

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURES

PROVISION OF NEW ASSEMBLY PREMISES

September 1992

Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures – Terms of Reference (Temporary Order 16A)

A Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures shall be appointed at the commencement of each Assembly to:

- (a) inquire into and report on, as appropriate:
 - (i) the Assembly's annual estimates of expenditure;
 - (ii) matters relating to the privileges of the Assembly which may be referred to it by the Assembly;
 - (iii) the practices and procedures of the Assembly; and
 - (iv) the standing orders of the Assembly;
- (b) advise the Speaker on:
 - (i) Members' entitlements including facilities and services;
 - (ii) the operation of the transcription service (*Hansard*);
 - (iii) the availability to the public of Assembly documents; and
 - (iv) the operation of the Assembly library; and
- (c) arrange the order of Private Members' business and Assembly business.

Committee membership

Ms Roberta McRae MLA, Speaker (Presiding Member)

Mr Tony De Domenico MLA

Mr David Lamont MLA

Mr Michael Moore MLA

Secretary to Inquiry

Ms Karin Malmberg

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1 Introduction

Background

1.1 On 9 April 1992 the ACT Legislative Assembly agreed, on a motion of the Chief Minister, to refer the question of the provision of new premises for the Legislative Assembly to the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures for inquiry and report.

1.2 The Committee, established under temporary orders of the Assembly, has among its responsibilities advising the Speaker on Members' entitlements including facilities and services, the operation of Hansard and the Assembly library. It was considered that this Committee was the most appropriate avenue for Assembly Members to consider the issue.

1.3 In summary, the Committee was asked to:

- examine the future accommodation needs of the Legislative Assembly including the Chamber, Committee and other meeting facilities; Assembly Members including the Executive; the Legislative Assembly Secretariat; the media and library;
- examine access for members of the public visiting the Assembly building;
- consider an optimum layout design for the Chamber to facilitate the workings of the Assembly;
- consider the redesign and refurbishment of South Building as the new Legislative Assembly building; and
- consider any matters, including adequate parking accommodation for all members and staff, incidental to the foregoing matters.

1.4 The Committee was initially required to report prior to the winter recess, but this was extended to the September sittings given the complexity of the Government's submission and the consequent delay in presentation of it to the Committee.

1.5 The detailed terms of reference are at Appendix A.

Why move?

1.6 Legislation providing for ACT self-government was passed in the Federal Parliament in 1988 and the first election for the new body politic was held in February 1989. In May 1989 the ACT Legislative Assembly sat for the first time and the Chamber, the Executive, Members, their staff and the Assembly's Secretariat were (and continue to be) housed in the ACT Administration Centre at 1 Constitution Avenue in the centre of Canberra, a building rented from the private sector. The Assembly occupies three of the six floors of the building with other floors accommodating officers from the Chief Minister's Department and the Housing and Community Services Bureau.

1.7 Over the life of the First Assembly it became apparent that the current accommodation was not adequate. The Government's comments in its first submission to the Committee probably best sum up the general views of many Members:

The Government has concluded that the current leased accommodation occupied by the Assembly and associated areas of Chief Minister's Department total approximately \$2M per annum. Members have been significantly inconvenienced by the standard of airconditioning, the standard of lift service, and the failure of waterproofing. The configuration of the building has not proved suitable to the efficient functioning of the Assembly, and in particular the dimensions of the chamber and the size and location of the public gallery are less than ideal.¹

1.8 The Public Sector Union welcomed consideration of new premises for the Assembly and stated that:

from many points of view, the Assembly's existing accommodation is inadequate and provides substandard working conditions for many of the staff.²

¹ ACT Government, submission, dated 4 May 1992, p 1

² Public Sector Union, submission, dated 10 August 1992, p 1

1.9 It was clear that the question of long-term accommodation for the Assembly needed to be addressed. The lease of the building currently occupied runs to the end of 1996 at which time, unless the Assembly moved to a Government owned building, a further extension of the lease or move to other rented accommodation would be necessary.

1.10 It was considered that the commencement of the Second Assembly was an appropriate time to examine the future accommodation needs of the Assembly, following the experience gained in the First Assembly, and at the same time consider the physical location of the Assembly.

1.11 Another important factor is the need to have a symbolic and identifiable Assembly building that is readily accessible to all members of the community and which will become identified within the community as an administrative and community centre.

Inquiry process

1.12 Over the course of the inquiry, the Committee aimed to consult with all persons who had an interest in the Assembly and the facilities provided to it, including the Canberra community.

1.13 At the commencement of the inquiry, the Committee wrote to all non-Executive Members of the Assembly, the Clerk of the Assembly, the Press Gallery and unions representing Members' and Secretariat staff seeking comment on the terms of reference. The Committee also wrote to the Presiding Officers of all State legislatures seeking their assistance with the inquiry.

1.14 The Committee sought two submissions from the Government. It was requested that the first submission address the options considered by Government, other than South Building, for the location of the new Assembly premises, and that the second submission address the terms of reference in detail, with specific attention paid to the redesign and refurbishment of South Building.

1.15 Following receipt of the second Government submission, which included a pre-design study carried out by an architect engaged by the Government for the purpose of developing options for South Building, the Committee distributed it to Members, the Clerk, the Press Gallery and unions for their comment.

1.16 At this stage the Committee also advertised the inquiry in The Canberra Times seeking public comment. It provided interested persons with the terms of reference and a copy of the Government's second submission, including the pre-design report.

1.17 The Committee received submissions from a number of Members, the Clerk, the Press Gallery, other Presiding Officers and members of the Canberra community, in many cases more than one. A list of contributors to the inquiry is at Appendix B. The Committee appreciates the interest shown in the inquiry and values the constructive contributions made.

1.18 In addition, the Committee held two public hearings, the first with officials from the Department of Urban Services at which the options for the location of the new premises were discussed, and a second, at which officials from the Department again appeared to explore in detail cost estimates for the construction of a purpose built building and the redesign and refurbishment options for South Building. Also at that hearing the Committee heard from officials from the Chief Minister's Department concerning the co-location of the Assembly and ACT Government Service Libraries in the new Assembly premises. The dates of the hearings and a list of witnesses can be found at Appendix C.

1.19 The Committee was also briefed on a private basis by the Chief Territory Planner on a study being carried out regarding future land use of the area between London Circuit and Vernon Circle.

1.20 As part of its information gathering process the Committee travelled to Brisbane and Darwin to meet with the Speaker, members of the New Parliament House Committee and officials of the Northern Territory Parliament, the Speaker and officials of the Queensland Parliament and an official of the Brisbane City Council. The Speaker also travelled to Sydney and Melbourne to meet with the Speaker, President and officials of the State Parliaments.

1.21 To ensure wide consultation and dissemination of information regarding the Committee's progress, the Committee issued a series of newsletters over the life of the inquiry.

Scope of inquiry

1.22 The Committee's terms of reference were, put simply, to examine the future accommodation needs of the Assembly, consider a Chamber layout and other associated matters. In doing so, the Committee was to examine the redesign and refurbishment of South Building, the Government's preferred location, as the new Assembly building.

1.23 The terms of reference did not specifically task the Committee to examine a range of site options or address the question of whether to build or refurbish, but the Committee considered that to fully examine and come to a view regarding South Building, it was necessary to review what options had been considered by Government.

1.24 The Committee notes the comments of Ms H Szuty MLA in her second submission to the inquiry:

I believe it to be unfortunate that South Building has been identified as the most likely site for relocation prior to detailed discussions occurring with Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly and other interested groups and individuals. A full and opening canvassing of all of the options before a likely site was chosen would, I believe, have been a more constructive approach to the issue at hand and would have been more likely to achieve a consensus.³

1.25 The Committee considers that it has examined fully the various options even though not specifically required to do so by the terms of reference and believes that concerns similar to those quoted above have been allayed. The information gathered by the Committee is available from the Assembly Secretariat Committee Office if interested persons wish to examine it.

1.26 This report will, in the next chapter, address the issue of options considered relating to the new premises prior to setting out, in later chapters, the detail of the Committee's deliberations regarding the specific matters in the inquiry's terms of reference. The Committee will also comment on the consultative arrangements that will need to be set in place following the decision to proceed with the refurbishment. The Committee's recommendations will be included in the body of the report and consolidated in Chapter 11.

³ Ms H Szuty, submission, dated 5 August 1992

2 Options considered

2.1 As part of its deliberations the Committee examined alternatives to the South Building proposal which included the refurbishment of a government owned building, the acquisition of a non-government owned building and its subsequent refurbishment and the construction of a purpose built building by either the Government or the private sector.

2.2 The Government, in its first submission to the inquiry, provided information on other options which was supplemented by officials from the Department of Urban Services at both public hearings.

Factors affecting site and building choice

2.3 The Committee believes that the location for the new Assembly premises, as well as the actual building, is of particular significance and is an integral element in the long term acceptance of the ACT as a self-governing body. It is considered essential that the Assembly be located in the Canberra city area, preferably within the City Hill precinct.

2.4 The Committee also views it as important that the new premises be easily and readily accessible by the Canberra community and that the building be designed to become the administrative and municipal focus of the community. This is particularly so given the combination of state and municipal responsibilities of the Assembly and the immediacy of contact between the community and its elected representatives. The Committee believes that an accessible location and modest, 'low key' facilities will encourage members of the community to visit and interact with the Assembly.

