



1996

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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

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## PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

# HOBART REMAND CENTRE

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*Presented to His Excellency the Governor pursuant to the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1914.*

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### MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

*Mr Wilson*

*Mr Wing*

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

*Mr Bonde (Chairman)*

*Mr Davison*

*Mr Polley*

By Authority: Government Printer, Tasmania

To His Excellency the Honourable Sir Guy Stephen Montague Green, Companion of the Order of Australia, Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Governor in and over the State of Tasmania and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

### MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

The Committee has investigated the following proposal:—

#### HOBART REMAND CENTRE

and now has the honour to present the Report to Your Excellency in accordance with the *Public Works Committee Act 1914*.

### PROPOSAL AND COSTING

#### Proposal

It has long been recognised that the Remand facility at Risdon Prison and the Watch-house at the Liverpool Street police headquarters are by all accepted standards grossly inadequate.

The intention to replace these sub-standard facilities was foreshadowed to the PSCPW when the submission for the new Hobart Magistrates Courts was presented to the Committee in 1993.

It has been determined that the most appropriate site for the new Remand facility is between the police headquarters and the new Courts in Liverpool Street, Hobart.

This location offers very real advantages : it will minimise the movement of people in custody and be far more convenient for lawyers, families, friends, advisers and support groups.

Because of the confined nature of the site, the connections between the buildings, the desire to minimise nuisance, and the opportunity for more favourable tendering, the completion of the Hobart Magistrates Courts (ie. Stage 2) and the new Remand Centre are intended to be carried out as one project.

The Remand facility will have a life expectancy similar to that of the new Courts, ie. approximately 50 years. There is no provision for expansion as there are no indications of increasing demand. However if a need for additional Remand facilities does arise, the appropriate location is seen as being in northern Tasmania.

The new Remand Centre will provide facilities which meet the Australian Standard Guidelines for Correction, the United Nations Minimum Rules and the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

The Centre will be a maximum security facility containing fifty cells. Forty of these cells will be for persons remanded in custody by the courts and awaiting trial; the remainder being watch-house cells for short holding periods. Until now this latter function has been provided by the Police.

The building will comprise five levels—

1. prisoner reception and processing, watch-house cells;
2. public reception and visiting;
- 3 & 4. remand cells;
5. recreation.

The lowest level will have direct connections to the police building and the courts.

The Remand Centre, being set back from the street behind the old police station, will be quite inconspicuous. Its design is intended to relate in a discreet way to the adjacent Police and Courts complexes, while expressing its own particular function.

Tenders are proposed to be called in February/March 1996 with construction being completed by August 1997.

## **The proposed building:**

### *General*

The Remand Centre will contain 40 cells to accommodate people remanded in custody by the Courts, awaiting trial.

The Remand Centre will also contain 10 watch-house cells for short-term accommodation of people (maximum 20) prior to their being granted bail by the Police or their appearance in Court. This function is presently administered by the Police, but is to be undertaken by Corrective Services when the proposed facility is completed.

The Remand Centre will be a maximum security prison, with a secure building envelope and extensive surveillance and monitoring systems. The facility will be staffed 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

### *Accommodation/Function*

#### LEVEL 1 - PRISONER RECEPTION & PROCESSING

Prisoners will be delivered to the Remand Centre from three locations:—

- The Magistrates Courts (via secure segregated passageways)
- The Police Building (from the Police charge room immediately adjacent)
- Risdon Prison and other Police & Courts facilities around the State, (in vans which will unload in the secure 'Sally-Port').

The prisoners will be received and processed on Level 1. Other deliveries into Level 1 will be prepared meals from the Royal Hobart Hospital 'cook/chill' facility, and laundry.

The 10 watch-house cells on Level 1 will accommodate a maximum of 20 detainees (2 per cell).

In the event of complete or partial evacuation due to fire or other emergency, inmates can be marshalled in the secure segregated evacuation yards.

#### LEVEL 2 - PUBLIC RECEPTION

Public access to the facility will be at Level 2, where visitors can participate in non-contact and contact visits/interviews with prisoners by arrangement during normal business hours (9.00 am to 5.00 pm).

Level 2 will also contain some prisoner and staff amenities.

#### LEVELS 3 & 4 CELLS

Levels 3 & 4 are to be identical, and contain a total of 40 individual occupancy remand cells (a 6 cell group, a 12 cell group and 2 segregation cells per level.) Each level will also contain a laundry for detainees to do their own small washing.

