



BACKGROUND NOTE

22 April 2013

The house that ASIO built—a short history of the new Central Office of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation

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Introduction

It is now eight years since the Howard Government first committed funds to expanding the Central Office of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) in anticipation of an increase in staff numbers, and seven years since it was decided instead that an entirely new building was required. Designed to ‘take its place amongst Australia’s national institutions in Canberra’, but dubbed ‘Lubyanka by the lake’ by some, ASIO’s new Central Office building, costing over half a billion dollars, is said to be the largest Commonwealth building project in Canberra since the construction of the new Parliament House.¹ It has had a somewhat troubled history, attracting a significant amount of debate and controversy and suffering major cost and time over-runs.

In October 2012, ASIO advised that ‘assuming the construction program and building commissioning are completed, ASIO will take possession of the new building on 8 April 2013’.² Similarly, until mid-April 2013 the ASIO website stated that ‘ASIO is preparing to take possession of the building in April 2013’ and that ‘staged relocation of staff is expected to commence in August 2013’.³ However, media reports in early April 2013 claimed that the new building will now not open for ‘at least another several months’ and as at 16 April 2013, ASIO’s website states that ‘ASIO is now expecting to take possession of the building in the latter half of 2013’—more than seven years since the new Central Office building was proposed.⁴

1. Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 7 (2007–08)—Australian intelligence agencies*, submission no. 4, no date, p. 47, viewed 28 March 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=picis/adminexp7/subs.htm; S Roggeveen, ‘Lubyanka on the lake’, *The Interpreter* blog, Lowy Institute for International Policy, 4 March 2010, viewed 9 April 2013, <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2010/03/04/Lubyanka-on-the-Lake.aspx>. Lubyanka was the infamous headquarters of the former Soviet state security service, the KGB.
2. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012–13, 16 October 2012, Question 55, viewed 5 April 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=legcon_ctte/estimates/sup_1213/ag/index.htm
3. ASIO, ‘ASIO new Central Office—what’s happening next’, ASIO website, viewed 3 April 2013, <http://www.asio.gov.au/About-ASIO/New-Central-Office/Whats-Happening-Next.html> (as at 16 April 2013, this link had been removed from the website).
4. R Peake, ‘ASIO office behind schedule’, *Canberra Times*, 7 April 2013, viewed 9 April 2013, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/asio-office-behind-schedule-20130406-2hebq.html>; ASIO, ‘ASIO new Central Office’, ASIO website, viewed 16 April 2013, <http://www.asio.gov.au/About-ASIO/New-Central-Office.html>

Background

In April 2005, the Howard Government committed \$132.6 million over four years to extend ASIO's existing Central Office building, but the re-development work was suspended pending the outcome of the *Review of ASIO Resourcing* (the Taylor Review).⁵ On 23 June 2005, ASIO briefed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (the Public Works Committee) on the proposed extension which, at the time, was expected to be completed during 2008–09.⁶

On 16 October 2005, the Attorney-General announced a five-year strategic plan in response to the Taylor Review under which significant additional funding would be provided to ASIO to, amongst other things, increase staffing from 980 (as at October 2005) to 1860 by the end of 2010–11.⁷ This funding was ultimately delivered as part of the 2006–07 Federal Budget.⁸

On 12 April 2006, the Government decided that ASIO and the Office of National Assessments (ONA) (co-located at the time) needed more space and that an entirely new Central Office building would be more appropriate.⁹ In a May 2006 Budget media release, the Attorney-General announced plans for a new ASIO headquarters to accommodate the anticipated increase in staff numbers:

The Government has also given in principle approval for a new building in Canberra to accommodate an expanded ASIO central office and the Office of National Assessments (ONA).¹⁰

The total number of staff in ASIO as at 30 June 2006 was 1110, 800 of whom were full-time.¹¹

According to ASIO, five criteria were used in considering the options for a new Central Office:

- capacity to locate all ASIO staff at a single location.
- capacity to meet unique requirements including security measures.

5. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure: Australian intelligence organisations—No. 5*, submission no. 3, 28 February 2007, p. 58, viewed 9 April 2013,

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=picis/adminexp5/subs.htm

6. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2004–2005*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2005, p. 56 and 67, viewed 3 April 2013, <http://www.asio.gov.au/img/files/ASIOsReportToParliament04-05.pdf>

7. P Ruddock (Attorney-General), *Five year strategic plan unveiled for ASIO*, media release, Canberra, 16 October 2005, viewed 9 April 2013,

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FCGMH6%22>

8. Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, *Annual Report 2005–06*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2006, p. 23, viewed 5 April 2013, http://www.igis.gov.au/annual_report/05-06/pdf/IGIS_AR_2005-06.pdf

9. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure: Australian intelligence organisations—No. 5*, op. cit.

10. P Ruddock (Attorney-General), *Budget funds enhanced resourcing for ASIO*, media release, Canberra, 9 May 2006, viewed 9 April 2013,

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FNGLJ6%22>

11. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2005–2006*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2006, p. 118, viewed 3 April 2013, <http://www.asio.gov.au/img/files/ASIOsReportToParliament05-06.pdf>

- capacity for future expansion – essential for a special-purpose building with a 50 to 80 year life.
- proximity to the Australian Intelligence Community and other key partner agencies.
- value for money for Government.¹²

On 16 August 2006, the Attorney-General and the Minister for Finance and Administration announced that ASIO and ONA would move to a ‘purpose-built building within Canberra’s security precinct by 2010–11’ and that the ‘estimated cost of the building [would] be the subject of detailed consideration in the 2007–08 Budget’:

The new building will be purpose-designed, operating 24 hours a day with a level of security commensurate with the threat Australia faces from terrorism.

The building will be project-managed by the Department of Finance and Administration and constructed on Commonwealth land between Constitution Avenue and Parkes Way, next to Anzac Park East.

The chosen site will enable ASIO and ONA to remain near other close partners in the intelligence and law enforcement community.