2.5 Reference was made in the Government's first submission to the original plans for Canberra by stating that "Burley Griffin identified the area of land surrounding City Hill as the focus of "local" as opposed to national administrative functions".⁴ The Committee believes that, given the nature of development in Canberra, that this identification is still valid and recognised within the community.

⁴ Government submission, 4 May 1992, p 2

2.6 The Committee did not agree with a suggestion that the Assembly be located in the old (Provisional) Parliament House⁵ as it is important that the ACT Legislative Assembly is not only a separate body politic from the Commonwealth but is seen to be so, particularly from the view of the Australian population that resides outside Canberra. The Committee believes it important that the ACT develop its own traditions and practices as a body politic and a self-governing territory.

2.7 The Government's first submission identified ten sites as possible locations for the Assembly, five of which are within the City Hill precinct and the other five, whilst not fully consistent with the Burley Griffin plan, are centrally located.⁶

Sites requiring construction of a new building

2.8 The Government identified the following locations as possible sites for the construction of a new Assembly building:

- the head of Constitution Avenue
- the head of Edinburgh Avenue
- the head of Northbourne Avenue at London Circuit
- the Queen Elizabeth II site

2.9 In examining the above sites, the Committee considered the question of whether it was appropriate to construct a purpose built building or to refurbish an existing building.

2.10 The Committee was advised by the Government and officials from the Department of Urban Services of the costs involved in the construction of a building. In its first submission the Government stated:

Ideally it was considered that the long term solution should be a purpose built building in a symbolically appropriate location (e.g. the head of Constitution Avenue). It was estimated that to construct and fit-out to appropriate standard a new building meeting the minimum size (6,000 square metres) would cost of the order of \$15M to \$18M.

⁵ Submission dated 30 April 1992

⁶ Government, submission, dated 4 May 1992, p 2

However, a building of this size on its own would significantly underutilize any of the identified sites. If the new building option were to be pursued, it was concluded that a building of the order of 10,000 square metres to include associated offices at an estimated cost of \$25M to \$30M should be considered. These estimates do not include allowance for car parking or loose furnishings.

The Government took the view that the option of constructing a new building is not viable in the current economic climate, and that in the medium term it would be significantly cheaper to refurbish an existing building.⁷

2.11 The Committee considered the issue of construction in some detail and canvassed the matter at both public hearings. The Committee notes the Government's comments that ideally the long term solution should be a purpose built building but that such an option was not viable at this time. The Committee is a little concerned that the refurbishment of an existing building could lead to either the Assembly "making do" in permanent "temporary" accommodation, or in the future constructing its own building with the consequent additional costs. Further comment in relation to this will be made later in this Chapter.

2.12 The Committee also questions the early comments from Government that if a purpose built building was to be constructed it would need to be a building of significance and in the order of 10,000 square metres when 6,000 square metres is required. The Committee was surprised that the option of constructing a staged building appeared not to have been put forward and was not included in the advice to the Committee of the options considered by Government.

2.13 During the second public hearing, officials from the Department of Urban Services tabled a document which provided details of cost estimates for a new building utilising a site between Vernon Circle and London Circuit using several different methods of construction. These estimates were based on the facilities and standard of finish identified in the Government's second submission and the architect's pre-design report.

2.14 The cost of a purpose built building was estimated to be a total of \$21.64M (excluding land value as it would be constructed on ACT Government land). If the building was constructed by private enterprise the cost could rise to \$24.88M, which includes 15% for profit and risk factors.⁸

⁷ Op cit, p 3

⁸ Document tabled 24 July 1992, pp 2-3

2.15 The tabled document also outlined an option for private enterprise to build the Assembly building as part of a private enterprise development, and hand it back to Government free of charge. This approach was discounted in the document on the basis that:

The value of development rights to office space is valued at approximately \$0.5M per 1000 square metres. On this basis a developer would require the land for no payment and the right to develop say 50,000 sq metres office space. . . . In addition a developer would require precommitment of a tenant. The only likely tenant is the ACT Government. Leases expiring in the next four years do not total this amount of floor space. Occupation of new leased space on this scale would be contrary to the accommodation strategy.⁹

2.16 The Committee was also advised that the construction of a building, as opposed to the refurbishment of South Building, would add a year to the timetable, putting an occupation date at sometime in 1995.

2.17 The Committee believes that the construction of a new, purpose built building is not viable or appropriate at this time. The Committee is particularly mindful of the need, both on the part of the community and the Assembly members, for the Assembly to be housed in modest and appropriate circumstances.

Non ACT Government buildings

2.18 The Government identified the following buildings as possible sites, although not owned by the ACT Government:

- the head of University Avenue (Reserve Bank Building, Police)
- Acton House
- Ian Potter House

2.19 The Committee was advised that these sites were not considered appropriate as they were either in the legal precinct (Reserve Bank and Police) or had limitations regarding size (Acton House and Ian Potter House) and heritage issues (Ian Potter House). In addition, all are either Commonwealth property or leased for 99 years to other than the ACT Government.¹⁰

⁹ Op cit, p 3

2.20 The Government argued that the University Avenue site was not appropriate as it is the legal precinct.¹¹ The Committee does not agree that this, on its own, rules the site out of consideration and notes as an example that, the Northern Territory will, when its new Parliament House is completed, have its Supreme Court and Parliament House side by side.

2.21 The Committee does, however, exclude the site from consideration on the basis of location. The Committee believes that the site, whilst in the city area, is not as accessible as others given the recent development of the Ainslie Avenue area and future development of the section 19 area. The use of the site would also require relocation of a number of officials and public functions causing disruption, particularly in relation to the Australian Federal Police.

2.22 The Committee considers that the location of the properties, plus the need to either purchase property from the Commonwealth or buy out a lease, discount them as options and agrees that these properties are not suitable.

ACT Government buildings

2.23 The Government's submission identified the following Government buildings and locations as possible sites:

- the head of Ainslie Avenue (North or South Buildings)
- the head of University Avenue (Law Courts)
- ACT Department of Health Building (1 Moore Street)
- Gorman House (on a short term lease)

2.24 The Committee discounted both the Department of Health building and Gorman House as possibilities early in its consideration based on the location of the sites on the fringe of the city area. In view of the importance of accessibility to the community, a more central location was a prerequisite.

¹⁰ Government, submission, dated 4 May 1992, p 3

¹¹ Ibid

2.25 In addition, ACT Government Service officers located in the Moore Street building would need to be relocated to other accommodation, either rented or other government owned accommodation. The relocation of the City Health Centre in a central location could prove expensive and reduce (or negate) any rental savings from moving the Assembly from its own rented accommodation.

2.26 Gorman House is also limited in size and is leased until early 1996 to the Gorman House Arts Centre. Heritage issues would preclude a major increase in building size.

2.27 The head of University Avenue was considered inappropriate due to its location.

2.28 The location most preferred by the Committee, for a range of reasons, is the head of Ainslie Avenue, ie North and South Buildings.

2.29 With regard to North Building, the Committee is of the view that as the refurbishment of North Building has only recently been completed and officials from a number of ACT Government Service agencies have been relocated into the building, it would not be appropriate to consider that building for the Assembly.

2.30 In terms of the South Building, the Committee was advised by the Government that the building, whilst structurally sound, requires major refurbishment to bring it to an acceptable standard for office accommodation.¹²

2.31 The estimated cost for refurbishment for use as conventional office use is \$5.9 million, based on the funding provided to refurbish and fit out North Building for public service/commercial use.¹³

2.32 The submission stated that the Government concluded that the South Building should be the preferred choice and that design/construction work can be programmed to enable the Assembly to relocate in early 1994. Public servants currently located in South Building will be relocated to other refurbished buildings.¹⁴

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

2.33 The Committee was advised that, regardless of whether the building is to be used for conventional office accommodation or for the Assembly, refurbishment will be necessary in 1992-93 to rectify the current low standard of amenity.¹⁵ The Committee notes evidence given at the first hearing that whilst the standard of fit out has a life of 10 - 15 years, the building is structurally sound and could be the Assembly building for 30 to 50 years.¹⁶

2.34 The redesign and refurbishment of South Building is, in the Committee's view, the most economic option. South Building is in dire need of refurbishment regardless of the Assembly requirements, and even if a new Assembly building was constructed at a cost of some \$21.64M, South Building would still need to be refurbished for public servants at a cost of \$5.9M, a total of \$27.54M. This is in comparison to the Government's proposal which is estimated to cost \$12.7M. In effect the additional expenditure attributable to the Assembly is \$6.8M.

2.35 When the additional costs attributable to the new Assembly building are compared to the savings in rent payments that will be achieved, the costs of the redesign and refurbishment of South Building are more than recouped. It should also be noted that the Committee has examined the Government's proposal with a view to ensuring the most cost efficient building. The Committee considers that the cost estimates that have been put forward are acceptable as modified and reduced by the Committee, but it has exercised caution in regard to the estimates provided as the information available is at a very preliminary stage and many variables have to be examined.

2.36 Whilst the Committee has reservations about South Building, principally the age of the building (23 years), it considers that as construction is not a viable option the South Building is the most appropriate building to refurbish in terms of location, orientation and efficient and effective use of the physical limitations of the building.

