *Hawkers Ordinance* 1936-1966 of the Australian Capital Territory

That proposed amendments of the *Hawkers Ordinance* 1936-1966 of the Australian Capital Territory should be enacted without delay to eliminate completely any possibility of a recurrence of hawkers occupying fixed positions in Canberra.

(The full Recommendation is contained in paragraph 71, page 16.)

The Proposed Canberra-Tumut Road

The assistance of the National Capital Development Commission is sought in expediting the construction of a direct Canberra-Tumut road, preferably via Brindabella.

(The full Recommendation is contained in paragraph 73, page 17.)

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY

**Report on the Desirability of Establishing
in Canberra a Municipal Type Market for
Fruit, Vegetables and Farm Products**

THE INQUIRY

1. In a letter to the Committee on 13 March 1968, the Minister for the Interior, the Hon. P. J. Nixon, M.P., requested it to inquire into the desirability of establishing in Canberra a municipal type market for fruit, vegetables and farm products. The Minister's letter read:

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chairman of the Joint Committee on the A.C.T., to ask that your Committee conduct an enquiry into and report upon the desirability of establishing in Canberra a municipal type market for fruit, vegetables and farm products, and what form such a market should take.

I make this request against the background of a great deal of interest and concern about the marketing of fruit and vegetables in Canberra, and I have in mind that the subject was debated to some extent by the A.C.T. Advisory Council during 1966, and again more recently.

The Council has put it to me that the fruit and vegetable market presently operating on a trial basis at Canberra Avenue be established on a permanent basis, with proper facilities for orderly marketing. The Council also proposes to receive submissions with a view to advising me further on this matter.

There are indications that a population of some 200,000 or more is necessary to support a full wholesale market, and Canberra's population has not yet reached that size. Nevertheless, it would be most helpful for forward planning if the enquiry were to examine now the question of the possible need and timing for such a market, while at the same time it examines the more immediate question of what facilities should be provided now and perhaps progressively in the future, for various categories of trade and direct consumer purchasing.

In view of the importance of this question to the public generally, as well as to those businessmen who operate in this field, and keeping in mind that the establishment of municipal type fruit and vegetable markets could be a matter of great interest and concern, not only in the A.C.T. but also in the neighbouring region of New South Wales and perhaps beyond, I feel that an enquiry by your Committee would be the most appropriate and satisfactory way of examining the whole matter.

The enquiry might give particular attention to the following matters:

- The location, size and form of any fruit and vegetable market facilities to be provided now.
- What provision should be made for future development.
- How should any such market or markets be established.
- What form should the management take, and what if any of the various sections of the trade from producers to consumers should be directly represented on any management body.
- What facilities should be provided and when, for various categories of buyers including trade and direct consumer purchasers.
- In general, whether, when, and in what form or stages should any municipal type markets for fruit, vegetables and farm products be established in Canberra.

I would very much appreciate your advice that your Committee will undertake this enquiry, whereupon I will arrange for my Department and the National Capital Development Commission to provide basic information and to render every possible assistance to the Committee.

2. On 14 March 1968 the Committee agreed to undertake the inquiry.

INTRODUCTORY

3. By advertisement in nineteen newspapers serving Canberra and the surrounding fruit and vegetable growing areas the Committee invited written submissions from interested individuals and organisations. Additional witnesses were also called by the Committee and a total of sixty-one written or oral submissions were received by the Committee.* Evidence was taken at twelve public hearings and, in addition, the Committee held seven deliberative meetings during its consideration of the reference.

4. On 30 April and 1 May 1968 respectively, the House of Representatives and the Senate resolved that the powers of the Committee should be extended to enable it to move from place to place during the currency of the inquiry. This extension of its powers enabled a sub-committee of the Committee to carry out an inspection of the facilities and working arrangements at existing wholesale and retail markets in the mainland States. In all, ten Australian markets were visited by the sub-committee.

5. The Committee also had the benefit of a report of the facilities at the Golden Gate Markets, South San Francisco.

6. During its interstate inspections, discussions were held with market representatives, State Ministers and City Council Aldermen. Additional discussions were held in Sydney with representatives of the Australian Primary Producers' Union and of the New South Wales Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries.

7. Growing areas and packing shed facilities at Griffith, New South Wales, were inspected by the Committee and members of the Committee held meetings with representatives of a growers' co-operative, a privately-owned packing house and Shire Council Aldermen.

8. Throughout its inspections, the Committee was accompanied by representatives of the National Capital Development Commission and the Department of the Interior who, with the approval of the Chairman of the Committee, attended as observers.

HISTORICAL

9. In his competition drawings for the design of the City of Canberra, Walter Burley Griffin incorporated an area for a 'market' site as part of a merchandising centre on the northern side of the present King's Avenue bridge. A later map prepared by Griffin when he was Federal Director of Design and Construction for the Australian Capital Territory omitted this site.

10. The possibility of establishing a fruit and vegetable market in Canberra has been canvassed for at least the past thirty years. The first inquiry appears to have been made in 1938 when Canberra's population was about 10,000.

* See Appendix I for list of witnesses.

Sir William Clemens, C.M.G., in reporting on Canberra's cost of living, concluded 'that whatever advantages might follow the establishment of a mart in Canberra, the city has not yet reached the stage at which this could be done with any prospect of success'.

11. Some consideration was given to the matter by the Department of the Interior in 1943 and again in 1947 when the views of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (Canberra and Homebush Divisions), the New South Wales Department of Agriculture and the Commonwealth Department of Health were sought. These authorities almost entirely discounted the feasibility of a wholesale market but thought in terms of the establishment of a retail market or of improved shopping facilities. At that time there were few retail outlets for fruit and vegetables in Canberra.