The need for ASIO to be relocated followed from the findings of the Taylor review which recommended the Organisation grow to 1860 staff by 2010–11.¹³

The new Rudd (Labor) Government was elected in November 2007 and continued with the project. The *ASIO Report to Parliament 2007–08* noted that ‘a design concept for ASIO’s new building was developed in 2007–08 ... in keeping with the National Capital Plan and the Griffin Legacy under the guidance of the National Capital Authority’.¹⁴ The report also noted that the new building was to be designed and constructed in partnership with the renamed Department of Finance and Deregulation (DoFD).

The seven hectare site between Constitution Avenue and Parkes Way selected for the construction of the new building is known as Section 49. The site is ‘National Land’ under the *ACT (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*, being land that is owned, used and managed by the Commonwealth.

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12. ASIO, *ASIO’s new Central Office*, public statement, ASIO website, 2 June 2009, viewed 26 March 2013, <http://www.asio.gov.au/Publications/Speeches-and-Statements/2009/ASIO-New-Central-Office.html>
 13. P Ruddock (Attorney-General) and N Minchin (Minister for Finance and Administration), *Designers sought for intelligence facility*, media release, Canberra, 16 August 2006, viewed 18 December 2012, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FUTKK6%22>
 14. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2007–08*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2008, p. 55, viewed 17 December 2012, <http://www.asio.gov.au/img/files/ASIOsReportToParliament07-08.pdf>. The National Capital Plan is Canberra’s strategic plan which ensures that, according to the *ACT (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*, ‘Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance’. The Griffin Legacy is a framework to maintain and further develop the civic design envisaged for Canberra by its designers, Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin. For further information on both the Plan and the Legacy see http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=39&Itemid=164 (viewed 27 March 2013).

Seven sites were considered in the Russell Security Precinct alone (see Figure 2), and according to ASIO:¹⁵

The site selection process was expansive with various options being considered, including ‘green field’ sites outside of Canberra’s security precinct, other sites located within the Parliamentary Triangle and the use of existing commercially constructed buildings. Section 49 was selected with the assistance of professional advice from a range of consultants within the property industry.¹⁶

The Central Office building is the only ASIO office to be identified publicly.

Outlined below is an annotated chronology of the new building’s construction.

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15. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Supplementary Budget Estimates 2008–09, 19 October 2009, Question 96, viewed 26 March 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=legcon_ctte/estimates/sup_0910/ag/index.htm
 16. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure: Australian intelligence organisations—No. 5*, op. cit., p. 59.



Figure 1: photo showing the location of the new ASIO Central Office building (indicated by the black outline), the Russell Security Precinct, and the nearby suburb of Campbell.¹⁷



Figure 2: location of the new ASIO Central Office building (outlined in the top right corner) in relation to the Russell Security Precinct (the existing ASIO Central Office building is the lower and longer of the two buildings in the bottom left corner).¹⁸

17. Department of Finance and Deregulation, *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) Referral, Schedule of figures, 25 March 2009, viewed 26 March 2013, http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=4814

Construction timeline

Date	Notes
2007	Total full-time ASIO staff as at 30 June 2007—1125. ¹⁹
January	A project consultant (GHD Pty Ltd) is appointed. ²⁰
February	<p>ASIO notes that the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, the National Capital Authority (NCA) and the Department of the Environment and Water Resources have been consulted on the proposal, and that a ‘full briefing’ on the project will be provided to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCS).²¹</p> <p>Due to the high-security nature of the building, in the initial stages of the project the Governor-General grants the new ASIO building project an exemption from scrutiny by the Public Works Committee on the basis that:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Detailed enquiries could lead to public disclosure of sensitive information regarding the building’s protective security features. In the public arena, this information would be of particular interest to hostile intelligence services and, potentially, terrorist groups. This would be prejudicial to national security and contrary to the public interest.²²</p> <p>Reflecting the timing mentioned in the Government’s announcement on 16 August 2006, ASIO indicates that it anticipates relocating to the new Central Office building in 2010–11.²³</p>
March	<p>A budgeted cost for the building of \$460 million is approved and appropriated across the three project sponsors as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$254.5m to the Department of Finance and Administration (base building

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18. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure: Australian intelligence organisations—No. 5*, op. cit., p. 59.
 19. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2011–12*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2012, p. 130, viewed 5 April 2013, <http://www.asio.gov.au/img/files/ASIO-Report-to-Parliament-2012-update.pdf>
 20. ASIO, ‘ASIO new Central Office—progress to date’, ASIO website, no date, viewed 26 March 2013, <http://www.asio.gov.au/About-ASIO/New-Central-Office/Progress-to-Date.html> (as at 16 April 2013, this link had been removed from the website).
 21. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure: Australian intelligence organisations—No. 5*, op. cit., p. 59.
 22. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 8 (2008–09)—Australian intelligence agencies*, submission no. 9, no date, p. 43, viewed 28 March 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=pjcs/adminexp8/subs.htm
 23. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure: Australian intelligence organisations—No. 5*, op. cit., p. 60.

	works) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$186.6m to ASIO (ASIO fit-out) and • \$17.8m to ONA (ONA fit-out).²⁴
August	A managing contractor (Bovis Lend Lease) is appointed. ²⁵
2008	Total full-time ASIO staff as at 30 June 2008—1263. ²⁶
January	A secure site office is established adjacent to the site. ²⁷
25 June	The NCA gives in-principle support for the building proposal. ²⁸
October	The project planning phase is completed. ²⁹
5 November	Additional funding of \$146.2 million is allocated to the project in the 2008–09 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook ‘after detailed architectural, engineering, construction and cost planning identified the additional investment would be required to deliver the functional capacity originally intended for the new facility’. ³⁰ This brings the total budget to \$606.2 million. ³¹
24 November	The ‘Delivery Phase’, which involves ‘the detailed design and construction of the building to achieve the occupation date of 2012’, commences. ³²
4 December	The DoFD and ASIO together provide the Public Works Committee with a confidential briefing on the project at which ‘architectural presentation boards provided the Committee with a good overview and introduction to the building design and siting within the Parliamentary Triangle and Russell Security Precinct’. ³³ Subsequent confidential briefings are provided to the Committee as the project progresses.

24. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Additional Estimates 2010–11, 22 February 2011, Question 32, viewed 8 April 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=legcon_ctte/estimates/add_1011/ag/index.htm
25. ASIO, ‘ASIO new Central Office—progress to date’, op. cit.
26. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2011–12*, op. cit.
27. ASIO, ‘ASIO new Central Office—progress to date’, op. cit.
28. A copy of the NCA’s letter providing in-principle support for the proposal is available at http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=4814 (viewed 26 March 2013).
29. ASIO, ‘ASIO new Central Office—progress to date’, op. cit.
30. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Additional Estimates 2010–11, 22 February 2011, Question 32, op. cit.
31. Ibid.
32. ASIO, *ASIO’s new Central Office*, public statement, op. cit.
33. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Supplementary Budget Estimates 2008–09, 19 October 2009, Question 96, op. cit.

2009	Total full-time ASIO staff as at 30 June 2009—1452. ³⁴
January	The NCA approves ‘site establishment works’—under the National Capital Plan, ‘the NCA is responsible for assessing compliance and granting approval of the site development’. ³⁵
March	‘Site establishment works’ commence. On 20 March 2009, the DoFD submits an <i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act) Referral for environmental approval of the project. ³⁶ The proposal is opened to public comment on 25 March for a period of ten business days, the standard (and maximum) period under the EPBC Act. ³⁷
23 April	The Referral decision determines that the project is ‘not a controlled action’ under the EPBC Act, which means the proposed building works are not subject to any special restrictions. ³⁸
5 June	<p>A report by the <i>Stateline ACT</i> TV program outlines the opinions and concerns of a number of people (including politicians, security experts, and nearby residents) regarding the location and size of the new ASIO building and a perceived lack of consultation with the community.</p> <p>A resident of the nearby suburb of Campbell (see Figure 1) states in the report:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">There's been no consultation whatsoever. I'm most concerned that the first we really knew about it was the big blue fences going up all around the construction site.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">...</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It's not only the citizens of Canberra but the citizens of the nation who've been sidelined on this issue. We've not been given any opportunity to make a meaningful comment on this huge development.³⁹</p> <p>Federal Liberal Senator for the ACT, Gary Humphries, makes similar claims about</p>

34. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2011–12*, op. cit.

35. ASIO, ‘ASIO new Central Office—progress to date’, op. cit.

36. As the Federal Government’s main environmental legislation, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) protects and manages nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places—for further information on the Act and details of the Referral, see http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=4814 (viewed 26 March 2013).

37. Invitations to comment are advertised on the ‘[EPBC Act Public Notices](#)’ page on the website of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, which administers the Act, and sometimes in the Government Gazette and the national press as well—for further detail see <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/notices/epbc-help.html#comment> (viewed 28 March 2013).

38. A copy of the Referral Decision notification is available at http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=4814 (viewed 28 March 2013).

39. ‘ASIO bugs Canberra’, *Stateline ACT*, transcript, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), 5 June 2009, viewed 27 March 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/act/content/2006/s2592260.htm>

	<p>what he believes to be a lack of community consultation:</p> <p>This is a very important building on a very important site and I don't think that we should sacrifice good planning principles merely because ASIO is a secure organisation with highly sensitive work that doesn't allow it to be as open as some other organisations. If they have special requirements for the site and those requirements prevent ASIO from conforming with the planning rules that govern a very important part of Canberra, along Constitution Avenue, then perhaps a different site should be chosen.</p> <p>...</p> <p>The decision not to allow the usual public consultation was a decision taken by the previous Government and I accept that with a building that has highly sensitive uses such as ASIO, it may not be appropriate to have the public gazing on, for example, detailed plans of what the building will look like. There might be national security reasons why that shouldn't occur. But the fact that the public are [not] consulted formally doesn't mean the NCA should ignore public concerns about the site and the design.⁴⁰</p> <p>A former officer of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service and regular commentator on security matters, Warren Reed, also appears in the report questioning the need for such a prominent building and location, but security expert and academic, Clive Williams, does not share his concerns.</p>
16 June	The NCA provides approval for 'site works'. ⁴¹
July	<p>Bulk excavation works commence, with a sod-turning ceremony marking the occasion.⁴² It is around this time that the Government agrees to the ONA withdrawing from the project and pursuing separate accommodation rather than continuing to co-locate with ASIO as originally planned, although the exact reasons for ONA's withdrawal do not appear to have been announced or discussed publicly.⁴³ ONA's withdrawal causes the project's budget to be reduced by \$17 million to \$589.2 million.⁴⁴</p>

40. Ibid.

41. Cited in J Thistleton, 'Secret manoeuvres', *Canberra Times*, 15 August 2009, viewed 9 April 2013, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressclp%2FWFEU6%22>

42. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 9 (2009–10)—Australian intelligence agencies*, submission no. 4, no date, p. 59, viewed 3 April 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=picis/adminexp9/subs.htm

43. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 8 (2008–09)—Australian intelligence agencies*, op. cit., p. 42.

44. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General's Portfolio, Additional Estimates 2010–11, 22 February 2011, Question 32, op. cit.

