

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON PUBLIC WORKS

**Thirty-Eighth  
General Report**

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# PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

## THIRTY-EIGHTH GENERAL REPORT

Pursuant to Section 16 of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969-1974*, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works have the honour to report on the proceedings of the Committee during the period between 18 July and 31 December 1974.

This report is an account of the proceedings and views of the Twenty-third Committee.

### TWENTY-THIRD COMMITTEE

1. Members of the Twenty-third Committee were appointed in the Senate and in the House of Representatives on 18 July 1974. They were Senator D. S. Jessop, Senator J. I. Melzer, Senator A. G. Poyser, Messrs R. N. Bonnett, H. J. Garrick, L. K. Johnson, the Honourable C. R. Kelly, Messrs L. J. Keogh and D. T. McVeigh.

2. At the first meeting of the Committee on 23 July 1974, Mr L. K. Johnson was elected as Chairman and the Honourable C. R. Kelly as Vice-Chairman.

### PROPOSALS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE

3. Fifteen references were made to the Committee and seven were reported on during the period 18 July to 31 December 1974.

4. A tabulated summary of references and reports is at the end of this report.

### MEETINGS

5. The Committee met on 19 occasions between 18 July and 31 December 1974. These meetings were held to take evidence at public hearings, carry out inspections or to undertake private deliberations and took place in Canberra (10), Melbourne (3), Sydney (1), Geelong (3), Townsville (2).

### PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE ACT—SECTION 18

6. In response to a request by the previous Committee, an amendment clarifying Section 18 (8) of the Public Works Committee Act was introduced into the Parliament by the Special Minister of State. Royal Assent to this amendment was given on 21 August 1974. Section 18 (9) now clarifies that point of time at which the estimated cost of a public work should apply and reads as follows:

‘The reference in sub-section (8) to the estimated cost of a public work shall be read as a reference to the estimate of cost made at the stage of design development at which all particulars of the work substantially affecting its cost have been determined.’

## **WORKS EXCEEDING PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REFERENCE LIMIT OF \$2 MILLION DURING DOCUMENTATION/TENDERING STAGE**

7. During the year, a suggestion was made in the House of Representatives that the Public Works Committee include in its General Report details of works which, in view of the new definition of 'estimated cost' in the *Public Works Committee Act 1969-1974*, are not referred to the Committee for examination and report.

8. As at 31 December 1974 there were no works proposals on which the first limit of cost estimate was below \$2m, and which, during documentation/tendering, exceeded \$2m due solely to inflationary pressures.

## **NORTHERN TERRITORY HOUSING**

9. The Committee refer to paragraph 6 of the Thirty-sixth General Report covering their activities for the year ended 31 December 1973, which was tabled in the Parliament on 13 March 1974. In that paragraph, the Committee noted with satisfaction that 'the Government will arrange for a reference to come before the Committee in 1974 for one group of 40 houses in the Darwin area'. This reference did not come before the Committee during 1974.

10. In the light of events following the tragic cyclone at Darwin on 25 December 1974, the Committee stand ready to investigate and report on any aspect associated with the reconstruction of the City of Darwin, should the Government deem it necessary. The Committee have been closely associated with the development of Darwin and desire to express their sympathy to the relatives of those who died in the disaster as well as to those who sustained such severe losses.

## **INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE ACT**

11. The Committee's views were sought on the Interdepartmental Committee's report relating to the Public Works Committee Act. The Committee considered the report and have conveyed to the Government their comments on the various aspects of the report.

## **CO-ORDINATION AND CONSULTATION**

12. The Committee are concerned at the lack of co-ordination and consultation between Australian Government and State Government Departments and local bodies having regard to the initial planning of some projects. The Committee feel that such co-ordination and consultation is essential to avoid duplication of services and to ensure that provision is made for all necessary requirements.