12. The views of the National Capital Planning and Development Committee were sought by the Department of the Interior in 1947 and 1948 following an application by a local firm to establish a wholesale and retail fruit and vegetable market at Kingston. The location of the proposed market was not supported by that Committee but it did not comment on the principle involved. The application was subsequently withdrawn.

13. In February 1948 the Australian Capital Territory Advisory Council discussed the possibility of establishing a market in Canberra but does not appear to have adopted a resolution on the proposal.

14. The views of the Newcastle Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries were sought by the Department of the Interior in 1949. The population of Canberra was then about 21,000 and the Chamber favoured the establishment of a market.

15. In reply to a question on notice, the Department of the Interior representative advised the Advisory Council in February 1950 that the Department was inquiring into the need for providing land for market facilities but that no decision had been reached. In the same month, the then Minister for the Interior, Mr (later Sir Philip) McBride criticised the fruit supply in Canberra.

16. In February 1950 the Canberra Chamber of Commerce, following discussions with the Department of the Interior, and in consultation with growers and distributors, submitted a plan for a market building in Canberra. Basically, the proposal was that the Department should provide the shell of the market building, with offices and adequate provision for off-loading and parking, and capable of being sub-let in sections. It was envisaged that the building would be used primarily for a holding centre and as a market centre for fruit and vegetables.

17. Negotiations between the Department and the Chamber continued for some months but in the meantime, in August 1950, a market gardener was granted leases of two blocks in Braddon for the establishment of market facilities. The Department advised the Chamber in March 1951 that, as private markets and cold storage facilities were being established by private enterprise, this 'reduced the necessity for departmental participation in a market.' The then Member of the House of Representatives for the Australian

Capital Territory was also advised by the Minister for the Interior in September 1950 that Government assistance for a market was unlikely to extend beyond selection of a site, which could be developed by private enterprise.

18. The National Capital Planning and Development Committee again examined the question in 1951 and reported that the establishment of a municipal type market managed by the Department of the Interior or a co-operative society 'warranted favourable consideration.'

19. In December of that year, the Australian Capital Territory Advisory Council again raised the matter and was informed by the representative of the Department of the Interior that favourable consideration by the Department could be anticipated to a firm proposal for any such development by private enterprise. The Advisory Council brought the matter up again in November 1952 and was informed by the Department of the Interior's representative that 'the Department does not contemplate operating a produce market, but if growers or sellers of fruit and vegetable products desire to establish a market a site can be made available for the purpose.'

20. An application from a company for a site to set up a wholesale and consumer fruit and vegetable market was lodged in October 1955 but although the Department of the Interior was prepared to make a site available, the application was not pursued. Similarly, two proposals in 1963 for the establishment of a food market lapsed.

21. Consideration given to these applications led to the selection by the National Capital Development Commission of two adjoining sites which were intended to be publicly offered for lease for purposes of food storage and distribution. Before these leases could be offered, an approach was made by other business interests for a lease for a somewhat similar purpose.

22. Discussions between the business interests, the National Capital Development Commission and the Department of the Interior led to the public auction in April 1967 of a lease of a site (being a consolidation of the two previous sites selected by the National Capital Development Commission) 'for the purpose only of the wholesale storage, distribution and ripening of fruit and vegetables'. It was also specified that 'sales from the site are to be wholesale only (except as in his absolute discretion the Minister may severally in writing otherwise permit)'.

23. At the public auction held on 19 April 1967, the Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Distributors Pty Ltd was the successful bidder, paying a premium of \$40,000 for the right of the lease. The company was subsequently granted the lease which required the commencement within six months and the completion within twelve months of the date of commencement of the lease, of approved buildings, to include cool storage and ripening rooms in the first stage of building construction and costing not less than \$100,000; and for the completion within five years of the date of commencement of the lease of total building development costing not less than \$250,000.

24. The company has pressed ahead with its building development and has completed not only the first stage required by the Department but all stages of the project. Its business operations will be centred on the new building shortly.

25. In the meantime, the Australian Capital Territory Advisory Council had resolved, on 30 May 1966 that ' . . . there be established in Canberra a properly constructed and conducted fruit and vegetable market to be set up and operated by a Trust and all wholesaling be confined to this local market'. The reply of the Minister for the Interior on 18 August 1966 stated that investigations by his Department and the National Capital Development Commission did not support any suggestion that the time was opportune to establish a fruit and vegetable market. He added that a minimum population of Canberra of 200,000 plus a regional catchment would be necessary to support a viable wholesale market.

26. On 19 September 1966 the Advisory Council further resolved 'That the Minister be advised to take the necessary steps to have a feasibility survey conducted to ascertain whether or not a wholesale fruit and vegetable market could be established in Canberra and when such a market should be established'. The Minister did not accede to the Council request.

THE CREATION OF A SPECIAL SELLING AREA

27. The action in 1966 of several hawkers 'squatting' regularly each week at certain favoured points around the city led to concern about the resultant traffic problems and complaints from established fruit and vegetable retailers in Canberra and from the Canberra Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber was concerned particularly at the use of Crown Land by the hawkers for the payment of an annual hawker's licence fee of \$2* in competition with shopkeeper/retailers who had to pay big rents and meet much higher overhead costs.