2.37 The central location, the fact that the building is Government owned and identified in the community as an administrative area, together with the fact that South Building has housed the locally elected advisory bodies that existed prior to self-government, were factors that influenced the Committee's deliberations. The location of Civic Square in the centre of that site is also important in the community and cultural sense.

¹⁵ Government submission, 4 May 1992, p 4

¹⁶ Transcript, p 5

2.38 The Committee has concluded that its preferred option is to refurbish South Building. The Committee believes that the Government should assess options for project delivery, including direct tender, and use the most cost efficient method for the redesign and refurbishment of South Building.

2.39 The Committee notes that a member of the pre-self government elected bodies is supportive of the proposal to refurbish South Building as the new Assembly building, referring to the associated history of the South Building.¹⁷

2.40 In relation to the life of the new premises, the Committee notes that the Public Sector Union submission commented that it was unclear as to whether the Government's proposal to convert the South Building is intended to be a permanent solution or not. The PSU highlighted an apparent contradiction between the Government's second submission, which referred to the refurbished building as the home for the Assembly for the foreseeable future, and the conclusion of the consultant architect in the pre-design brief who stated that South Building, with some remodelling and refurbishment, can accommodate all the needs of the Assembly for the next 15 years.¹⁸

2.41 The PSU also commented on the dangers of a "temporary solution". It stated:

Should the Assembly plan to adopt a 'temporary' solution, shortcuts may occur in the standard and extent of accommodation which would lead to later problems and costs if, following a famous precedent, the temporary solution became more or less permanent.¹⁹

2.42 Ms H Szuty MLA stated that if a decision to relocate to South Building is made on economic grounds, then the South Building should become the permanent home for the Assembly.²⁰

2.43 The Committee believes that the refurbishment of South Building should be undertaken with the view that it will be the home of the Assembly for the longer term.

2.44 In coming to this conclusion the Committee was aware of some comment in the community regarding expenditure on a new home for the Assembly as perhaps being inappropriate at this time.

¹⁷ Submission, dated 21 July 1992

¹⁸ Public Sector Union, p 1

¹⁹ Op cit, p 2

²⁰ Ms H Szuty MLA, submission, 5 August 1992, p 2

2.45 The Committee is of the view that a number benefits will flow from the modest redesign and refurbishment proposals, including generation of employment. The Committee believes that local contractors and suppliers should be used wherever possible.

2.46 The Committee recommends that:

- **South Building be redesigned and refurbished as the new Assembly premises using the most cost efficient delivery process; and**
- **local contractors and suppliers be used as much as possible in the redesign and refurbishment of South Building.**

3. The Assembly's requirements

3.1 In examining the future accommodation requirements of the Assembly, the Committee was conscious of the views expressed in a number of submissions regarding the style and level of facilities to be provided. In its second submission the Government noted that:

the new premises should provide an efficient working environment for the Assembly, have due regard to economy, and create a focus for Territory Government which can be a source of pride to the local community without being pretentious.²¹

3.2 Similar sentiments were expressed by other Members, including Mr T Kaine, MLA, the Leader of the Opposition, who stated:

I believe that there are three basic considerations that must be taken into account in establishing permanent accommodation for the Legislative Assembly. They are:

- (1) the new facilities must be consistent with the expectations of the community – ie, not lavish;
- (2) to some extent at odds with (1), the facilities must reflect the true status of the Assembly as the Territory's legislature, and
- (3) again consistent with community expectations, the Members, the secretariat, and staff must be reasonably housed.²²

3.3 The Committee welcomed the Government's second submission and the associated pre-design report and believes that these expectations regarding the new Assembly premises have been realised.

²¹ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 3

²² Mr T Kaine MLA, submission, 12 May 1992, p 1

3.4 The pre-design report contained four options for the internal redesign of the South Building and four options relating to parking. The option preferred, in the pre-design report, is option three, the main features of which are:

- The Chamber will be located on Civic Square at first floor level, visible from the Square, London Circuit and the Canberra Centre
- Public access to the following areas from a foyer on Civic Square:
 - . the public gallery of the Chamber
 - . committee rooms
 - . a reception/exhibition area
 - . the landscaped courtyard and galleria
- A secure members entrance on the south side via a porte cochere and basement car parking for 30 cars linked directly to the members foyer and lift
- Glazed balcony circulation areas providing access to the first and second floors, achieving efficient use of the existing office areas of the building
- Accommodation for the Executive, the Speaker and the Secretariat on the second floor, with Members and Committee Rooms on the first floor
- Approximately 750 square metres of residual space, in the long term which can be used for additional Members, but in the short term could be used for appropriate cultural facilities
- The estimated cost is \$12.7 million, including fitout, basement parking and all costs of the works, including complete furnishing of the Chamber.²³

3.5 The Government, in commenting on option three, stated:

The Government has considered this proposal and has concluded that in principle the recommended design would provide premises adequate for the efficient operation of the Assembly. The concept deals adequately with issues of pedestrian and vehicular access, working environment for Members and staff, the Chamber, facilities for public access to the Assembly and Members, and accommodation for staff necessary to the effective operation of the Assembly and the Executive.

²³ Pre-design report, 16 June 1992, p 2

With regard to the estimated cost, the Government has previously indicated the need for efficiency and economy in the provision of new premises. The estimate is at the high end of the range which the Government considers it would be reasonable to commit to this project, and a thorough scrutiny of the standard of refurbishment and the level of provision of facilities would be an ongoing element of the detailed design process.²⁴

3.6 The Committee supports option three as outlined in the pre-design report, with some amendments and some suggested additions. The Committee believes that its changes to the plans proposed will not add to the cost of the project, rather that some modifications will reduce the total estimated cost.

3.7 **The Committee recommends that:**

- **option three, as outlined in the pre-design report, be the design for the new Assembly premises, as amended by this report.**

3.8 The Committee's findings, against each of the terms of reference, are included in the following chapters. The Committee notes that the consultant architect drew on the submission from the ACT Legislative Assembly Secretariat in preparing the pre-design report. The Committee's report does not include the level of detail contained in the Secretariat's submissions, but the Committee believes that the steering committee, at the next stage, should use the Government's submission, the pre-design report and the Secretariat's submissions as base documents for future planning.

²⁴ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 16

4 The Chamber, Committee and other meeting facilities

The Chamber

4.1 In addition to examining the accommodation needs in relation to the Chamber, the Committee was also required to examine an optimum layout design to facilitate the working of the Chamber.

4.2 The Chamber is probably the most important feature of the new premises, being the forum wherein the actual sittings of the Assembly take place and which is the primary public focus of the Assembly's operations.

4.3 The Chamber in the current premises has proved, with experience, to be inadequate for a range of reasons. The floor space is limited, approximately 115 square metres, with inadequate space between Members and also across the Chamber resulting in what should be private conversations being audible to others. In addition, the closeness of Members can lead to an escalation in the level of debate, particularly when an issue is contentious and interjections can be more clearly heard than if the Chamber was larger and more appropriately designed.

4.4 There is also very limited space on the perimeter of the Chamber for the presence of advisers as well as a lack of lobbies adjacent to the Chamber for private conversations between Members.

4.5 In relation to the new Chamber, the Clerk of the Assembly proposed that the segmented horseshoe configuration of the current Chamber be preserved. The Clerk's submission states that the segmented horseshoe configuration:

- . facilitates the provision of appropriate seating arrangements for independent Members or parties other than the government and opposition parties on the cross-benches;
- . allows for possible large imbalances between the numbers of government and non-government Members;

- . when properly designed, facilitates a good line of sight to and from the Chair; and
- . makes more effective use of the available space than do some other possible configurations.²⁵

4.6 This configuration was supported by the Government in its second submission as being generally appropriate.²⁶ The Committee also agrees with the approach and notes that the possible future expansion in the number of Members is catered for in the pre-design report. The proposed design for the Chamber allows for an increase to as many as 27 Members without need for structural changes to the building.²⁷

4.7 The pre-design report proposes three locations for the Chamber, the ground, first and second floors. The location of the Chamber at the first floor is preferred in the pre-design report and also by both the Government and the Committee. This option provides for:

- access from Members' offices on the same level; and
- a public gallery at the second floor level overlooking the floor of the Chamber.

4.8 The option requires the removal of a portion of the second floor slab of the South Building to provide the Chamber and the Public Gallery with a sense of openness and providing adequate space and good lines of sight for both Members and the public.

4.9 The Committee supports the general design of the Chamber as shown in the pre-design report, but notes that access to the Chamber for the Speaker, Members, the Clerks and advisers appears to be limited to the one main entrance. Whilst this entrance is necessary for ceremonial and other entrances, the Committee considers other access points such as shown in the Clerk's representation of the Chamber will be necessary to ensure the smooth running of the Assembly.²⁸

4.10 The pre-design report provides for seating on the perimeter of the Chamber floor for advisers/officials, which will assist Members during consideration of legislation.

²⁵ Clerk of the Assembly, submission, 8 May 1992, p 6

²⁶ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 6

²⁷ Pre-design report, p 10

²⁸ Clerk, submission, 8 May 1992, p 9

4.11 In addition, the provision of a lobby for each of the two major parties plus a lobby for the independent members of the Assembly has been included and is supported by the Committee. The Committee notes, however, that the pre-design report provides for lobbies of only 25 square metre each in size, which is considered not to be adequate.