## **STANDARD OF SUBMISSIONS**

13. The Committee noted that in some instances, the standard of

departmental submissions was not satisfactory. The main shortcomings related to amendments being made to submissions after receipt by the Committee and in some cases the omission of relevant information. It is considered that submissions should be refined to an acceptable state prior to submission to the Committee.

### **PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM**

14. At a number of public hearings during the year, the public was not able to hear clearly the Committee's proceedings because of large attendances and the poor acoustic qualities of some venues. On two of those occasions, the Committee hired a public address system to alleviate the problem. It was decided that to meet this contingency in the future, a public address system should be available for the Committee's use. Arrangements have been made with the Principal Parliamentary Reporter to procure and operate a system which will be utilised as required.

### **APPRECIATION**

15. The Committee wish to record their appreciation to all those who gave assistance at hearings and site inspections, particularly the Department of Housing and Construction.

16. We also wish to thank the Principal Parliamentary Reporter, the Government Printer and respective staffs for their co-operation and service throughout the year.

### **STAFF**

17. The Committee were served by Mr R. B. Fenton as Secretary, Mr P. J. Roberts as Assistant Secretary, Mr G. L. Laffan and Mrs J. R. Thompson.

L. K. JOHNSON  
*Chairman*

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
Parliament House  
Canberra, A.C.T.

13 February 1975

Date Proposal Referred	Proposed Work	Date of Report	Report Presented	Expenditure Proposed when Referred to Committee	Expenditure Recommended by Committee	Motion for Expediency Passed	Remarks
30. 7.74	Area School at Yirrkala, N.T.	19. 9.74	2.10.74	\$ 5 000 000	\$ 5 000 000	23.10.74	Committee recommended the work should be constructed in 2 stages if required due to population factors.
30. 7.74	Redevelopment of Tennant Creek Hospital, N.T.	1. 8.74	1. 8.74	4 830 000	4 830 000	18. 9.74	Committee recommended that staff accommodation of a sufficiently high standard should be available to attract personnel required to operate the hospital efficiently.
30. 7.74	Australian Radiation Laboratory	17.10.74	30.10.74	3 600 000	3 600 000	14.11.74	Recommended as proposed.
30. 7.74	Australian Post Office Administrative Centre, Perth			7 000 000	7 000 000		PMG to review project in the light of the Commission of Inquiry into the Post Office.
30. 7.74	Central Health Laboratory, Woden, A.C.T.	19. 9.74	2.10.74	4 400 000	4 400 000	23.10.74	Recommended as proposed.
30. 7.74	New Telephone Exchange, Haymarket, N.S.W.	19. 9.74	2.10.74	7 000 000	7 000 000	23.10.74	Recommended as proposed.
31. 7.74	Animal Health Laboratory, Geelong, Vic.	17.10.74	30.10.74	56 000 000	67 000 000	14.11.74	Committee recommended that after a suitable proving period the laboratory should be authorised to handle foot and mouth disease virus prior to an outbreak of the disease in this country and that the project should proceed as a matter of urgency.
24. 9.74	Rehabilitation Centre, Townsville, Qld	21.11.74	27.11.74	2 300 000	2 300 000	28.11.74	Committee recommended that every effort should be made to reduce the documentation period for this project.
13.11.74	Malak Primary and Pre-School, Darwin, N.T.		(a)	2 800 000			
13.11.74	Central Hospital Services Complex, A.C.T.—Stage 2.		(a)	2 350 000			
21.11.74	Sanderson High School, Darwin, N.T.		(a)	6 650 000			
21.11.74	Orchestral Studio and Music Centre, Brisbane, Qld		(a)	2 350 000			
28.11.74	Water Resources Centre, Darwin, N.T.		(a)	6 200 000			
5.12.74	Central Laboratory Facilities, Casuarina, N.T.		(a)	7 400 000			
5.12.74	Australian Government Centre, Parramatta, N.S.W., Stage I		(a)	21 000 000			

(a) Report yet to be presented.