28. On 15 August 1967, the Minister for the Interior announced that an area off Canberra Avenue had been selected with a view to it being used as a special selling area by fruit and vegetable hawkers who might thus be induced to cease the practice of 'squatting' at the roadside. The area would be available from 15 September 1967 on a six months' trial basis and a daily fee of \$2 would be charged for the right to operate from the area. Trading would be permitted only during the hours of daylight and all vehicles, stalls and goods must be removed by sundown each day.

29. The arrangement received popular support and it became necessary for the Department of the Interior to extend the area to accommodate additional hawkers and provide sufficient parking space for customers.

30. The establishment of the special selling area led to new protests from fruit and vegetable retailer/shopkeepers in Canberra who claimed it was of direct and serious consequence to them. They made their objections known to the Minister for the Interior and to his Department.

31. Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Distributors Pty Ltd, the company who had secured the lease of the site for the construction of a building for the wholesale storage, distribution and ripening of fruit and vegetables, claimed that the unplanned creation of the special selling area raised a grave threat to the project they had undertaken and to which they were committed to spend a total of \$290,000.

* The fee payable by a hawker operating from a truck is \$2 if he carries fruit and vegetables only. If additional items are also offered for sale, the annual fee is \$8.

32. The Australian Capital Territory Advisory Council resolved on 20 November 1967 that:

- (i) The fruit and vegetable market presently operating on a trial basis at Canberra Avenue, Kingston, be established on a permanent basis with proper facilities for orderly marketing.
- (ii) That, this Council be invited to co-operate with the planning for and siting of any such market.
- (iii) That in order to assist the Administration in (ii) that this Council hear any objections to the establishment of such a market and advise the Minister of the fairest way to plan and site a fruit and vegetable market for the Australian Capital Territory.

33. It was in the light of these circumstances that, at the expiration of the six months' trial period of the special selling area, the Minister for the Interior agreed to the extension of the period and asked this Committee to conduct an inquiry into the desirability of establishing in Canberra, a municipal type market for fruit, vegetables and farm products.

WHAT IS A MUNICIPAL TYPE MARKET

34. A fruit and vegetable market is, in essence, a clearing house to which primary producers send their fruit and vegetables in bulk and from which these goods radiate out through various channels, to the public. It involves a number of independent buyers and independent sellers operating together and competing in the one place. A 'municipal type' market indicates that it is in public ownership and management, being owned and operated by a city or municipal council or by a trust or authority specially constituted for that purpose.

35. A wholesale market disposes of produce through agents, merchants or, in some cases, growers themselves to retailers for ultimate sale to consumers. Generally, in such a market, a consumer has the right of purchase provided he is willing to buy in bulk lots.

36. At a consumer (or retail) market, sales are made direct to the consumer with no restriction on the size of any purchase. In essence, it is a gathering together of independent retailers in one area, under one roof, competitively selling from stalls, direct to the public.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF A WHOLESALE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET

37. With the flexibility of the trucking system, improved transportation and better storage facilities, the success of a wholesale market is now very much less dependent on its proximity to production. However, it is still fundamental to the successful operation of that market that its geographical position enables it to command a sufficiently wide field of operations, from producers to consumers. The population to be serviced by a market must be such as to merit the operation of strong retailers, agents and merchants and to attract and maintain sufficient grower support. **There must be strong agents and merchants in direct and vigorous competition seeking to attract the patronage of growers and retailers alike.**

38. The development of an adequate and continuous supply of produce to a market is basic to its operation but it is also essential to that operation that the market should be able to absorb, at all times, the total quantities of produce forwarded to it by growers. No grower can afford to risk over-supply and no retailer can risk a lack of continuity of supply of in-season fruit and vegetables.

39. The turnover of a market must be large enough to enable the cost of the buildings and facilities necessary for efficient operation, together with its operating costs, to be covered by the charges levied on the wholesale sellers. Evidence of the decline in number of wholesale operators at markets due to high overhead costs, demands that rental charges at such a market must be kept to the absolute minimum required to meet the cost of construction and maintenance of that facility.

CHANGES IN MARKETING TRENDS

40. There is an increasing tendency towards by-passing wholesale markets which will influence the marketing of fruit and vegetables in Australia for some years. The practice of bringing together products in a centralised location in order that the operation of exchange, standardisation and price fixation may be carried out by buyers and sellers is clearly diminishing. Buyers and sellers are operating in widely separate locations in the production areas, significantly reducing the through-put of centralised markets. These trends appear to be principally due to improved transportation, communication, refrigeration, storage and grading facilities and the development of larger production units replacing the small and unspecialised farms.

41. Consumer preference is playing an increasingly important role in the marketing of fruit and vegetables. The popularity of pre-packaged fruit and vegetables in convenient and attractive nets, packs and polythene wraps is significantly increasing. Sales of these pre-packaged items through supermarkets and chain stores where the housewife can carry out 'one-stop' purchasing of all her household requirements are growing. These supermarkets and large chain stores are purchasing a greater proportion of their fruit and vegetable requirements direct from producers, by-passing the wholesale markets.

42. Evidence presented to the Committee indicates that processors are establishing strong contractual relationships with growers. Growers' representatives are playing an increasingly important role in the marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables and are tending to exercise more control over the merchandising of their products to the retailer.

43. With the substantial drop in the through-put at centralised markets in Australia, the population necessary to sustain an economically viable wholesale market is increasing and will continue to increase. The Committee believes that this tendency will continue at least for some years, necessitating careful re-appraisal of proposals for the establishment of additional wholesale markets in Australia at this time.