4.12 The Committee notes that the wall behind the Speaker's Chair will contain a large amount of glass. Whilst it is noted that there will be minimal alterations to the external facade to maintain conformity with the North Building, it is considered the some measures will need to be included in the redesign and refurbishment of South Building to ensure that the Chamber, as well as other areas of the Building, do not suffer from heat problems, particularly in summer.

4.13 The Committee recommends that:

- the Chamber design included in the pre-design report be amended to:
 - . incorporate more entry points to the Chamber for the Speaker, Members, the Clerks and advisers;
 - . increase the size of the lobbies adjacent to the Chamber; and
 - . include measures to prevent heat build up in the Chamber.

The Galleries

4.14 The public gallery in the existing Assembly building is limited. There is seating for approximately 50 people in the public gallery, including seats allocated to the press gallery and ministerial advisers. At times of increased public interest in the proceedings of the Assembly there is not enough space for the public, resulting in the overflow being seated in the foyer outside the Chamber where it is almost impossible to observe proceedings. As the seating within the Chamber area is on the same level as the floor of the Chamber, visibility is also restricted to some extent to those in other than the front rows.

4.15 The pre-design report proposes an increase in size for gallery seating from the existing 48 square metres to a total of 170 square metres – 100 square metres for the public, 50 square metres for the Speaker's Gallery and 20 square metres for officials/advisers. The Speaker's Gallery and the seating for officials/advisers will be on the same level as the floor of the Chamber, with the public gallery overlooking the Chamber on three sides. The floor of the public gallery should be tiered to provide for maximum visibility.

4.16 The Committee supports the proposal from the Government and other Members for provision of facilities for school groups to attend Assembly sittings, preferably with access to explanatory comment during sittings. The Committee believes that a section of the gallery should be glassed-in to allow explanation of Assembly proceedings without causing disruption to the Members or visiting members of the public.

4.17 The Committee recommends that:

- **provision of a glassed-in section be made in the public gallery for school groups.**

4.18 Currently, seating for the Press in the current public gallery is limited to ten seats. The Committee notes that the pre-design report does not specifically identify space for a press gallery, although the Government identifies that:

Arrangements for the press in the present public gallery have not proved satisfactory and some dedicated seating would seem appropriate.²⁹

4.19 In its submission, the ACT Press Gallery stated that, taking into account future expansion of the media contingent, a dedicated press gallery should have space for twelve representatives³⁰, a position supported by the Committee. This gallery should be at the second floor level overlooking the Chamber. It would be preferable for the press gallery to be located either in a new gallery above the Speaker's Chair to provide the best line of sight for proceedings, or in the proposed gallery facing the Speaker's Chair.

4.20 The Committee recommends that:

- **a dedicated Press Gallery seating twelve members of the Press be provided at the second level overlooking the Chamber.**

²⁹ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 7

³⁰ ACT Press Gallery, submission, 9 July 1992, p 2

Audio and recording facilities

4.21 Acoustics within the current Chamber and public gallery are not satisfactory. In addition, the sound reticulation system relaying proceedings to Members, staff and Secretariat offices is poor, with Members inaudible at times.

4.22 The Committee considers that the acoustics of the Chamber are an important consideration in the redesign and refurbishment of South Building as it is essential that all Members of the Assembly can clearly hear other speakers during debates, as well as the members of the public observing proceedings. The Committee believes that an acoustics expert should be engaged during the next stages of planning the refurbishment so that advice can be received at all decision points.

4.23 The Committee notes that the pre-design report recognises that a specialist sound reticulation system is required in the Chamber and Committee Rooms which will be controlled from a central monitoring and recording room located near the Hansard office.³¹

4.24 The Committee believes it essential that a high quality sound reinforcement and reticulation system be installed in the new Assembly building at the time of refurbishment. The Committee notes the recent replacement of parts of the sound reinforcement system in Federal Parliament House, which was reported as having become necessary as a result of a cost reduction exercise during construction,³² and considers that such additional, future expense can and should be avoided in the refurbishment of South Building.

4.25 In relation to future broadcasting or televising of Assembly proceedings, the Committee notes the comments in the Government's second submission that it:

is perhaps an issue which should be left for future deliberation. However if design can be sufficiently flexible to enable inclusion of space for such provision without significant cost the Government would consider such proposals for inclusion in the proposed works.³³

4.26 The Committee believes that provision can be made for permanent cabling, lighting and equipment outlets without the necessity to alter the design or the floor space allocated for the Chamber and its surrounds.

³¹ Pre-design report, p 23

³² The Canberra Times, 19 August 1992, p 3

³³ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 6

4.27 The Committee notes that the pre-design report states that the Chamber will be provided with adequate lighting for possible future televising of proceedings.³⁴ Provision of such facilities will obviate the need to disrupt the proceedings of the Assembly whenever file footage is recorded by the television stations. The Committee does not envisage the inclusion of specialist broadcast booths or other expensive facilities at this time.

4.28 The Committee recommends that:

- permanent cabling, lighting and equipment outlets for broadcasting and televising of proceedings be provided in the new Assembly Chamber.

Other facilities

4.29 Adjacent to the Chamber are limited Secretariat facilities necessary for the operation of the Chamber, a sub-table office (some 12 square metres) and an area containing sound recording and reticulation equipment (some 15 square metres).

4.30 The Clerk has proposed improved facilities for both these areas on the perimeter of the Chamber with clear lines of sight to the Members, as the current arrangements, whilst workable, are not the most appropriate arrangement to facilitate the operations of the Chamber.³⁵ The pre-design report includes limited space for both areas at the side of the Chamber (15 square metres each). In additional comments to the Committee, the Clerk has stated that location of the two areas is particularly important in relation to the operation of the Assembly.³⁶

4.31 The Committee notes that the Government has concluded that, in principle, the range of facilities suggested (by the Secretariat) is appropriate. The Committee notes:

However the Government would have some reservation about the cost implications, and would be seeking a detailed costing of all elements, particularly any which might not be considered critical to the operation of the Assembly per se.³⁷

³⁴ Pre-design report, p 23

³⁵ Clerk, submission, 8 May 1992, p 12

³⁶ Clerk, submission, 3 August, p 2

³⁷ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 8

4.32 The Committee is mindful of the total cost of the redesign and refurbishment of South Building and is concerned that a full costing of facilities considered important to the operation of the Assembly appears not to have been undertaken. It would appear that, apart from the Clerk's request that provision be made to accommodate staff and equipment that may be needed for future broadcasting, the facilities are not greatly in excess of those available in the current premises, other than location and size.

4.33 The Committee recommends that:

- the Secretariat be consulted in the development of plans and the costing of facilities to be provided on the perimeter of the Chamber and considered necessary by the Secretariat for the efficient operation of the Chamber.

Committee rooms

4.34 The existing Assembly premises provides two Committee Rooms, one large room (80 square metres) suitable for public hearings, equipped with sound recording equipment, and a smaller room (20 square metres), which is limited in its use, due to its size and lack of facilities.

4.35 The Clerk's submission suggested the provision of two large (80 square metres) and one small (35 square metres) Committee Rooms, all equipped with transcription and sound reinforcement and reticulation facilities for use in public hearings. It was suggested that all rooms be sound secure and each room be integral in itself (not part of a larger room capable of being divided into smaller rooms).³⁸

4.36 The pre-design report provides for two large rooms (100 square metres each) and one smaller room (50 square metres).³⁹ The Committee notes an apparent anomaly between the pre-design report and the Government's second submission. The pre-design report states that a specialist sound reticulation system is required in the Chamber and the Committee Rooms which will be monitored from a central room near the Hansard Office. However, the Government's submission states that it is concerned at the cost implications of the technical capability that the Secretariat suggests be provided to the Committee Rooms.⁴⁰

³⁸ Clerk, submission, 8 May 1992, p 20-21

³⁹ Pre-design report, p 8

4.37 The Committee believes that, for Committees to operate and hold public hearings as well as use Committee Rooms for seminars etc, a sound reinforcement and reticulation system is necessary. For practical purposes, each room would need to be monitored from within the Committee room to ensure proceedings are observed by Hansard staff, rather than a central position.

4.38 In addition, the Committee believes that permanent cabling, lighting and equipment outlets for broadcasting and televising of proceedings should be provided in the Committee Rooms at the time of refurbishment, as it will be more cost efficient than incorporating such features at a later date.

4.39 The Committee recommends that:

- the Committee Rooms be provided with a sound reinforcement and reticulation system that will allow proceedings of public hearings to be broadcast in Members, staff, Secretariat and media offices; and
- permanent cabling, lighting and equipment outlets for broadcasting and televising of proceedings be provided in the Committee Rooms.

Other meeting facilities

4.40 The pre-design report identifies space for interview rooms (30 square metres on the ground floor), a total of 150 square metres for three Party Rooms, one Government, one Opposition and one for Independent Members (to be located on the first floor) plus a Cabinet Room of 80 square metres on the second floor, adjacent to the Executive's offices.⁴¹ These facilities are identified as being in addition to the Committee Rooms and Lobbies adjacent to the Chamber.