7 August	Senator Gary Humphries calls for the height of the new ASIO building to be reduced by ‘at least two storeys’. ⁴⁵
15 August	In an interview, the architect of the new Parliament House, Romaldo Giurgola, criticises the design and location of the new ASIO building, calling it a ‘monster’ and referring to it as an ‘isolated and mute entity’. ⁴⁶
September	Construction activity commences. ⁴⁷
October	<p>Complaints from residents living near the project site continue throughout 2009, focussing mainly on community consultation and planning processes. Some residents of the nearby suburb of Campbell expected, but claim they did not receive, direct consultation on the project and complain that the only notification about the sole opportunity for public comment was to be found on an ‘obscure departmental website’.⁴⁸ The North Canberra Community Council runs a campaign against the new building, criticising the ten day public consultation period as ‘woefully inadequate’ and calling for, amongst other things, a reduction in the height of the building.⁴⁹</p> <p>This leads to questions on the issue being put to ASIO at Senate Estimates on 19 October 2009:</p> <p>Question No. 95</p> <p>In relation to new ASIO headquarters to be built over the next three years at a cost of \$589 million;</p> <p>a) why was the public only given 10 days to comment on the plans,</p> <p>b) did the National Capital Authority treat the approval of this building any differently than to any other building approval ...</p> <p>The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:</p> <p>a) Public comment was sought on the development in April 2009 as part of the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts’ (DEWHA) <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act)</p>

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45. Senator Gary Humphries, ‘Shave 2 floors off ASIO building: Humphries’, personal website, 7 August 2009, viewed 9 April 2013, <http://www.garyhumphries.com/tag/asio-building>
46. J Thistleton, ‘Parliament’s architect attacks ASIO building “monster”’, *Canberra Times*, 15 August 2009, p. 5, viewed 9 April 2013, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressclp%2FDFEU6%22>
47. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 9 (2009–10)—Australian intelligence agencies*, op. cit., p. 59.
48. See, for example, the redacted correspondence between residents and the NCA (dated from August 2009) available at http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au/attachments/866_ASIO%20Building%20-%20Copy%20of%20released%20documents%20for%20FOI%20Disclosure%20Log.pdf (viewed 28 March 2013).
49. North Canberra Community Council, 11 October 2009, viewed 9 April 2013, <http://www.northcanberra.org.au/concern-regarding-new-asio-building/>

	<p>Referral process. The EPBC Act provides a public comment period of ten business days (with no extensions).</p> <p>As the site location is in a 'Designated Area', as defined in the National Capital Plan, the National Capital Authority (NCA) is responsible for assessing compliance and granting approval of the site development. The NCA is required to ensure the development is compliant with the National Capital Plan. Although this process does not involve public consultation, the National Capital Plan and amendments to the Plan such as 'Amendment 60 – Constitution Avenue' were the subject of lengthy periods of public consultation and parliamentary consideration prior to their enactment.</p> <p>b) The process followed by the NCA in providing its approval for this building is no different to any other building that falls within the NCA's responsibility...⁵⁰</p> <p>...</p> <p>Question No. 96</p> <p>In relation to ASIO's new building:</p> <p>... d) given the sustained public outcry, has ASIO considered revising the plan, and has the height of the building been reconsidered ...,</p> <p>The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:</p> <p>... d) The NCA has already exercised its powers in ensuring the building's design complies with the Plan. The NCA rejected a proposal for the building to exceed the 25m height limit specified in the Plan. The design has since been modified and is compliant with the NCA height requirements. Additionally, the height of the building and its impact on the parliamentary vista was assessed by, and to the satisfaction of, the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts as part of the <i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> Referral for the project...⁵¹</p> <p>ASIO also acknowledges the issue in its unclassified submission to the 2008–09 annual review of the administration and expenditure of Australia's intelligence agencies, and lists the measures through which information is being provided to the public:</p> <p>During 2009, local residents raised a number of concerns including whether the relevant planning processes had been followed. In response, the National Capital Authority (NCA) confirmed publicly that approvals had been</p>
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50. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General's Portfolio, Supplementary Budget Estimates 2008–09, 19 October 2009, Question 95, viewed 26 March 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Committees?url=legcon_ctte/estimates/sup_0910/ag/index.htm

51. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General's Portfolio, Supplementary Budget Estimates 2008–09, 19 October 2009, Question 96, op. cit.

	<p>given in accordance with the National Capital Plan.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Information on the progress of the project is regularly provided to the public through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> the ASIO and NCA websites (www.asio.gov.au and www.nationalcapital.gov.au) <input type="checkbox"/> regular briefings to the commercial neighbours including Defence, ACT Department of Territory and Municipal Services, actewAGL, Action buses, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> letterbox drops to residents; and <input type="checkbox"/> a hotline to take enquiries from the public and media.⁵² <p>In response to another question at the Senate Estimates hearing on 19 October 2009 regarding the project's progress and timeline, ASIO advises:</p> <p>The building is currently being designed and the base building is 85% complete. Works started on site in April 2009 and are currently focussed on the excavation of the site and installing the site services. The main building works are scheduled for completion in mid 2012 with commissioning works to be undertaken prior to occupation in late 2012. The project is currently progressing on schedule and to budget.⁵³</p>
26 November	The NCA holds a public forum on planning issues in Canberra (the first of its kind for the agency), at which the new ASIO building is discussed. ⁵⁴
December	Bulk excavation works, which required the removal of 90 000 tonnes of rubble, are finalised. ⁵⁵
2010	Total full-time ASIO staff as at 30 June 2010—1460. ⁵⁶
February	Concrete pouring of Level 1 slab completed. ⁵⁷
May	Façade construction commences off-site. ⁵⁸ Another project update is provided to

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52. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 8 (2008–09)—Australian intelligence agencies*, op. cit., p. 43.
53. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General's Portfolio, Supplementary Budget Estimates 2008–09, 19 October 2009, Question 95, op. cit.
54. J Thistleton, 'NCA faces roasting over \$606m ASIO HQ', *Canberra Times*, 26 November 2009, pp. 1–2, viewed 9 April 2009, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressclp%2FWXAV6%22>
55. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 9 (2009–10)—Australian intelligence agencies*, op. cit., p. 59; ASIO, 'ASIO new Central Office—progress to date', op. cit.
56. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2011–12*, op. cit.
57. ASIO, 'ASIO new Central Office—progress to date', op. cit.