THE CASE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MUNICIPAL TYPE WHOLESALE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET IN CANBERRA

44. In April 1968, the population of the Australian Capital Territory, Queanbeyan and the surrounding areas of New South Wales was approximately 144,000 persons, principally made up of 105,500 in Canberra, 2,700 in Rural A.C.T. and 13,200 in the Municipality of Queanbeyan. The National Capital Development Commission estimates that the population of Canberra will grow to over 200,000 by 1976 and that after allowing for a population increase in Queanbeyan and the surrounding areas, the potential sales area of a Canberra wholesale market will contain a population of 250,000 persons by that time.

45. When it presented its submission to the Committee, the view of the National Capital Development Commission was that, on the assumption of a continuation of the population growth trends of recent years and subject to confirmation by the operating experience of the proposed Wollongong market, it will be appropriate to establish a public wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra in about eight years' time and that preliminary legislative and design studies should commence by about 1970.

46. Local and regional production makes a contribution to the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables in Canberra but this contribution is uneven and relatively minor.

47. The major part of the Canberra-Queanbeyan demand for fruit and vegetables is met through wholesale merchants who sell both to retailers and institutional buyers. A total of 12 firms operating as wholesale merchants have been identified as meeting this demand, the two largest of these firms having combined to form a new company which has established a substantial wholesale commission agency in Canberra. It is this company which has constructed a modern wholesale distribution centre for fruit and vegetables in the Canberra suburb of Fyshwick.

48. Proponents of the establishment of a wholesale market claim that its creation would result in cheaper and fresher fruit and vegetables being available in Canberra. Producers strongly favour its establishment believing that the creation of another outlet would bring benefits to consumers and growers alike through savings in freight costs, regular supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to retailers and consumers, assurance of quality standards and an increased per capita consumption of these commodities. It should be noted, however, that there is little or no local manufacturing to absorb any surplus supplies in a glut period.

49. Principal opposition to the proposal has come from Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Distributors Pty Ltd who have constructed the modern wholesale distribution centre at Fyshwick. They claim that the establishment of a wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra at this stage would expose their investment to grave risk. The lease of the site where they have constructed their wholesale distribution centre was purchased at public auction in April

1967 for \$40,000 and required the completion within five years of the date of commencement of the lease of total building development costing not less than \$250,000.

50. The Committee believes that the Department of the Interior acted wisely when it offered this lease at public auction, resulting in the construction of a modern wholesale fruit and vegetable distribution centre. This action has, however, had some influence on the Committee in reaching its conclusions in respect of the establishment of a publicly owned and operated wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MUNICIPAL TYPE WHOLESALE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET IN CANBERRA

51. The Committee's findings and recommendations in respect of the establishment of a municipal type wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra are as follows:

- (1) The Committee is satisfied that there is no justification for the establishment of a municipal type wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra at the present time.
- (2) Whilst it supports the proposal to establish a publicly owned and operated wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra when such a proposal is an economically viable proposition, the Committee believes that changing trends in marketing could require a substantially greater population than 250,000 persons in Canberra and the region to sustain such a market.
- (3) That, until such time as it is decided to establish a municipal type wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra, the National Capital Development Commission and the Department of the Interior should encourage wholesale distributors of fruit and vegetables, totally unassociated with existing wholesalers of these commodities in Canberra to operate independently of and in competition with the existing wholesalers.
- (4) That additional wholesalers of fruit and vegetables be required to operate within the area recommended in paragraph 63 of this Report for the establishment of any future wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra.
- (5) That, when a decision is made to establish a publicly owned wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra, the lease of Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Distributors Pty Ltd and of any other wholesale distributors of fruit and vegetables operating in the wholesale market area should, if necessary, be acquired under fair and just terms as provided in the *Lands Acquisition Act 1955-1966*, for incorporation in such a publicly owned facility.

- (6) That any wholesaler whose lease is acquired for incorporation in a publicly owned wholesale fruit and vegetable market should be given the right to take up a wholesale selling area in the public market.
- (7) That a survey of the economic viability of a publicly owned wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra should be carried out by the National Capital Development Commission or a competent firm of business consultants when the population of Canberra and the region reaches 200,000.
- (8) That, when a municipal type wholesale fruit and vegetable market is established in Canberra, it should be administered by a Trust or Authority established for that purpose.
- (9) That the Trust or Authority referred to in Recommendation (8) above should consist of five members to be appointed by the Minister for the Interior. Of the members so appointed:
 - (i) Two shall be nominees of the Minister for the Interior, one of whom shall be Chairman of the Trust or Authority;
 - (ii) One shall be an elected member of, and nominated by, the Australian Capital Territory Advisory Council;
 - (iii) One shall be a consumers' representative, preferably a woman; and
 - (iv) One shall be a producers' representative.
- (10) That the design of the market should be similar to that of the Rocklea market operated by the Brisbane Market Trust.
- (11) That, initially, sales of fruit and vegetables only should be permitted but that the Trust or Authority should have the right to include other farm products (other than live poultry, birds or animals) should operating experience indicate that additional products should be permitted.
- (12) That sales at the market should be negotiated by private treaty as distinct from the auction system of selling.
- (13) That, with the coming into operation of a future publicly owned wholesale fruit and vegetable market, legislation should be enacted requiring all wholesaling of fruit and vegetables in the Australian Capital Territory to be carried out at that market.

THE CASE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT PUBLICLY OWNED RETAIL FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET IN CANBERRA

52. In January 1968, it was estimated that as many as 15 per cent of Canberra households each week were patronising the special selling area created by the Department of the Interior on a temporary basis to overcome the problem of hawkers selling from certain fixed roadside positions in Canberra. Whilst there was some falling off of patronage during the winter months, a significant proportion of Canberra's households regularly purchases its fruit and vegetable requirements at the special selling area.