4.41 The Committee supports the provision of these facilities. The Committee does, however, note the Government's comments in its second submission suggesting that the provision of multiple user Committee facilities may be more appropriate and cost efficient rather than the provision of separate conference/interview/discussion facilities.⁴²

⁴⁰ Pre-design report, p 23; Government submission 9 July 1992, p 10

⁴¹ Pre-design report, p 8

⁴² Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 11

4.42 The Committee notes the advice of the Clerk⁴³ regarding difficulties with multiple use Committee Rooms and believes it may be more appropriate to fit out interview rooms on the ground floor (where there is unallocated space), in the public access area. The cost of such facilities would be minimal as no specialist facilities are required, only general furniture.

⁴³ Clerk. submission, 3 August 1992, p 3

5 Office Accommodation

5.1 The standard of accommodation in the current Assembly building varies widely. The Government stated:

In some cases it has proved to be reasonably adequate subject to difficulties with layout. In other cases it has proven totally inadequate and has led to cramped and inefficient working conditions for Members and their staff.⁴⁴

5.2 The Committee believes that accommodation in the new premises should be modest and appropriate, recognising the requirements of the Members of the Assembly, including the Speaker, the Executive and the Leader of the Opposition, their staff and others working in the building.

5.3 The Committee notes and supports the following general comments received in relation to office accommodation:

The resulting refurbishment of South Building should provide comfortable and well equipped premises for members, members staff, the secretariat, library staff and press staff who will work there.⁴⁵

When new offices are established, the privacy needs of Members and staff should be acknowledged. Soundproofing in walls between offices must be adequate to ensure that conversations in one office cannot be heard in the corridor outside or in adjoining offices.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 9

⁴⁵ Ms H Szuty, MLA, submission, 5 August 1992, p 5

⁴⁶ Mr G Cornwell, MLA, submission, 27 April 1992

Office Holders

5.4 The Committee supports the provision of office accommodation of the type suggested in both the Government's second submission and the pre-design report for the Speaker, the Executive and the Leader of the Opposition.⁴⁷

5.5 The Committee believes that the Executive should be located on the second floor as suggested together with the Cabinet Room and related facilities, and separate from the non-executive members.

5.6 The Committee, however, believes that the office for the Speaker would more appropriately be located on the first floor, rather than on the second floor with the Executive Members. This is primarily to ensure ready access by the Speaker to the floor of the Chamber but it also locates the Speaker on the same floor as the non-executive Members, a desirable, symbolic co-location.

5.7 The Committee recommends that:

- **the Speaker's Office be located on the same level as the floor of the Chamber, ie the first floor.**

5.8 To provide space for the location of the Speaker's office on the first floor the Committee suggests that the Committee Rooms could be placed on either the ground or second floors. It would be preferable for all Committee Rooms to be together, rather than scattered throughout the building, to ensure efficient use of the facilities.

Members

5.9 The Committee supports the location of the Members' offices on the first floor, the same level as the floor of the Chamber.

5.10 The Committee notes and agrees with the following views of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition regarding Members' offices:

The proposed arrangement assumes that Members are not grouped in party "enclaves" and provides party rooms for consultations.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 9-10; Pre-design report p 8, 34, 36

⁴⁸ Government, submission, dated 9 July 1992, p 9

I believe there would be merit in not segregating Party Members as at present. An inter-mingling of government and non-government (opposition and cross bench) Members would be beneficial.⁴⁹

5.11 The intermingling of Members' offices will overcome difficulties associated with changing numbers of government, opposition and cross bench Members and changes in party affiliations which can result in expensive renovations if party groupings for Members offices are maintained, as in the current building.

5.12 The Committee notes that provision has been made for the inclusion of an ensuite and kitchenette for all Members.⁵⁰ Whilst the Committee supports the inclusion of such facilities for the Speaker, the Executive and the Leader of the Opposition, the Committee has some concerns, on the basis of cost, regarding the provision of such facilities for all Members.

5.13 The Committee believes that before a final decision is made regarding the provision of ensuites and kitchenettes, details of costings for the facilities in each office as opposed to cluster facilities for three to four members, and any other viable option, should be examined in the next stage of planning.

5.14 The Committee recommends that:

- **prior to a final decision being made regarding the provision of ensuites and kitchenettes for Members other than the Speaker, the Executive and the Leader of the Opposition, costings be prepared for other options.**

5.15 The Committee notes that, whilst not speculating on the number of Members of future Assemblies or how quickly the number of Members may increase, the pre-design report and the Government's second submission both identify space for future growth. The space, unallocated in the submission and pre-design report, is some 750 square metres, mainly on the ground floor. The Government suggests that the space would be able to be used in the immediate future for cultural or public access use.

5.16 The Committee believes that the course of action proposed by the Government is prudent and appropriate. Further comment on the interim use of the space will be made in Chapter 9.

⁴⁹ Mr T Kaine, MLA, submission, 11 May 1992, p 2

⁵⁰ Transcript p 37

5.17 The Committee notes that no comment has been included in the Government's submissions regarding the impact on the facilities necessary for Members and their staff as a result of a changed electoral system and the possible provision of electorate offices for Members.⁵¹ Currently, Members are provided with an office in the Assembly building, which also serves as the Member's electoral office and accommodates their staff.

5.18 The Committee believes that the impact of electorate offices on requirements in South Building should be assessed and taken into account in the next stage of planning.

5.19 The Committee recommends that:

- **the impact of electorate offices on requirements in South Building should be assessed and taken into account in its redesign and refurbishment.**

Staff of Members

5.20 As with the current office accommodation provided to Members of the Assembly, office accommodation of staff of Members varies widely. In a number of cases, there is overcrowding, lack of privacy and no natural light.

5.21 The Public Sector Union (PSU) considers that:

From many points of view, the Assembly's existing accommodation is inadequate and provides substandard working conditions for many of the staff members.⁵²

5.22 In relation to accommodation standards in the new building the PSU states:

⁵¹ Government, submission, 9 July 1992; and pre-design report

⁵² Public Sector Union, p 1

In determining the necessary office working space within a new Assembly building, PSU believes that as a minimum the Committee must apply the Commonwealth office accommodation guidelines after allowing provision for future growth in the size of the Secretariat, the number of Assembly Members, and the size of

Members' and Ministers' staff. To do otherwise will inevitably lead to inadequate accommodation somewhere in the future. Anybody who worked in or visited the old Parliament House will know the unsatisfactory working conditions which resulted.⁵³

5.23 The PSU believes there is a strong case for providing higher accommodation standards than those required by the Commonwealth guidelines because of the high work pressures and long hours required of Secretariat and Members' staff.

5.24 The Committee agrees with the need to fully take into account the identifiable and inevitable growth of the number of Members and Ministers of the Assembly and their staff, as well as that of the Assembly Secretariat, during the design stage.

5.25 The Committee also notes the comments of the PSU in regard to the possibility, depending on layout of Members' offices, for staff to be accommodated in offices which lacked natural light. The PSU is concerned that the addition of the glassed circulation space:

Would mean that reception and waiting areas would be concentrated on the courtyard side of the building, while it is likely that the Members' own offices would be placed against the outward-facing windows. This would leave staff accommodation in the middle of the building without direct access to windows.⁵⁴

5.26 The Committee believes that this type of layout and the resulting lack of natural light in staff offices should be avoided for both health and morale reasons. The Committee believes that prior to decisions being taken regarding the layout of all offices (including Members and Secretariat), a range of layouts should be considered.

5.27 The Committee recommends that:

- **the refurbishment of South Building ensure as many offices as possible receive natural light.**

⁵³ Op cit, p 2

⁵⁴ Ibid

Assembly Secretariat

5.28 The pre-design report has identified office space for the Assembly Secretariat on the second floor.⁵⁵ The second submission from the Clerk states that whilst it is desirable to locate the whole Secretariat in the one area (as in option three), certain facilities of the Secretariat should be located on the same floor and in close proximity to the Chamber entrance. The Clerk's view is that it is imperative for the working of the Chamber, in terms of staff movements and the flow of documents to and from the Chamber, for the Chamber support officers to be located on the first floor in close proximity to the Chamber.⁵⁶

5.29 The Committee recommends that:

- the Chamber support area of the Assembly Secretariat be located on the first floor in close proximity to the Chamber.

Media

5.30 The media is currently provided with office space within the Assembly premises which provides on site accommodation for use by print, radio and television journalists covering the Assembly (approximately 45 square metres). It is noted that, in its submission, the Press Gallery states that the current accommodation is inadequate, lacks privacy and is crowded when the Assembly is sitting.⁵⁷

5.31 The pre-design report allocates the same amount of space on the ground floor of South Building.⁵⁸

5.32 The Committee believes that dedicated media office space is necessary, and needs to be larger and more appropriately situated than at present. The Committee is also of the view that a Press Room, which would have facilities to allow Members and Ministers to hold large press conferences, should be provided and be located next to the media offices on the ground floor for ease of access.

⁵⁵ Pre-design report, p 36

⁵⁶ Clerk, submission, 3 August 1992 p 2-3

⁵⁷ Press Gallery

⁵⁸ Pre-design report, p 8

5.33 The Press Room should be equipped with lighting suitable for filming and provide appropriate, concealable picture backdrops.