	the Public Works Committee. ⁵⁹
Mid-year	<p>Perhaps taking the opportunity to emphasise the official endorsement and supervision of the project after the sustained negative attention it received during 2009, ASIO notes in its unclassified submission to the PJCS's 2009–10 Review of Administration and Expenditure:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The building is being designed in close consultation with the National Capital Authority (NCA) to maintain adherence with the National Capital Plan and sympathy to the Griffin Legacy. The NCA has determined the development is consistent with the Plan and has provided works approvals for site establishment works, site works and building works (structural).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The project is being delivered in accordance with the Implementation Guidelines for the National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry and the requirements of the Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner.⁶⁰</p> <p>ASIO also notes that following site surveys which revealed that 'a small percentage of soil was contaminated by bonded asbestos sheeting', most of the contaminated soil has since been successfully removed from the site, with the remainder to be progressively removed as construction allows.⁶¹ A spokesman for the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) later refers to the discovery of the asbestos as a 'major issue with asbestos on the site', describing it as 'one of the largest asbestos dumps'.⁶²</p> <p>Construction at this stage appears to still be on schedule, although ASIO warns that additional capability will most likely need to be incorporated into the project as it progresses:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The construction of ASIO's new central office in Canberra is progressing on schedule and is expected to be completed in 2012, with the main relocation of ASIO staff to commence in late 2012 ... Given the nature of the security environment and the pace of technological change, it is inevitable that some capability will need to be added to the new central office as construction and fit-out progress. Funding for new capability will need to be committed from ASIO's ongoing appropriation in the next two years.⁶³</p>

58. Ibid.

59. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 9 (2009–10)—Australian intelligence agencies*, op. cit., p. 60.

60. Ibid., p. 59.

61. Ibid., p. 60.

62. 'Man in hospital after ASIO break-in', *ABC News* online, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), 22 March 2011, viewed 3 April 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-03-21/man-in-hospital-after-asio-break-in/2649178>

63. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 9 (2009–10)—Australian intelligence agencies*, op. cit., p. 13.

	<p>ASIO also states:</p> <p>Close financial management against the project schedule by ASIO and Finance (through a jointly chaired Steering Committee), has ensured the project is proceeding on time and within budget and scope.⁶⁴</p>
August	Concrete pouring of the carpark commences. ⁶⁵
September	On-site installation of the façade begins. ⁶⁶
November	Installation of the lifts commences. ⁶⁷
December	The building reaches its full height (five storeys, or 25 metres). ⁶⁸

64. Ibid., p. 59.

65. ASIO, 'ASIO new Central Office—progress to date', op. cit.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.



Figures 3 & 4: the new ASIO Central Office building takes shape.⁶⁹



69. (Figure3) S Roggeveen, op. cit.; (Figure 4) ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 10 (2010–11)—Australian intelligence agencies*, submission no. 2, no date, p. 49, viewed 3 April 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=pjicis/adminexp10/subs.htm

2011	Total full-time ASIO staff as at 30 June 2011—1511. ⁷⁰
January	As at 31 January, some 77 per cent (\$387 million) of the Delivery Phase works has been committed, and 32 per cent of the total budget has been expended. ⁷¹
February	ASIO advises a Senate Estimates hearing that the project is ‘running within the \$589.2 million budget’. ⁷²
March	A seriously injured 19 year old man is found lying at the bottom of a deep construction hole on the building site, where it is believed he had been for 36 hours before being discovered. ⁷³ Despite regular patrols by security guards, it appears the man scaled a chainlink fence to gain access to the supposedly secure site. A CFMEU spokesman is reported as claiming that this is the latest in a number of accidents and safety issues on the site, citing the examples of ‘an unmanned run-away truck’, ‘a concrete pump collapse’, and a worker falling three metres from scaffolding. ⁷⁴
April	The first stage of the installation of the two-layer glass façade begins. ⁷⁵ Construction work peaks in April with more than 900 subcontractors working on site. ⁷⁶
Mid-year	ASIO’s unclassified submission to the 2010–11 annual Review of Administration and Expenditure states that during 2010–11 most of the external works on the new building were completed, but notes for the first time that ‘a slight delay’ in ASIO staff occupying the building is now anticipated. ⁷⁷ However, echoing a similar comment from the year before, ASIO gives reassurances that: Close financial management against the project schedule by ASIO and the Department of Finance and Deregulation (through a jointly chaired steering committee) has ensured that cost and schedule pressures on the project are being managed in a way that there will be no requirement to seek additional funding from government for the project. ⁷⁸

70. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2011–12*, op. cit.

71. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Additional Estimates 2010–11, 22 February 2011, Question 32, op. cit.

72. Ibid.

73. ‘Man in hospital after ASIO break-in’, *ABC News* online, op. cit.; D Welch, ‘Injured teen lies unseen for three days at spy force building site’, *The Age*, 23 March 2011, viewed 3 April 2013, <http://www.theage.com.au/national/injured-teen-lies-unseen-for-three-days-at-spy-force-building-site-20110322-1c556.html>

74. ‘Man in hospital after ASIO break-in’, *ABC News* online, op. cit.

75. ASIO, ‘ASIO new Central Office—progress to date’, op. cit.

76. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2011–12*, op. cit., p. 67.

77. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 10 (2010–11)—Australian intelligence agencies*, op. cit., p. 18.