53. Whilst the Committee believes that the Department of the Interior could have more appropriately dealt with the problem of hawkers selling from fixed positions by making a relatively minor amendment of the *Hawkers Ordinance* 1936-1966 of the Australian Capital Territory, the popularity of the temporary arrangements has clearly demonstrated the community's desire that some form of marketing arrangement should continue.

54. Vendors engaged in selling at the special selling area have claimed that their operations have brought to the people of Canberra, fruit and vegetables at lower prices, not only at that area but throughout Canberra generally. These vendors have strongly advocated the establishment of a permanent retail market with proper facilities.

55. Although higher rentals would need to be charged at any properly constructed market establishment, vendors at the special selling area have claimed that reduced wastage of produce resulting from protection from the weather would enable them to sell even more cheaply at a permanent market.

56. Support for the creation of a properly established retail market facility for fruit and vegetables has come from a great number of organisations and individuals in Canberra. Elected members of the Australian Capital Territory Advisory Council in a submission to the Committee stated 'Council considers, despite the probable loss of business to some retailers, that it is in the public interest that the market should be retained permanently'. The representative of Canberra Consumers Incorporated submitted that some form of retail market should be continued and claimed that it serves a useful purpose by providing a section of the community with fruit and vegetables it could not normally afford and that its existence provides a healthy element of competition to keep fruit and vegetable prices for the whole community at a reasonable level.

57. Favouring the establishment of a public retail market, the National Capital Development Commission said that 'the Commission believes that the public support given to the truck vendors' selling area at Hume Circle* has demonstrated the desirability of establishing a public retail market in Canberra and that the public retail markets which have been established for many years in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide provide precedents for such a move'. The Commission went on to say that a public retail market for fruit and vegetables would make a significant addition to the range of retailing in Canberra and that although such a market would provide increased competition for the established retailers, the extent of this competition would be limited because of the market's less central position, limited trading hours and more modest facilities.

58. Opposition to the existence of the special selling area has been strongly expressed by the Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Retailers' Association prior to and during the Committee's inquiry. It claimed that 'the establishment of open-air facilities for the sale of fruit and vegetables in Canberra Avenue, Griffith, in September 1967, was of direct and serious consequence to others engaged in the sale of fruit and vegetables in Canberra' and that 'special

* The special selling area off Canberra Avenue.

favourable trading circumstances have been created for a very limited section of the trading community'. The Association further claimed that 'the vendors' market is in direct contradiction of the previously-applied principles of planning and development of Canberra' and that 'the present vendors' market represents a major departure from the land use system rigidly adhered to in the development of Canberra'.

59. The Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Retailers' Association expressed the opinion that if a permanent vendors' market is to be established in Canberra, it could jeopardise the prospects of establishing a full-scale municipal market. It believed that any permanent vendors' market should be established on a site well removed from the immediate city area, and that the lease of such a site should be sold at public auction like any other commercial lease in Canberra. In the Association's view, retail sales only should be permitted from such a market and facilities to be erected on the site must conform with all requirements imposed on similar commercial and industrial undertakings in Canberra.

60. **The Committee recognises that losses may have been experienced by some fruit and vegetable retail shopkeepers since the creation of the special selling area and is not unmindful of the possible effects on these shopkeepers should a permanent retail market be established. However, the Committee believes that the public interest is of paramount importance and accordingly supports the establishment of a permanent retail market for fruit and vegetables in Canberra.**

61. **It is the Committee's desire that such a permanent retail market should provide free and real competition in the sale of fruit and vegetables. The Committee's recommendations have been framed with this clear objective.**

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT PUBLICLY OWNED RETAIL FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET IN CANBERRA

62. The Committee recommends:

- (1) That a permanent publicly owned and administered retail market for fruit and vegetables should be established in Canberra as soon as possible.
- (2) That, initially, sales of fruit and vegetables only should be permitted.
- (3) That, ultimately, the retail market should be operated in conjunction with any future municipal type wholesale market but that, in the interim, a Trust should be constituted to administer it.
- (4) That the retail market Trust should consist of three members to be appointed by the Minister for the Interior. Of the members so appointed:

- (i) The Chairman shall be nominated by the Minister for the Interior and shall be a person whose experience and ability qualifies him for such appointment. He shall not be an officer of either the Department of Health or the Department of the Interior.
 - (ii) One shall be a representative of the Department of the Interior, and
 - (iii) The remaining member shall be an elected member of, and nominated by, the Australian Capital Territory Advisory Council.
- (5) That planning for such a market should be carried out by the National Capital Development Commission and the Department of the Interior and that, if necessary, the Department of the Interior should manage the market during its initial stages pending the appointment of the Trust.
- (6) That preference in the initial allocation of up to eight of the total number of stalls in the retail market should be given to vendors of fruit and vegetables who have been issued with Permits by the Department of the Interior to operate stands at the special selling area (off Canberra Avenue) within the twenty-eight days immediately prior to the presentation of this Report to the Parliament. In the event of more than eight such vendors applying for this preference, allocation of these stalls should be determined according to the number of days operated during the previous twelve months, the highest preference going to the applicant with the greatest number of days of operation and so on in descending order of magnitude. In the event of a tie, the position should be determined by a ballot conducted by the Department of the Interior or the Trust.
- (7) That no wholesale distributor of fruit and/or vegetables should be eligible to be granted the lease of a stall.
- (8) That, in the initial allocation of stalls (other than those before-mentioned in Recommendation (6) above) should there be an excess of eligible applicants over the number of available stalls, allocation should be determined by a ballot conducted by the Department of the Interior or the Trust.
- (9) That one stall only should be leased to any one person and that person should be required to make a sworn statement that he holds no interest, direct or indirect, in
- (a) any other stall in the retail market; or
 - (b) any wholesale fruit and/or vegetable business
- and that he recognises that he would be prohibited from acquiring a direct or indirect interest in any other stall in the market.
- (10) That stalls be leased on a yearly basis, with rental payable monthly in advance. Any lessee may surrender his lease with one month's notice.