5.34 The Committee recommends that:

- media office space, larger than that included in the pre-design report, be included at ground floor level in South Building; and
- a Press Room, equipped with television lighting, be located next to the media office space.

6 Library facilities

6.1 Currently, library facilities and services for the Legislative Assembly are provided by the Chief Minister's Department through the ACT Government Service Library. The Library operates as an integrated facility and a dedicated library professional provides services to the Assembly members, their staff and the Secretariat.

6.2 The Government's second submission states that "The present arrangement whereby the Assembly accesses the ACT Government Service Library ... has provided an adequate level of service to the Assembly" and concluded:

The current shared use arrangement is an economic use of resources, and the Government would therefore propose that the ACT Government Service Library be transferred to the new Assembly premises, with appropriate provision for continued convenient access by ACT Government Service officers, and with the continued provision of dedicated staff resources to enable joint use by the Assembly with adequate service to the Assembly Members, their staff, and the Secretariat.⁵⁹

6.3 Mr G Cornwell MLA also expressed the view that the Assembly and ACT Government Service libraries "should remain together, as they are now, to prevent duplication of resources and delays in obtaining information".⁶⁰

6.4 The Clerk of the Assembly advised the Committee that "An appropriately staffed, equipped and stocked library has always been regarded as an essential part of the support services for a Parliament".⁶¹ He continued by stating the view that "library services of at least the current standard be provided in the new premises".

⁵⁹ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 11-12

⁶⁰ Mr G Cornwell MLA

⁶¹ Clerk, submission, 8 May 1992, p 24

6.5 Following questioning at the second public hearing, the Committee was provided with a detailed paper by officials from the Chief Minister's Department outlining the current staffing and expenditure levels, the current resources dedicated to Assembly clients and the implications of a separate library for the Legislative Assembly.⁶²

6.6 Following consideration of the issues involved the Committee believes that the Library should remain an integrated facility as it is clear that, in addition to initial set up costs to establish a separate Assembly library, there would be an increase in staff and operating costs to provide, what would be in effect, a duplication of the library services.

6.7 The Committee believes it important that the Library be placed on the ground floor of the South Building with ready access through the public area of the Assembly precincts to allow unimpeded access by public servants, but with the Library entrance at the same time close to an entry point to the Members' area.

6.8 It is noted that option three, the preferred option included in the pre-design report, includes the Library in this location and the Committee believes that this should not alter with subsequent changes in location of other facilities in the Building.

6.9 The Committee recommends that:

- **the ACT Government Service Library remain an integrated library and be located in the Assembly premises in South Building.**

6.10 The pre-design report states that currently the Library is 270 square metres in size and suggests that in the South Building 350 square metres be provided.⁶³ The need for an increase in space was also put to the Committee at the second public hearing when the Library facilities were considered.⁶⁴ The Committee believes that an increase in space of the order indicated is appropriate.

6.11 In relation to storage, the Committee believes that the Library's requirements should be assessed and provided for separately to the needs of the Assembly.

⁶² Chief Minister's Department, 4 August 1992

⁶³ Pre-design report, p 8

⁶⁴ Transcript, p 46

6.12 The operation and management of the Library is the responsibility of the Chief Minister's Department, and as such, the Assembly or the Speaker has no formal role or responsibility in relation to the Library, although one of the functions of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures, as expressed in Temporary Order 16A, is to advise the Speaker on the operation of the Assembly library.

6.13 The Committee recommends that:

- **the administrative and functional arrangements for the Assembly and the ACT Government Service Libraries be examined by the Speaker and the Chief Minister.**

7 Other facilities and services

Air conditioning/Energy management system

7.1 One feature of the current Assembly building that attracts frequent adverse comment is the air conditioning. The Committee notes advice during the public hearings that the air conditioning in South Building is near to the end of its useful life and will be replaced. The Committee also notes advice in an attachment to the Government's first submission which states that:

The system design does not meet the present day standards of air conditioning and will be replaced with up to date design efficient equipment. The present system design does not provide an adequate level of air conditioning by current standards.

The proposed upgrading works entail replacement of existing boiler, chiller, cooling tower, primary air fans and switchboards. ... The system would be controlled by an energy management system.⁶⁵

7.2 The attachment also states that the energy management system will also incorporate the building's lighting system and enable the installation and usage of off-peak electricity rates.

7.3 The Committee received a submission referring to the positive benefits of energy management systems and buildings designed along ecologically sustainable principles.⁶⁶ The Committee is of the view that the South Building should be refurbished to be as energy efficient as possible and that ecologically sustainable design principles should be used wherever possible.

⁶⁵ Government submission, 4 May 1992, p 4

⁶⁶ Ms K Nicholson, submission

7.4 The Committee recommends that:

- **South Building be refurbished in the most energy efficient manner as possible.**

7.5 In relation to the air conditioning, the Committee believes that, for the occupational health and safety of all building occupants, as well as members of the public visiting the Assembly, it is essential that all existing ducting and other plant should either be replaced during refurbishment or thoroughly cleaned before being reused. It is also important that special ventilation and exhaust equipment be installed where photocopying and other office machines produce exhaust gases to ensure building occupants are not exposed.

7.6 The Committee notes the comments of the PSU drawing attention to the PSU's clean air log of claims, currently before the Industrial Relations Commission.⁶⁷

7.7 Consideration will also need to be given to the ability of the air conditioning system to cope with changing requirements in different parts of the building particularly the wings of South Building that are exposed to the hot summer sun.

7.8 The Committee believes that it is particularly important, in view of the long periods of time Members and staff spend in the Assembly building, that a good quality, responsive air conditioning system be installed.

7.9 The Committee is a little concerned at the following comment in the pre-design report which appears to acknowledge a potential problem which should be addressed in detail prior to redesign commencing.

The glazed circulation areas around the courtyard are a potential source of high summer heat load. However, the proposed planting in the courtyard will provide some relief when used in conjunction with shading of the sloped sections. In winter the heat load should not be a problem.⁶⁸

7.10 The Committee recommends that:

- **the impact of the glazed circulation space on the internal heat load be assessed, and in doing so the potential heat problem resulting from the large amounts of glass on the northern perimeter walls should be taken into account.**

⁶⁷ Public Sector Union, p 4

⁶⁸ Pre-design report, p 24

Education facilities

7.11 The Committee believes that the provision of education facilities, both for school children as well and the general community, in the new premises is important. As recommended in paragraph 4.17, the Committee believes it necessary that school groups be catered for with special provisions in the public gallery that will facilitate explanation of proceedings.

7.12 In addition, the Committee supports the proposal by the Clerk that provision be made for an informal area where school groups can be addressed by Members or officials on the role and operation of the Assembly and where light refreshments can be served.

7.13 The Committee recommends that:

- **provision be made for an informal area where school groups can be addressed by Members or officials on the role and operation of the Assembly and where light refreshments can be served.**

7.14 The Committee also believes that facilities should be provided in the public areas of the ground floor for displays on the history of self-government and the Assembly, as well as information on the current Assembly, its Members and proceedings.

7.15 The Committee recommends that:

- **provision be made in the public areas of South Building for educational displays.**

Electronic communication and information technology needs

7.16 The Committee notes advice that the refurbishment of South Building will include adequate cabling for information technology requirements throughout the building.

7.17 The Committee believes that a review of electronic communications and information technology needs should be carried out prior to the installation of cabling and facilities.

7.18 The Committee recommends that:

- **a review of the electronic communication and information technology needs of building occupants be carried out.**

First aid room

7.19 The Committee believes that a properly equipped first aid room be located on the ground floor in or close to the public access area for use by Members, staff and visitors to the building.

7.20 The Committee recommends that:

- **a first aid room be established on the ground floor for use by all building occupants and visitors.**

Furnishings and art works

7.21 The Committee is of the view that throughout the Assembly building, whether it be in the public areas or the Members' offices, the use of local furnishings and the display of local artist and craft workers should be encouraged.

Parking

7.22 The terms of reference for the inquiry required the Committee to consider the issue of adequate parking for all Members and staff.

7.23 The pre-design report included four options for parking:

- basement parking for 30 cars and limited surface car parking for visitors
- surface parking for members and staff (30 spaces)
- courtyard parking for some cars together with some surface parking
- covered laneway parking for six cars at ground level plus some surface car parking⁶⁹

7.24 Additional parking for visitors and the public is available in the existing parking areas adjacent to South Building.

7.25 Basement car parking for 30 cars is the option preferred in the design report and the costing for the redesign and refurbishment of South Building includes \$797,400 for this option. The Committee believes that underground car parking, whilst desirable, cannot be justified at a cost of almost \$800,000 for only 30 cars. In addition, given the nature of Assembly work, including late night sittings, the Committee believes that all staff employed in the building are entitled to the same car parking facilities as Members.

7.26 The Committee believes that the last option listed above is preferable, ie the provision of secure car parking for six vehicles at ground level, under South Building, that would be available for the Executive, and secure, well lit car parking at the surface level, adjacent to South Building, for non-executive Members, Members' staff and the Secretariat. Provision should also be made for visitor parking.