78. Ibid., p. 49.

	The submission states that it is still expected that the building will be ‘handed over’ to ASIO in mid-2012, with the relocation of staff to commence from late 2012. ⁷⁹
August	One of the regular reviews of the estimated cost of finishing construction of building identifies a ‘potential shortfall’, which is met from within the existing budgets of both ASIO and the DoFD. ⁸⁰
October	The installation of the second layer of the glass façade begins. ⁸¹
2012	Total full-time ASIO staff as at 30 June 2012—1546. ⁸²
February	On 24 February, nineteen of the nearly 4x2 metre glass panels above the main entrance to the new building (on Constitution Ave), which were not yet permanently fixed to the façade, crack and fall to the ground. ⁸³ No one is injured, but the CFMEU claims it was not told of the accident for several days and accuses the builder (Bovis Lend Lease) of ‘hiding behind ASIO’s security restrictions to deny the union proper access to the site’. ⁸⁴ Landscaping on top of the carpark commences. ⁸⁵
March	Another cost review identifies an additional shortfall of \$31.9 million, \$14.6 million of which will be met from ASIO’s existing capital budget. The DoFD seeks and obtains Expenditure Review Committee approval for an extra \$17.3 million to cover the remainder of the shortfall. ⁸⁶
April	It is reported that ASIO has applied to the ACT Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) for permission to store 660 000 litres of diesel at the new building to operate back-up generators in the event of a major power disruption. ⁸⁷ By comparison, the Defence complex at Russell is reported to have the capacity to

79. Ibid.

80. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Budget Estimates 2012–13, 24 May 2012, Question 180, viewed 8 April 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=legcon_ctte/estimates/bud_1213/ag/index.htm

81. ASIO, ‘ASIO new Central Office—progress to date’, op. cit.

82. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2011–12*, op. cit.

83. B Hall, ‘Secrecy on ASIO site condemned after collapse of glass panels’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 March 2012, viewed 15 March 2013, <http://www.smh.com.au/national/secrecy-on-asio-site-condemned-after-collapse-of-glass-panels-20120305-1ueaz.html>

84. ‘Safety concerns for workers on ASIO site’, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, 6 March 2012, viewed 15 March 2013, <http://www.cfmeu.asn.au/branch/act/news/safety-concerns-for-workers-on-asio-site>

85. ASIO, ‘ASIO new Central Office—progress to date’, op. cit.

86. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Budget Estimates 2012–13, 24 May 2012, Question 180, op. cit.

87. E Kretowicz, ‘Bid to store fuel at ASIO site’, *Canberra Times*, 7 April 2012, viewed 15 March 2013, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/bid-to-store-fuel-at-asio-site-20120406-1wh8y.html>

	<p>store 180 000 litres of diesel, and The Canberra Hospital is reported to store less than 30 000 litres of diesel on site.⁸⁸</p> <p>Although, according to media reports, this application was subject to a public notification period, nearby residents again complain about a lack of consultation. However, it is pointed out in one report that, although Commonwealth agencies are exempt from a requirement under ACT law to obtain authorisation to store more than 50 cubic metres of petroleum products, ASIO voluntarily sought approval anyway—one of only a few Commonwealth agencies to do so.⁸⁹</p>
May	<p>In response to questions put to ASIO at Senate Estimates, ASIO explains that being able to operate the building's back-up generators for several days is 'an important element of the Organisation's business continuity planning' and highlights the fact that 'the formal application under the Environmental Protection Act submitted the new building project to a higher level of public scrutiny than other Commonwealth agencies, because federal agencies are not required to comply with the ACT law requiring EPA authorisation ...'.⁹⁰</p> <p>ASIO states further that it '[does] not expect the storage of diesel at the new ASIO Central Office to have any impact on local residents' and that strict monitoring requirements are imposed by legislation on the storage of fuel in order to minimise environmental risks.⁹¹</p> <p>ASIO advises that the managing contractor, Bovis Lend Lease, has recently informed ASIO that the construction schedule has 'slipped by several months', so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the majority of construction works will not be completed until September or October 2012; • ASIO is not likely to take possession of the building until late-2012; and • staff relocation may be unable to commence until Feb-Mar 2013.⁹² <p>ASIO states that the slippages are outside of its control.</p> <p>ASIO also advises that the total cost of the budget over-runs to date amounts to</p>

88. P Jean, 'ASIO fuel application unexpectedly candid', *Canberra Times*, 14 April 2012, viewed 15 March 2013, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/asio-fuel-application-unexpectedly-candid-20120413-1wzb6.html>

89. Ibid.

90. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General's Portfolio, Budget Estimates 2012–13, 24 May 2012, Question 73, viewed 3 April 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Committees?url=legcon_ctte/estimates/bud_1213/ag/index.htm

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

	<p>\$41.6 million (seven per cent of the existing \$589.2 million budget), \$24.3 million of which has been met from ASIO's existing capital budget.⁹³ This means the overall budget is around \$631 million—reported fluctuations in the building's budget have included \$460 million (original budget, March 2007); \$606.2 million (November 2008); and \$589.2 million (July 2009).</p> <p>ASIO explains that some of the additional cost stems from the need to fund 'additional scope', including \$5.8 million to install audio-visual equipment, and \$10 million to remove asbestos found on site.⁹⁴</p> <p>Work begins to seal the on-grade car park and extend one of the roads leading to the ASIO complex (Blamey Crescent).⁹⁵</p>
June	<p>It is reported on 26 June that nearby residents are concerned about the ability of local roads to accommodate the extra traffic in and out of the new building, given that it will have around 1100 car spaces. The report cites the NCA chief planner as stating in response that works to improve traffic flow around the building will be completed 'well in advance of the ASIO building being progressively occupied from February or March next year'.⁹⁶</p> <p>ASIO acknowledges that 'delays in the construction of ASIO's new Central Office have led to the handover date slipping', with possession of the new building by ASIO now scheduled to take place in mid-2013 and staff relocation expected to begin 'early in the second half of 2013'.⁹⁷ ASIO encourages consideration of the 'budgetary pressures and scheduling delays in the context of the complexity and tenure of the project, given the approved budget and construction schedule was approved in 2008'.⁹⁸</p>

93. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General's Portfolio, Budget Estimates 2012–13, 24 May 2012, Question 180, op. cit.

94. Ibid.

95. ASIO, 'ASIO new Central Office—progress to date', op. cit.

96. P Jean, 'NCA says roads will cope with ASIO HQ', *Canberra Times*, 26 June 2012, viewed 4 April 2013, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/nca-says-roads-will-cope-with-asio-hq-20120625-20ytb.html>. Plans to manage the traffic flow are outlined in the EPBC Act Referral available [online](#), part of which states that once operational, up to 1000 vehicles an hour may enter and exit the building during peak periods (p. 17).

97. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 11 (2011–12)—Australian intelligence agencies*, submission no. 7, no date, p. 33, viewed 3 April 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=pjicis/adminexp11/subs.htm

98. Ibid.

4 October	<p>A glass panel falls from the glass façade at the rear of the building (Parkes Way). No one is injured, but safety authorities investigate the cause and the potential for it to happen again.⁹⁹</p>
16 October	<p>In response to a question put to ASIO at Senate Estimates, ASIO advises of plans to take possession of the new building in early April 2013:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The majority of construction works are scheduled for completion in late 2012 with building certification activity expected to be completed in April 2013. Assuming the construction program and building commissioning are completed, ASIO will take possession of the new building on 8 April 2013.¹⁰⁰</p> <p>ASIO also advises that, following Budget cutbacks imposed by the Government in the 2012–13 Budget, it had to revise its recruitment drive (the graph below shows the rapid growth ASIO underwent over the 2006–2012 period):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Review of ASIO Resourcing, conducted in 2005, identified 1,860 full-time staff as the endpoint target for ASIO. As part of the Government’s 2012–13 Budget, and consistent with the Government’s fiscal policy, ASIO’s approved endpoint was reduced in February 2012 to 1,760, however ASIO is maintaining a staffing level of 1,730 in order to manage within its current budget.¹⁰¹</p> <p>ASIO describes this move as ‘an indefinite deferral of the remainder of organisational growth’.¹⁰² ASIO, however, reassures the Committee at Estimates:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">While overall staff growth has been deferred indefinitely ASIO will continue to recruit new intelligence professionals and technical officers within budget allocations and increase the skill-set of existing officers to meet the increasingly diverse challenges of our security environment.¹⁰³</p>

99. E Gilbert, ‘ASIO building loses another glass panel’, *ABC News* online, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), 5 October 2012, viewed 15 March 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-10-04/asio-building-loses-another-glass-panel/4296314>

100. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012–13, 16 October 2012, Question 55, op. cit.

101. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012–13, 16 October 2012, Question 54, viewed 5 April 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Committees?url=legcon_ctte/estimates/sup_1213/ag/index.htm

102. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 11 (2011–12)—Australian intelligence agencies*, op. cit., p. 25.

103. Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Attorney-General’s Portfolio, Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012–13, 16 October 2012, Question 54, op. cit.

	<p>Graph: growth in the number of ASIO staff, 2006–2012.¹⁰⁴</p> <table><caption>Approximate data from the graph</caption><thead><tr><th>Date</th><th>Headcount</th><th>FTE</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Jun 2006</td><td>1,100</td><td>1,000</td></tr><tr><td>Jun 2007</td><td>1,350</td><td>1,250</td></tr><tr><td>Jun 2008</td><td>1,450</td><td>1,350</td></tr><tr><td>Jun 2009</td><td>1,650</td><td>1,600</td></tr><tr><td>Jun 2010</td><td>1,650</td><td>1,600</td></tr><tr><td>Jun 2011</td><td>1,750</td><td>1,650</td></tr><tr><td>Jun 2012</td><td>1,800</td><td>1,700</td></tr></tbody></table>	Date	Headcount	FTE	Jun 2006	1,100	1,000	Jun 2007	1,350	1,250	Jun 2008	1,450	1,350	Jun 2009	1,650	1,600	Jun 2010	1,650	1,600	Jun 2011	1,750	1,650	Jun 2012	1,800	1,700
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Jun 2011	1,750	1,650																							
Jun 2012	1,800	1,700																							
18 October	ASIO is granted authorisation by the EPA to store for an unlimited period more than 50 cubic metres of petroleum products on site. ¹⁰⁵																								
2013																									
12 March	It is reported that a landscaping company which worked on the project and collapsed in October 2012 is in dispute with the site’s managing contractor, Bovis Lend Lease, over the recovery of millions of dollars it owes to other companies. ¹⁰⁶ Other contractors working on the site claim that the company’s collapse is being used as an excuse for the continuing delays in ASIO occupying the building. ¹⁰⁷																								
7 April	One day before ASIO is expected to take possession of its new Central Office building, it is reported that the building ‘will not open for at least another several months’ (citing a spokesperson for the Attorney-General who said the building would open ‘mid-year’). ¹⁰⁸																								
8 April	On the day last nominated by ASIO (in October 2012) as the date it expected to take possession of its new building, there is no mention of the issue on the websites of either ASIO or the Attorney-General.																								

104. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 11 (2011–12)—Australian intelligence agencies*, op. cit., p. 26.

105. A copy of the authorisation is available at http://www.environment.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/256433/0898AustralianSecurityIntelligenceOrganisation.pdf (viewed 3 April 2013).

106. N Towell, 'Builders caught up in ASIO dispute', *Canberra Times*, 12 March 2013, viewed 9 April 2013, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/builders-caught-up-in-asio-dispute-20130311-2fwv1.html>

