



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

8 March 1979

### PARLIAMENT HOUSE CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY BILL 1979

This bill reflects in legislative form the proposals concerning the construction of the new Parliament House which were announced by me in November last year.

Since that announcement the Government has taken a number of steps in order to get the project underway. The names of the persons who have been invited to form the new authority for the design and construction of the House have been announced and a number of preliminary meetings have taken place.

The panel to assess the competition to select a designer for the new Parliament House has been chosen. A stage has now been reached where it will be possible to proceed with the competition. Before it proceeds, however, it is necessary to establish the authority which will control the design and construction of the new House.

The purpose of this Bill is to establish it. It will be known as the Parliament House Construction Authority.

Since 1927 the Parliament has operated in a building intended to accommodate it for a temporary period. The growth of the nation since 1927 has brought with it increased representation of the people and more complex functions of Government.

As a result the temporary Parliament House has become increasingly unsatisfactory as a working place for Members and Senators, the staff who service the Parliament and the support services required to operate from Parliament House.

From 1955 to the present day successive Parliaments and successive Governments have considered the question of a new Parliament House. In 1965, a Joint Select Committee was appointed. Its main recommendation was to proceed with the new and permanent Parliament House.

To facilitate this it recommended the establishment of a "client" committee which in due course resulted in the setting up of a Joint Standing Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House.

For a considerable time agreement could not be reached on a site for that new building. This question was resolved in 1974 with the passage of the Parliament Act which declared that the new and permanent Parliament House will be on Capital Hill.

Since 1975, successive Parliaments have appointed the Joint Standing Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House and the Committee has undertaken the onerous task of preparing the users' brief for the building.

With the background of the several reports of the Joint Standing Committee, it has been decided that it is futile to proceed with short-term stop gap extensions to the existing building.

As was announced by me in November last, the Government has accepted the advice of the Joint Standing Committee and has decided to proceed with the design and construction of a new Parliament House with a view to it being opened on Australia Day 26 January 1988.

To give effect to this decision a powerful and competent authority will be established to undertake and carry out the design and construction of the project. The authority will consist of a Chairman and five members.

Five prominent Australian professionals and businessmen have already indicated their willingness to undertake the task. They are: Sir Bernard Callinan - Chairman and a leading engineer; Sir John Overall -- an architect and formerly Commissioner of the N.C.D.C.; Mr. R. Ling -- Chairman of Hill Industries Limited; Mr. N. MacPhillamy, lawyer and businessman, and Mr. L. Muir -- stockbroker and financier. The sixth member of the authority is the Commissioner of the N.C.D.C., currently Mr. A. Powell.

The persons chosen to form the assessment panel are also men of great experience. They are Sir John Overall, Chairman, Mr. John Andrews, architect of Sydney and Professor Len Stevens, engineer of Melbourne.

The Parliament will be represented on the panel by Senator Gareth Evans and by the Member of McMillan, Mr. Barry Simon. One further assessor (an architect) has to be chosen from overseas and it is hoped that this name will be announced shortly.

The authority will be a body corporate and in carrying out its task will have access to the skills and expertise of officers of the National Capital Development Commission, other Commonwealth bodies and persons outside the Commonwealth Service.

The authority will have an Executive Officer who will be appointed by the Governor-General.

Provision is being made for the authority to engage specialist consultant services to supplement its resources as necessary. Appropriate statutory recognition is given to the fact that the Parliament is the client for the new Parliament House and the authority is required to have regard to any advice provided by the Joint Standing Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House.

That Committee will be the watchdog on behalf of the Parliament and continue the role it has played over the years in the development of the architectural brief.

A resolution amending the terms of reference of the Committee will be presented to both Houses when this Bill has been passed by the Parliament.

The authority will of course be under the control of the Parliament and the Bill provides that the authority must comply with any resolution passed by both Houses of the Parliament in relation to the design or construction of the building.

It also provides that the responsible Minister may give directions to the authority on any matter of policy, but these must be tabled before both Houses and shall not become effective for a period of five sitting days during which time they may be disallowed.

Provision is made for both Houses of the Parliament to pass a resolution in each House by way of authorisation of stages of the building proceeding.

The authority will have paid to it, for its operations, such amounts as are appropriated by the Parliament for that purpose and the accounts of the authority will be subject to the scrutiny of the Auditor-General.

I am confident that through this legislation the design and construction of the new Parliament House will proceed to completion in 1988.

The work of the Joint Standing Committee and the nominated members of the authority, have already set the scene for an architectural competition to select a design.

It is the expectation of the Government that the new Parliament House will be truly the crowning achievement within the Parliamentary triangle where already we have our great National Library and where the New National Gallery and High Court are already under construction.

It is appropriate that the new Parliament House should become the focus of the Bicentenary celebrations in 1988 as is the Government's intention.

The new Parliament House will be a place for the efficient conduct of the Parliamentary affairs of the Commonwealth. It will be a symbol of the unity of all Australians. I commend the Bill to the House.