7.27 The Committee recommends that:

- **instead of the construction of an underground car park for 30 cars, secure parking at ground level under South Building be provided for the Executive and surface parking, well lit and secure, be provided for non-executive Members, Members' staff and the Secretariat staff. Provision should also be made for visitors.**

⁶⁹ Pre-design report, p 21

Reception areas

7.28 The facilities available in the existing premises are inadequate for the provision of hospitality functions. The Government has proposed the need for modest hospitality facilities to be provided in the new building, although recognising the need to hold larger functions at specialist function venues.

7.29 Whilst dining facilities and a kitchen have been included in the plans, it is not proposed, nor is it appropriate, that comprehensive in-house dining facilities be available for Members or staff. The Committee agrees with the Government's proposal that:

a kitchen facility adequate to service a small dining room or medium sized reception with "catered-in" food be provided.⁷⁰

7.30 The Committee notes that the pre-design report provides for 100 square metres of entry/exhibition space, 300 square metres for reception/function space and a dining room of 100 square metres. To service these areas a kitchen of 50 square metres has been included in the design. All facilities other than the dining room are located on the ground floor, the dining room being located on the first floor as this facility will primarily be used for smaller, private functions.

7.31 The Committee believes that the facilities proposed are suitable and appropriate, although it is considered that it may be more appropriate for the dining room to be located adjacent to the Speaker's Office. The Committee notes the concerns regarding possible intrusion of noise and odours into the Chamber and galleries that may arise if the dining room is located on the first floor.⁷¹

Recreation facilities

7.32 Included in the pre-design report is 120 square metres identified as space for recreation facilities. The report or the Government's submission do not identify any particular use for this space.

⁷⁰ Government, submission, 4 May 1992, p 12

⁷¹ Clerk, 3 August 1992, p 3

7.33 The Committee does not support the inclusion of expensive facilities in the new premises but believes that provision should be made for a Members' lounge and a staff commonroom, possibly located adjacent to the courtyard. The Committee believes that there should be no provision of a subsidised bar service, but supports the suggestion that any refreshment service be on a self serve, honour system.

7.34 The Committee is also of the view that showers and changerooms be provided in each wing of the building for the use of Members and staff who cycle to work or exercise at lunch time.

7.35 Small kitchen facilities should also be provided on each floor for the use of staff (and Members if individual kitchenettes are not provided) and also near the Members' lounge and staff commonroom. This is particularly important in the Assembly building given the long hours the building occupants are expected to work.

7.36 The Committee recommends that:

- a Members' lounge and staff commonroom be included in the new premises;
- showers and change rooms be provided in each wing of the building; and
- kitchen facilities be provided on each floor of each wing.

Security

7.37 As it is the Committee's view that the Assembly should be as accessible as possible to members of the public, the Assembly building should be designed with unobtrusive security in mind. The Committee is aware of the conflict between the need for access by the public to the Chamber, the Committee Rooms and their elected representatives and the need to ensure the safety of Members, staff and the public while in the building.

7.38 The Committee notes that the preferred option, option three, has clearly identifiable and defined areas that are Members and staff work areas and others that are clearly public areas. A number of circulation areas will merge the two.

7.39 The Committee believes that wherever possible security should be effected by the use of access points rather than security guards and physical barriers. There should be as little obstruction as possible for members of the public to enter the public gallery of the Chamber, the Committee Rooms and the reception and exhibition areas. Discreet security at entry points to Members and staff areas will be necessary.

7.40 The Committee believes that advice on security matters should be obtained from the Australian Federal Police during the next stage of planning.

Storage

7.41 The Committee notes that storage has not been identified in the pre-design report. The Assembly has specific requirements additional to normal public service requirements and the Committee believes that appropriate storage should be provided in South Building.

7.42 The Committee recommends that:

- **appropriate storage be provided in South Building.**

8 Co-location of certain areas of the Chief Minister's Department

8.1 The question of whether to co-locate areas of the Chief Minister's Department with the Assembly was one of the terms of reference. Initially, assumptions were made in the Government's first submission regarding the co-location of elements of the Chief Minister's Department, although those assumptions were qualified by the statement that the Government had yet to consider or endorse the issue. It was then considered appropriate that certain areas of the Chief Minister's Department which are currently located in the same building as the Assembly, continue to be co-located, given the need for close interface between those areas and the Executive.⁷²

8.2 However, it became clear following examination of the accommodation requirements of the Assembly that the majority of the floor space would be required for the Assembly, its Members, their staff, the Secretariat and the Library, a fact acknowledged by the Government in its second submission.⁷³

8.3 The Government is of the view that it is important for reasons of consultation that senior members of the bureaucracy be immediately accessible to the Executive. However, given the lack of space in South Building for significant numbers of public servants, those public servants requiring close access could be located in buildings nearby.

8.4 The Committee is of the view that, regardless of the availability of space, it is undesirable for public servants to be co-located in the new Assembly premises. The Committee believes that the legislature should not only be independent of the bureaucracy but also be seen to do so. In addition, the declaration of the Assembly's precincts and the authority of the Speaker in relation to the precincts could cause difficulties in relation to public servants who are responsible to a member of the Executive.

⁷² Government, submission, 4 May 1992, p 1

⁷³ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 16-17

8.5 **The Committee recommends that:**

- **no public servants, other than the Assembly Secretariat and Library staff, be permanently co-located in South Building with the Assembly.**

8.6 The Government considers it appropriate that one or two offices be provided for use by officers that are required to be available for long periods of consultation.⁷⁴ The Committee agrees with this suggestion and is of the view that during the next stage of consultation in the planning process the requirements for office space for temporary use as necessary be sought from the Chief Minister's Department regarding Cabinet and Assembly Liaison purposes and the Parliamentary Counsel's Office for access during debates on legislation.

8.7 **The Committee recommends that:**

- **during the planning stage the requirements for office space for temporary use as necessary be sought from the Chief Minister's Department regarding Cabinet and Assembly Liaison purposes and the Parliamentary Counsel's Office for access during debates on legislation.**

⁷⁴ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 17

9 Public access and community facilities

Public access

9.1 A fundamental feature of planning for the redesign and refurbishment of South Building is access by the public. The Committee notes the comments of the Government:

The provision of new premises for the Assembly should aim to encourage public access to the proceedings of the Assembly, and should achieve an improved level of amenity for members of the ACT community.⁷⁵

9.2 In preparing the pre-design report, the consultant architect stated:

A need has been recognised to address the public perception of openness and accessibility while providing the functional and working needs of Members to undertake the work of the Assembly within a clearly defined precinct in a non-disruptive environment.⁷⁶

9.3 The Committee is of the view that the preferred option for South Building, option three, provides a high degree of public access, which is greatly facilitated by the location of South Building on Civic Square and at the head of Ainslie Avenue. The Committee believes that the location of the Chamber on the first floor provides a significant amount of space at the ground floor level for reception rooms and display and exhibition areas, all with easy access to the public.

9.4 The Committee believes it important that the Assembly building and the Assembly proceedings are open and accessible to the Canberra community, but at the same time providing a working environment for the Members and staff. The Committee believes that the indicative floor plans included in the pre-design report reflect this, with access to all public areas, including the public galleries of the Chamber and Committee Rooms, through the main entry point off Civic Square.

⁷⁵ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 10

⁷⁶ Pre-design report, p 3

9.5 The Committee notes the view in the pre-design report that the internal courtyard be open to public access. The Committee believes that, whilst there should be provision for public access on particular occasions, such as receptions during summer months, access on a day to day basis should be restricted to building occupants.

9.6 The Committee believes it important that access for disabled persons be incorporated throughout the building, including the public galleries of the Chamber and Committee Rooms, Members' and Ministers' offices, reception areas (including the courtyard) and toilet facilities.

9.7 No provision has been made for a public cafeteria or other such facility within the Assembly premises, although it is noted one of the indicative floor plans in the pre-design report includes space for a cafe on the ground floor.

9.8 The Committee considers that the inclusion of a coffee shop (which also serves light meals) in the building would be of benefit to visitors to the building and building occupants. The Committee does not, however, believe it appropriate for the Assembly itself to enter into commercial ventures, but that appropriate space should be put to tender for such a purpose. The Committee believes that a coffee shop would be best located on the ground floor with entry from the outer perimeter of the building.

9.9 The Committee recommends that:

- **space for a coffee shop, to be let by public tender, be included in the redesign of South Building.**

Community facilities

9.10 The pre-design report identifies some 750 square metres of space that, in the report, is unallocated for specific uses, 500 square metres of which are on the ground floor.⁷⁷ The Committee believes that some of this space will be required for purposes identified earlier in this report, but that much of the 500 square metres on the ground floor will be available for other purposes.

⁷⁷ Pre-design report, pp 2, 38

9.11 The Committee notes that this space is reserved, in the longer term, for office space for any additional Members that may be elected. The Government's submission proposes that, in the interim, the unallocated space be used for appropriate cultural or community purposes or other appropriate uses.⁷⁸

9.12 The Committee supports this approach and believes that the area should be located adjacent to the reception area and be available for exhibition and display purposes by local community groups and to publicise local attractions such as Floriade.