- (11) That no stall should be leased other than as set out in Recommendation (10) above and Recommendation (16) hereunder.
- (12) That the transfer of the lease of any stall should be permitted only with the approval of the Trust.
- (13) That, initially, the weekly days of trading should be Thursday to Saturday, inclusive, with trading permitted between the hours of 8 a.m. and sunset.
- (14) That the Trust have power to vary the days and hours of trading in the light of operating experience and public demand.
- (15) That the Trust have power to include other farm products in the items permitted for sale, but that the sale of live poultry, birds and animals shall not be permitted.
- (16) That the Trust should consider setting aside one stall for allocation on a weekly basis to community organisations operating within the Australian Capital Territory for the sale of goods other than fruit and vegetables.
- (17) That any fittings additional to those provided by the Trust in the building shall be installed only with the approval of the Trust and at the expense of the stall holder. The Trust shall provide in each stall, a counter, hand wash basin and light and power outlets.
- (18) That sales should be permitted only from a counter and that no sales should be permitted from trucks or other vehicles.
- (19) That the Trust have power to cancel the lease of any stall holder who fails to maintain proper hygiene or health standards in the market or who does not comply with the provisions of the *Weights and Measures Ordinance 1929-1967* of the Australian Capital Territory or who otherwise acts in a manner detrimental to the public interest or contrary to the conditions laid down in his lease.
- (20) That, initially, the number of stalls to be provided in the retail market should be limited to twenty but that the design of the building should be such as to enable its future extension should the Trust decide that this is necessary.
- (21) That the Trust should have authority to grant a franchise for the operation of cool room facilities at the market should there be an application to provide such facilities on a commercial basis for the use of stall holders.
- (22) That the market should not be elaborate or over-capitalised. It should be a single, elongated building with stalls having equal frontage and all occupying the complete depth of the building. In particular, it should:
 - (i) Contain adequate toilet and washing facilities for stall holders and customers;
 - (ii) Have walls, or roller shutters for the protection of the stall holders and customers and for security of the premises;

- (iii) Provide loading ramps at the rear for the handling of goods from trucks;
 - (iv) Provide overhanging awnings at the front for customer protection;
 - (v) Be so designed and situated that future expansion can be easily and inexpensively carried out, and
 - (vi) Be provided with a hard standing parking area and smooth surfaced surrounds.
- (23) That the site reserved by the National Capital Development Commission for higher quality industrial or wholesaling development along Canberra Avenue and adjoining the area recommended for the permanent retail market, should be leased to businesses or institutions required to service the entire market area.
- (24) That rent to be charged for the lease of stalls should be calculated so as to provide a proper return on the capital cost, maintenance and operation of the retail market.

THE SITING OF THE PERMANENT RETAIL MARKET AND ANY FUTURE MUNICIPAL TYPE WHOLESALE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET IN CANBERRA

63. The Committee recommends:

- (1) That the area of land in the Canberra suburb of Fyshwick, adjoining the lease of Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Distributors Pty Ltd and bounded on the north by the Canberra/Queanbeyan railway line, on the east by a straight line drawn from the junction of the Canberra/Queanbeyan railway line and Jerrabomberra Creek to the point in Mildura Street where that street turns in a southerly direction, and on the south by Mildura Street (as shown on the map included as Appendix II to this Report), be reserved for a future municipal type wholesale fruit and vegetable market in Canberra.
- (2) That the adjoining area enclosed by Dalby and Mildura Streets and a line drawn parallel to but 425 ft north-east of Canberra Avenue be the site of the permanent retail fruit and vegetable market.
- (3) In recommending separate but adjoining areas for the retail and any future wholesale markets, the Committee recognises that some time in the future, some adjustment of the boundaries of these two areas, within the total recommended area of approximately 35 acres, may be necessary.

THE POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL RETAIL FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKETS IN CANBERRA

64. The Committee believes that the creation of additional small retail markets for fruit and vegetables in future new towns within the Canberra metropolitan area could provide valuable retail outlets for future residents of suburbs within those towns. In making this observation, the Committee

stresses that it is referring to as yet unplanned towns, and that adequate notice of any intention to establish such a retail fruit and vegetable market should be given prior to the offer of any business leases within the town, suburban or other shopping centres in that town.

65. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the National Capital Development Commission should examine the possibility of establishing additional small retail markets for fruit and vegetables in future new towns within the Canberra metropolitan area.

THE FUTURE OF THE SPECIAL SELLING AREA

66. The Committee believes that the operations of vendors at the special selling area (off Canberra Avenue) should be permitted to continue pending the establishment of the permanent retail fruit and vegetable market. It is pleased to note that evidence presented to the Committee during the course of this inquiry led to an improvement in the toilet and washing facilities available at the area and is of opinion that these facilities should be sufficient to serve the area until the permanent market is established.

67. In the opinion of the Committee, there should be no increase in the permit fee of \$2 per day charged by the Department of the Interior for the right to operate in the area. However, should additional interim improvements be necessary prior to the construction of the permanent retail fruit and vegetable market, an appropriate increase in fees would be justified to defray the cost of these improvements.