107. Ibid.

108. R Peake, op. cit.

15 April	<p>The Attorney-General and the Director-General of ASIO tour the new building with the media.¹⁰⁹ ASIO now advises:</p> <p>The current focus on the project includes the finalisation of the internal fit out and landscaping, and the commissioning of building systems is now underway. There have been some delays, and ASIO is now expecting to take possession of the building in the latter half of 2013.¹¹⁰</p>
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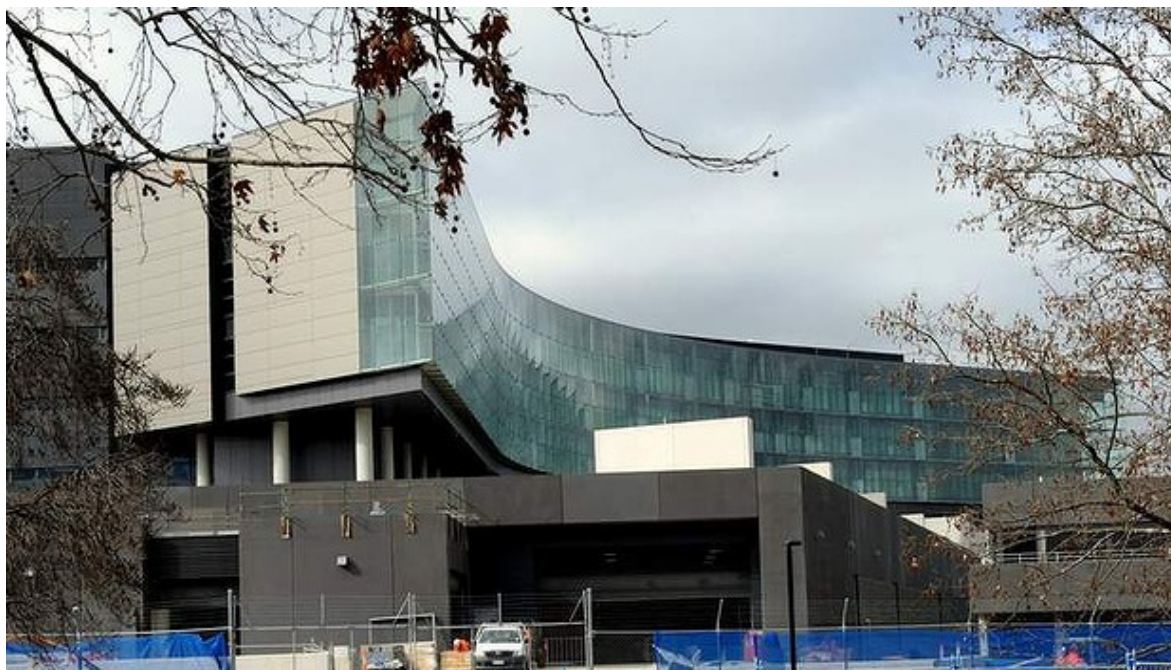


Figure 5: ASIO's new Central Office building nears completion.¹¹¹

109. 'Spy agencies monitoring Australians fighting in Syria', *ABC News* online, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), 15 April 2013, viewed 16 April 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-04-15/spy-agencies-monitoring-australians-fighting-in-syria/4630098>

110. ASIO, 'ASIO new Central Office', ASIO website, op. cit.

111. N Towell, 'Builders caught up in ASIO dispute', op. cit.

Building design

Whether one likes it or loathes it, it is hard to ignore the fact that the new ASIO Central Office building spares no detail in its design, with security, the environment, the health of its occupants, energy efficiency, and future growth among the guiding principles incorporated into its development.¹¹²

With a gross floor area of 62 674m² (and 40 000m² of net lettable area) the new five storey building will accommodate up to 1800 people and operate 24 hours a day.¹¹³ It is purpose-built for ASIO with an estimated minimum design life of 50 years.¹¹⁴ Total parking capacity is for 1100 spaces, with two to three levels of underground parking for 825 vehicles.¹¹⁵ Despite being a high-security building, perimeter security will be achieved simply ‘using landscaping elements that are unobtrusive and complement the local surroundings’.¹¹⁶

The building has been designed to accommodate future growth and advances in information and communication technology and to maintain operation independently of externally connected utility services in the event of outages or physical attack.¹¹⁷ It will comprise offices and open plan work areas, and include technical workshops, a data centre, training areas, a cafeteria, and a health and fitness centre.¹¹⁸

It is also being designed to achieve a 5-star energy rating in accordance with the National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) and a 4.5-star water rating. As such, it will include:

- a gas-fired cogeneration plant, which will reduce ASIO’s reliance on the electricity grid. It also produces heat as a by-product, which will be used to help heat the building;
- photovoltaic cells (solar panels) on the roof, which will reduce ASIO’s reliance on mains power;
- stormwater from the roof, which will be harvested in tanks and used for landscaping irrigation;
- air conditioning designed to provide 100 per cent fresh air at floor level for a healthier work environment;
- a building frontage designed to provide optimal climate control. The western dual-glass facade has an active ventilation system with roof-level cavity venting. This vented cavity will remain

112. ASIO, *ASIO’s new Central Office*, public statement, 2 June 2009, op. cit.

113. ‘Referral of proposed action’, viewed 26 March 2013, http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=4814; ASIO, *ASIO’s new Central Office*, public statement, 2 June 2009, op. cit.; ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 8 (2008–09)—Australian intelligence agencies*, op. cit., p. 42.

114. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2011–12*, op. cit., p. 67.

115. ‘Referral of proposed action’, op. cit.

116. ASIO, ‘ASIO new Central Office—design principles’, ASIO website, viewed 9 April 2013, <http://www.asio.gov.au/About-ASIO/New-Central-Office/Design-Principles.html>

117. ASIO, submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, *Review of administration and expenditure No. 8 (2008–09)—Australian intelligence agencies*, op. cit., p. 42. ABC News has reported that the building’s operations centre can run ‘off the grid’ for up to three days—‘Spy agencies monitoring Australians fighting in Syria’, *ABC News* online, op. cit.

118. *Ibid.*; ‘Referral of proposed action’, op. cit.

open in summer to allow the heat to escape and will be closed in winter to trap the heat, providing insulation to the building; and

- glass frontage with automated external sun shades, which reduce heat gain to the work areas.¹¹⁹



Figure 6: ASIO's new Central Office from the air.¹²⁰

119. ASIO, *ASIO Report to Parliament 2010–11*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2011, p. 108, viewed 3 April 2013, <http://www.asio.gov.au/img/files/Report-to-Parliament-2010-11.pdf>

120. 'Spy agencies monitoring Australians fighting in Syria', *ABC News* online, op. cit.; 'New ASIO building in Canberra', *ABC News* online, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), 15 April 2013, viewed 16 April 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-04-15/new-asio-building-in-canberra/4630312>

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