9.13 The Committee believes that as the currently unallocated space will be required for Assembly purposes in the future, it should not be permanently let to community or other groups. The Committee notes comments from the Clerk regarding the need to approach the question of granting any form of tenancy with caution.⁷⁹

9.14 The Committee recommends that:

- **the area on the ground floor reserved for future use be used in the present as exhibition and display space by community groups.**

⁷⁸ Government, submission, 9 July 1992, p 15

⁷⁹ Clerk, submission, 3 August 1992, p 3

10 Steering Committee

10.1 Attached to the Government's second submission was a timetable indicating the steps, shown month by month, necessary in the planning, refurbishment and refit stages associated with the Assembly's move to South Building.

10.2 The timetable is predicated on an occupation date of February 1994, the beginning of the Autumn sittings for the year. Included in the timetable are two specific points, the preliminary sketch plan and the final sketch plan stages, at which formal approval is necessary.

10.3 At the second hearing the officials outlined a continuous system of consultation where, as the design progressed, elements could be provided to the Assembly through a steering committee for consideration, involving regular meetings and input.⁸⁰

10.4 The Committee fully endorses the proposed process of consultation and believes that it would be most effectively progressed through a committee chaired by the Speaker.

10.5 The Committee recommends that:

- a **Speaker's Committee, comprising members of the Administration and Procedures Committee, be formed to liaise with the Minister responsible for carriage of the redesign and refurbishment of South Building and to ensure full consultation with all stakeholders including the Secretariat, the unions, the Library and others as appropriate from time to time.**

⁸⁰ Transcript p 21-25

10.6 The Committee notes that the timetable is very tight if an occupation date of February 1994 is to be achieved. The Committee believes the timetable attached to the submission needs to be reviewed, still with the aim of occupying the South Building in February 1994, taking into account the Assembly sitting pattern and other responsibilities.

11. Recommendations

11.1 Listed below are the recommendations of the Committee that can be found in the body of this report.

The Committee recommends that:

- **South Building be redesigned and refurbished as the new Assembly premises using the most cost efficient delivery process; and**
- **local contractors and suppliers be used as much as possible in the redesign and refurbishment of South Building. (2.46)**

- **option three, as outlined in the pre-design report, be the design for the new Assembly premises, except as amended in this report. (3.7)**

- **the Chamber design included in the pre-design report be amended to:**
 - . **incorporate more entry points to the Chamber for the Speaker, Members, the Clerks and advisers;**
 - . **increase the size the lobbies adjacent to the Chamber; and**
 - . **include measures to prevent heat build up in the Chamber. (4.13)**

- **provision of a glassed-in section be made in the public gallery for school groups. (4.17)**

- a dedicated Press Gallery seating twelve members of the Press be provided at the second level overlooking the Chamber. (4.20)
- permanent cabling, lighting and equipment outlets for broadcasting and televising of proceedings be provided in the new Assembly Chamber. (4.28)
- the Secretariat be consulted in the development of plans and the costing of facilities to be provided on the perimeter of the Chamber and considered necessary by the Secretariat for the efficient operation of the Chamber. (4.33)
- the Committee Rooms be provided with a sound reinforcement and reticulation system that will allow proceedings of public hearings to be broadcast in Members, staff, Secretariat and media offices; and
- permanent cabling, lighting and equipment outlets for broadcasting and televising of proceedings be provided in the Committee Rooms. (4.39)
- the Speaker's Office be located on the same level as the floor of the Chamber, ie the first floor. (5.7)
- prior to a final decision being made regarding the provision of ensuites and kitchenettes for Members other than the Speaker, the Executive and the Leader of the Opposition, costings be prepared for other options. (5.14)
- the impact of electorate offices on requirements in South Building should be assessed and taken into account in its redesign and refurbishment. (5.19)

- the refurbishment of South Building ensure as many offices as possible receive natural light. (5.27)
- the Chamber support area of the Assembly Secretariat be located on the first floor in close proximity to the Chamber. (5.29)
- media office space, larger than that included in the pre-design report, be included at ground floor level in South Building; and
- a Press Room, equipped with television lighting, be located next to the media office space. (5.34)
- the ACT Government Service Library remain an integrated library and be located in the Assembly premises in South Building. (6.9)
- the administrative and functional arrangements for the Assembly and the ACT Government Service Libraries be examined by the Speaker and the Chief Minister. (6.13)
- South Building be refurbished in the most energy efficient manner as possible. (7.4)
- the impact of the glazed circulation space on the internal heat load be assessed, and in doing so the potential heat problem resulting from the large amounts of glass on the northern perimeter walls should be taken into account. (7.10)

- provision be made for an informal area where school groups can be addressed by Members or officials on the role and operation of the Assembly and where light refreshments can be served. (7.13)
- provision be made in the public areas of South Building for educational displays. (7.15)
- a review of the electronic communication and information technology needs of building occupants be carried out (7.18)
- a first aid room be established on the ground floor for use by all building occupants and visitors. (7.20)
- instead of the construction of an underground car park for 30 cars, secure parking at ground level under South Building be provided for the Executive and surface parking, well lit and secure, be provided for non-executive Members, Members' staff and the Secretariat staff. Provision should also be made for visitors. (7.27)
- a Members' lounge and staff commonroom be included in the new premises;
- showers and change rooms be provided in each wing of the building; and
- kitchen facilities be provided on each floor of each wing. (7.36)
- appropriate storage be provided in South Building. (7.42)

- no public servants, other than the Assembly Secretariat and Library staff, be permanently co-located in South Building with the Assembly. (8.5)
- during the planning stage the requirements for office space for temporary use as necessary be sought from the Chief Minister's Department regarding Cabinet and Assembly Liaison purposes and the Parliamentary Counsel's Office for access during debates on legislation. (8.7)
- space for a coffee shop, to be let by public tender, be included in the redesign of South Building. (9.9)
- the area on the ground floor reserved for future use be used in the present as exhibition and display space by community groups. (9.14)
- a Speaker's Committee, comprising members of the Administration and Procedures Committee, be formed to liaise with the Minister responsible for carriage of the redesign and refurbishment of South Building and to ensure full consultation with all stakeholders including the Secretariat, the unions, the Library and others as appropriate from time to time. (10.5)

Roberta McRae OAM MLA
 Speaker
 4 September 1992

Terms of reference

- (1) The Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures shall inquire into and report on the provision of new premises for the Legislative Assembly. In doing so the Committee shall –
 - (a) examine the future accommodation needs of the Legislative Assembly including:
 - (i) the Chamber and associated recording, audio and other facilities;
 - (ii) Committee and other meeting facilities;
 - (iii) accommodation for the Speaker, the Executive, the Leader of the Opposition and other Members, the staff of the Speaker, Executive, the Leader of the Opposition and other Members, the Legislative Assembly Secretariat and the media;
 - (iv) library facilities;
 - (v) access for members of the public visiting the Assembly building; and
 - (vi) other facilities and services necessary for the functioning of the Executive and the Assembly and its Committees;
 - (b) consider an optimum layout design for the Chamber to facilitate the workings of the Assembly;
 - (c) consider the redesign and refurbishment of South Building as the new Legislative Assembly building; and
 - (d) consider any matters, including adequate parking accommodation for all members and staff, incidental to the foregoing matters.
- (2) In its examination, the Committee shall take account of:
 - (a) the requirement to co-locate with the Assembly certain areas of the Chief Minister's Department, given the need for close interface between those areas and the Executive; and
 - (b) the need for efficiency and economy in the functioning of the Assembly and the Executive, and in the provision of the new premises.

- (3) The Committee shall report at the latest by 8 September 1992 and if the Assembly is not sitting when the Committee has completed its inquiry, the Committee may send its report to the Speaker or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker who is authorised to give directions for its printing and circulation. The foregoing provisions of this paragraph have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

List of submissions

ACT Government

ACT Press Gallery

ACT Tourism Commission

Australian Federation of Construction Contractors

Canberra Festival Inc

Chief Minister's Department

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for the ACT

Clerk, House of Assembly, Tasmania

Mr G Cornwell, MLA

Department of Urban Services

Deputy Clerk, Legislative Council, Tasmania

Ms A Ellis, MLA

Gorman House Arts Centre Inc

Mr H Hird SC JP

Mr G Humphries, MLA

Mr T Kaine, MLA

Ms K Nicholson

Master Builders' Construction and Housing Association of the ACT

Minister for Urban Services

Peddle Thorpe Architects

Public Sector Union, ACT Branch

Ms H Szuty, MLA

Mr L Westende, MLA

The President, Legislative Council, New South Wales

The Speaker, Legislative Assembly, New South Wales

The President, Parliament House, South Australia

The President, Legislative Council, Victoria

The Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Victoria

The Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Western Australia

Some organisations and individuals provided more than one submission.

List of public hearings

Friday 22 May 1992

Department of Urban Services

Mr J Turner, Secretary

Mr J Flutter, Director, Public Works and Services

Mr P Tinson, General Manager, Estate Management Unit

Friday 24 July 1992

Department of Urban Services

Mr J Turner, Secretary

Mr J Flutter, Director, Public Works and Services

Mr P Tinson, General Manager, Estate Management Unit

Mr M Berry, Project Manager, Public Works and Services

Chief Minister's Department

Mr S Hunter, Head, Chief Minister's Division

Mrs M McGeehan, Librarian in charge, ACT Government Service Library

Mrs A Lange, Members Reference Librarian, ACT Government Service Library