68. The Committee believes that strict surveillance of the area should be continued by the responsible authorities to ensure proper hygiene and health standards and the enforcement of the conditions laid down in the *Weights and Measures Ordinance 1929-1967* of the Australian Capital Territory.

69. The Committee recommends that the special selling area for vendors of fruit and vegetables should remain until a permanent retail market for fruit and vegetables is established in Canberra, and that regular inspections should be continued to safeguard the interests of the consumers.

AMENDMENTS OF THE *HAWKERS ORDINANCE* 1936-1966 OF THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

70. Evidence presented to the Committee demonstrated that there are deficiencies in the *Hawkers Ordinance 1936-1966* of the Australian Capital Territory. The Department of the Interior has indicated that amendments have been drafted to prevent hawkers operating from fixed positions and to effect other improvements in the legislation. It is understood that the Department is awaiting the results of this Committee's inquiry before proceeding to enact these amendments.

71. The Committee is anxious that any possibility of a recurrence of hawkers occupying fixed positions in Canberra should be eliminated completely and recommends that the Department of the Interior should enact proposed amendments of the *Hawkers Ordinance 1936-1966* of the Australian Capital Territory without delay.

THE PROPOSED CANBERRA/TUMUT ROAD

72. During the course of this inquiry, evidence has clearly shown that savings could be achieved in the transportation of fruit, vegetables and other products to Canberra should an all-weather road be constructed more directly linking Canberra and Tumut. It will be recalled that, in 1959, this Committee reported on the proposed road and recommended that it should be constructed via Brindabella. Apart from other advantages, construction of the road on the route proposed would open up considerable areas for the production of fruit and vegetables to serve the Canberra area.

73. **As the Tumut, Batlow and Tumbarumba areas are an important source of supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to the Australian Capital Territory, the Committee requests the assistance of the National Capital Development Commission in expediting the construction of a direct Canberra/Tumut road, preferably via Brindabella.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

74. The Committee expresses its thanks to all witnesses for their valuable contributions. It gratefully acknowledges the considerable assistance given by fruit and vegetable marketing authorities in all States and in the production areas inspected by the Committee.

75. The Committee records its very real appreciation to its Clerk, Mr L. M. Barlin, for his unremitting and efficient work in all aspects of this inquiry. The Committee finally expresses its thanks to the Hansard staff for their efficient reporting and speedy preparation of the reports of the evidence and proceedings.

JOHN E. MARRIOTT
Chairman

Canberra,
11 October 1968

APPENDIX I

LIST OF WITNESSES

- ANDREWS, Mr W. C., Associate Commissioner, National Capital Development Commission.
- ARCHER, Mr R. W., Principal Urban Economist, National Capital Development Commission.
- BATINICH, Mr E., Chairman, Young Cherry Growers' Co-operative Limited.
- BEECHER, Mr K. J., General Manager, Griffith Producers' Co-operative Co. Ltd.
- BENSLEY, Mr R. W. D.
- BIGG, Mr J. W., Chairman, Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Retailers' Association.
- BOOTH, Mrs M. N.
- BORTOLUSSI, Mr M., Director, Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Distributors Pty Ltd.
- BOSWORTH, Mrs J. M.
- BROOKS, Mr J. H., Chairman, Mountain Maid Foods Co-operative Limited, Batlow.
- CALEY, Mr G. F., Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, New South Wales Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries.
- CANHAM, Mr J., Director, Young Cherry Growers' Co-operative Limited.
- CHAPMAN, Mr B. M., Technical Adviser, National Capital Development Commission.
- CLAYTON, Mr K.
- CORRIGAN, Mr R. J., Acting Chief Clerk, Lands Branch, Department of the Interior.
- CUNNINGHAM, Mrs R., Hon. Secretary, National Council of Women of the Australian Capital Territory (Inc).
- D'AQUINO, Mrs E.
- DAVIS, Mr C. H. C., Acting Executive Officer, Lands Branch, Department of the Interior.
- DOUST, Miss D.
- DUBE, Mr B. H. J., General Manager, Mountain Maid Foods Co-operative Limited, Batlow.
- EAST, Mr S. E., Secretary, Canberra Chamber of Commerce.
- EDWARDS, Mr E. V.
- FLEWELL SMITH, Mr B., General Manager, The Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing, Brisbane, and Member, Brisbane Market Trust.
- FORTESCUE, Mr R. E., Senior Consultant for Operations Research, W. D. Scott and Co. Pty Ltd, North Sydney.
- FRANK, Mr F. G.
- GREETHAM, Mr A., Director, Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Distributors Pty Ltd.
- HEAP, Miss J.
- HITCHCOCK, Mrs D.
- IRVINE, Mr L. H., President, Southern Districts Branch, Real Estate Institute of New South Wales.
- JASPRIZZA, Mr R. J., Hon. Secretary, Young Cherry Growers' Co-operative Limited.
- JOSEPH, Mr P., Chairman, Adelaide Fruit and Produce Exchange Company Limited.
- KING, Mr C. J., Chief of the Division of Marketing and Agricultural Economics, New South Wales Department of Agriculture.
- KIRALY, Mr L. G.
- KOOREY, Mr R. D., Director, Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Distributors Pty Ltd.

LANSDOWN, Mr R. B., Associate Commissioner, National Capital Development Commission.

LAYTON, Professor R. A., Professor of Marketing, University of New South Wales.

LEEDMAN, Mr J. W., elected member, Australian Capital Territory Advisory Council.

LINDELL, Mr G. J.

MCGEECHAN, Mr P. C.