The remand cells will be self-contained with toilet, shower and basin. The cells will open onto a day activity area where all meals are eaten, and opportunities will be provided for passive and active recreation. The detainees will be locked in their cells from 9.00 pm to 7.00 am.

The close proximity to the courts and the CBD and the inability to provide a sterile zone around the Remand Centre will create some risks which have impacted on the building design. Opening cell windows would present a security problem both from the introduction of contraband and passing out of prohibited material. All remand cells (excluding segregation cells) will have windows to provide natural light, but will be screened to prevent problems of privacy intrusion to and from adjacent buildings.

The cell accommodation has been designed to provide flexibility of use such that no cells are defined for a single purpose. Use is not to be restricted by gender designation.

Some cells however will provide for the special needs of those with intellectual or physical disabilities, religious, ethnic, or cultural mores, and parents who need to have very young children with them. This will be achieved by having some cells joined by connecting doors, and by having some cells of larger size with fixtures and fittings designed in accordance with AS 1488.1 -1988 General Requirements for Access - Buildings.

In addition to the shower, toilet and hand basin, all remand cells will contain similar basic facilities of bed and mattress, writing desk, personal effects locker and television. This will avoid the tensions created through some people with good support networks having apparent privileges over those people who do not enjoy the same level of support.

## LEVEL 5 - ROOF RECREATION

Due to the limited site area, and the need for secure containment, the outdoor recreation area is to be located on the roof (Level 5). The perimeter walling will be 3.0 metres high, with the balance of the wall and roof enclosure consisting of translucent panelling (for natural light) and perforated metal mesh panelling (for natural ventilation).

**Cost Estimate**

The combined Remand Centre/Courts Stage 2 project will be carried out in several stages. The first stage will be the demolition of the existing buildings on the site, the second stage being the main construction contract.

In addition, some minor works will take place after completion of the main contract.

The estimated project costs are as follows:—

	\$
Demolition .....	250,000
Bulk Excavation, Siteworks, External Services .....	322,000
Courts Stage 2 .....	2,500,000
Remand Centre.....	3,995,000
Electronic Security.....	260,000
Communications .....	160,000
Contingency (Contract).....	200,000
Artworks .....	20,000
Furniture & Furnishings .....	255,000
Post Contract Minor Works (Remand Courts Stage 2).....	25,000
Post Contract Minor Works (Courts Stage 1).....	130,000
<b>Total Cost.....</b>	<b>8,117,000</b>

These figures exclude professional fees and any cost increases in the Building Price Index

Cost control will be exercised by the Consultants throughout the project in order to contain the project cost to the estimate.

**EVIDENCE**

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Monday, 13 November, 1995. The Committee inspected the existing Remand Centre at Risdon Prison, and the site for the proposed new centre, as well as the Police Cells at the Hobart Police Headquarters. At the Hearing, the following witnesses gave evidence:—

JAMESON ALLOM and

KEITH DREW, Consultant Architects:

BEN MARRIS, General Manager, Corrective Services and

DOUGLAS BYERS, State Manager, Prison Services

DAVID ENGLAND, Director, Secretariat and Boards Administration, Department of Justice.

Mr Marris addressed the Committee and summarised the project as follows:—

“It has long been recognised that the remand facility at Risdon and the watchhouse at Liverpool Street Police Headquarters are by all accepted standards grossly inadequate. The intention to replace the substandard facilities was foreshadowed to the committee when the submission for the Hobart Magistrates Court was presented to the committee in 1993.

It has been determined that the most appropriate site for a new remand facility is between the police headquarters and the new courts in Liverpool Street in Hobart. That location offers a very real advantage: It minimises the movement of people in custody and is far more convenient for lawyers, family, friends, advisers and support groups.

Because of the confined nature of the site, the conditions between the buildings and the desire to minimise nuisance and the opportunity for more favourable tendering, the completion of the Hobart Magistrates Courts - that is stage 2 of the Magistrates Courts - and the new remand centre are intended to be carried out as one project.

The remand facility will have a life expectancy similar to that of the new courts, that is approximately fifty years. There is no provision for expansion as there are no indications of increasing demand. However if the need for additional remand facilities does exist, the appropriate location is seen as being in northern Tasmania.

The new remand centre will provide facilities which meet the Australian Standard Guidelines for Corrections, the United Nations Minimum Rules and the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

The centre will be a maximum security facility containing fifty cells; forty of these cells will be for persons remanded in custody by the courts and awaiting trial; the remainder being watchhouse cells for short holding periods. Until now this latter function has been provided by the police.