MORRIS, Mr R. A., Secretary, Leeton District Citrus Growers' Association.

MURRAY, Mrs S. R. E.

NICHOLAS, Messrs. D. M. and W. K.

PANNE, Mr K.

PEAD, Mr J. H., Chairman, Australian Capital Territory Advisory Council.

PENNINGTON, Mr J.

PERIN, Mr L., Director, Canberra Fruit and Vegetable Distributors Pty Ltd.

PETERS, Dr F. E.

PURNELL, Mr and Mrs D.

ROTH, Mr L. G., Shire President, Shire of Tumbarumba.

ROVERE, Mr M.

RYAN, Dr M., Medical Officer of Health for the Australian Capital Territory.

SMITH, Mr R. B., Town Clerk, The Council of the Municipality of Queanbeyan.

SPENCE, Mr J. A., Associate Director, W. D. Scott and Co. Pty Ltd, North Sydney.

STEINKE, Mr J. C., Lecturer in Economics, Wollongong University College, Wollongong.

STOREY, Mr K. W., Senior Planner, National Capital Development Commission.

TRIVETT, Mr H. F., Manager/Secretary, Brisbane Market Trust.

VERNON, Mr M. J., representative of Canberra Consumers Incorporated.

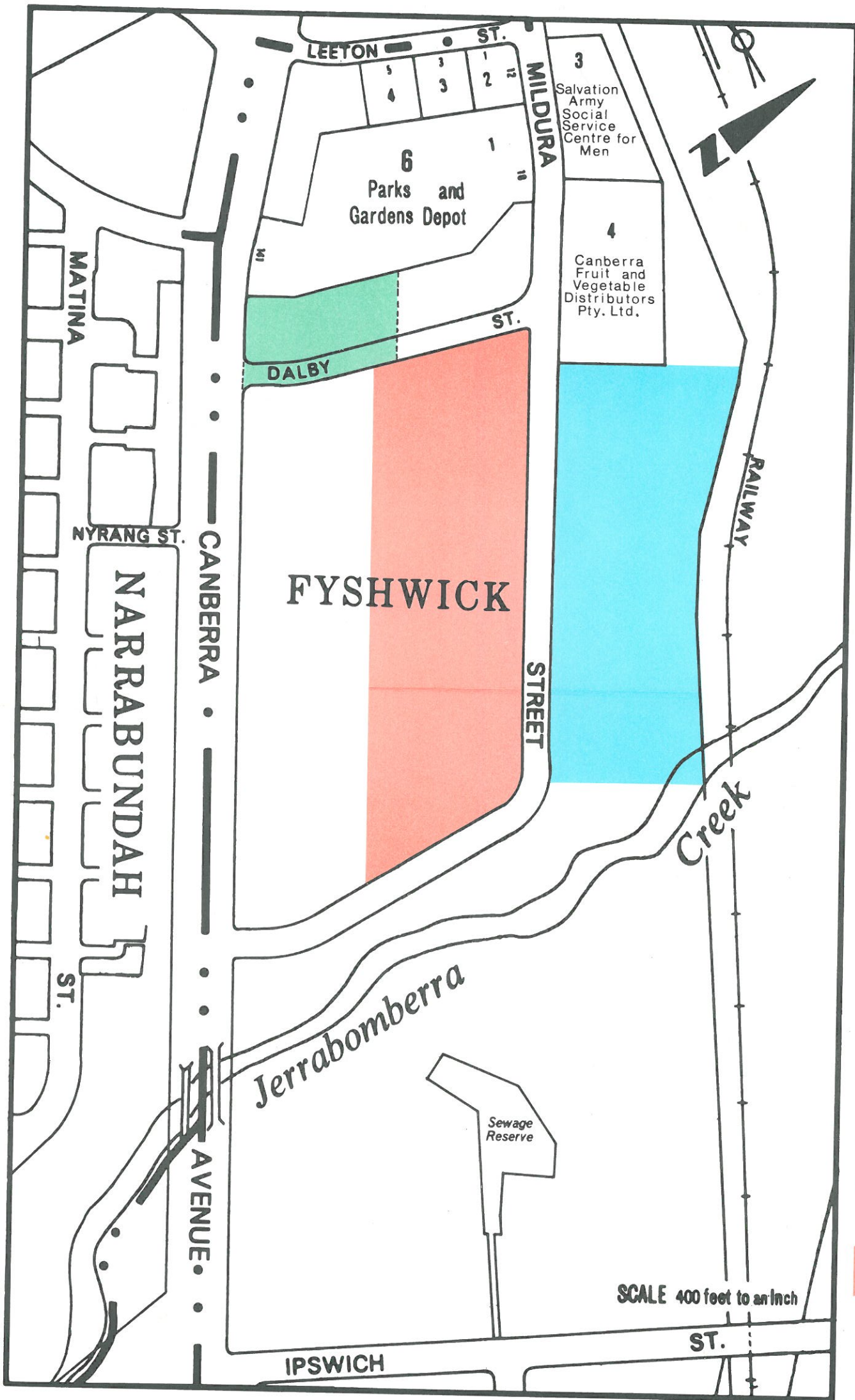
WALSH, Mr G. J., elected member, Australian Capital Territory Advisory Council.

WEBSTER, Mr R. H., Vice-President, Canberra Chamber of Commerce.

WILSON, Mr J.

WOODS, Mr M.

APPENDIX II



-  The present special selling area
-  Area recommended for the establishment of a future wholesale fruit and vegetable market
-  Area recommended for the establishment of a retail fruit and vegetable market

SCALE 400 feet to an Inch