The building will comprise five levels. On the bottom level, known as 1, prisoner reception and processing and the watchhouse cells. On the second level, public reception and visits; on the third and fourth levels, remand cells; on the fifth level, recreation. The lowest level will have direct connections with the police building and the courts.

The remand centre being set back from the street behind the old police station, will be quite inconspicuous. Its design is intended to relate in a discrete way to the adjacent police and court complexes whilst expressing its own particular function."

Mr Byers added "As you have seen this morning, H Division at Risdon Prison is old and antiquated and in excess of thirty years old. The people committed into custody on remand are presumed innocent until found guilty and I believe that the project before the committee this morning goes a long way to fixing up a rather dreadful accommodation area that currently exists at Risdon Prison."

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to some of the functional aspects of the design. Mr Drew submitted:—

"...one of the features of the design of the new remand centre is the ability to segregate the cells into different groups so that you can actually manage the prisoners in a more cooperative way. You will notice, if we run through the design, that the cells are focused in groups around the day-activity area, not one large recreation area as you saw at Risdon. So that in itself will be a far more pleasant environment.

It is a controlled internal environment as well as we are providing appropriate heating and cooling, depending on the seasonal changes. So from a climatic point of view it will be far more comfortable for them. Because of that also we imagine that they will not be spending time in their cells other than the lock-down times, and I believe at the moment that is proposed to be from nine in the evening until seven in the morning.

Because we do have an internal day activity area associated with the cell groups, we have another recreational area which gives them an opportunity to be outside in the sun and having fresh air rather than controlled air-conditioning. So, all in all, I think those sorts of provisions in a single facility will be far more amenable to a more comfortable way of life while they are in the facility.

The whole building is fully air-conditioned controlled; in other words, in winter there will be fresh air that is brought in from outside and will be heated before it is circulated into the day rooms, and I could show the way it will work. It is supposed to put the warm air into the day activity areas and then draw it through the cells and out through an exhaust system in the cells, so there will actually be constant warm air, cross-ventilation, through the day activity areas and the cells. Then in summer that can be reversed so that you actually get cool air coming into the day activity area and drawn through the cells and out. So there will be a maintained condition within that building which would be within the acceptable comfort zone."

The Committee asked about the level of consultation which the project has been the subject of. Mr Marris stated:—

"The consultation had three main phases: one was very early in the process when all of those groups came together and we outlined our general plans. We did not have architects at that time and we talked something like half a day with a facilitator and generally explained what was happening and got very positive responses indeed from all those groups. No criticism - people were very pleased about what we were doing.

The next phase was after the preliminary plans had been drawn and we were able to show people a building not too dissimilar from the plans we have on the wall here. We then took small groups of each of these people that you see listed there to the Jacob Allom Wade [Consultant Architects] office and myself and Mr Harvey [of the Justice Department] were there and went through and discussed the plans with them. So, in particular, people who had to operate in that environment - the police, lawyers and so on, the correctional offices association, all those groups - went through and examined it. We had very positive response, very little criticism; a number of constructive suggestions which led to further development of the plan.

A final phase more recently involved Trust, Parks and Wildlife and citizens of Hobart and the City Council are four at the bottom and we went through the plans there and also the plans for making sure we look after the excavations that might take place on the site and any historic plannings. They were concerned to know what we would be doing about that and they were satisfied with the answers.

On your specific question about people's concern about building a remand centre on that site, there has not been one criticism about building a remand centre on that site."

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The evidence presented to the Committee demonstrated the inadequacy of the existing remand centre and proved the need for a new remand centre. The proposal submitted to the Committee provides a modern facility which also replaces the existing Police cells as the Hobart Police Headquarters.

Additional information sought by the Committee confirmed that the facility either conforms with or exceeds standards applying in any comparable remand centre in other parts of Australia which has been built in recent times. It must be noted that with very few exceptions, people remanded in custody have not been found guilty of any wrong doing and accordingly are presumed innocent until proceedings may determine otherwise. The only instances where a person found guilty would be kept in a remand centre is when such a person is awaiting sentence. It is most commonly the case that people are kept in a remand centre for a period less than one month and very few for more than three months.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends the proposal, in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted at an estimated cost of \$8 117 000.

Parliament House, Hobart  
22 January 1996

W. B. BONDE, M.H.A., Chairman