

Redevelopment and construction of housing for Defence at Samford Road, Enoggera, Brisbane, Queensland

- 3.1 Defence Housing Australia (DHA) seeks approval to redevelop a 6,317m² site at Enoggera in Brisbane, Queensland.
- 3.2 The purpose of the project is to demolish the current seven, two storey brick and weatherboard townhouses that are out dated and do not meet Defence guidelines.
- 3.3 The cost of the project is \$24.6 million, including GST and escalated costs but excluding the cost of the land.
- 3.4 This proposed development and construction project was referred to the Committee on 16 May 2013.

Conduct of the inquiry

- 3.5 Following referral to the Committee, the inquiry was advertised in the *Brisbane Courier Mail* on 21 May 2013 and the *Northern Times* on 24 May 2013.
- 3.6 The Committee received one submission and three supplementary submissions from DHA. The Committee also received a submission from a local community group. The list of submissions can be found at Appendix A.
- 3.7 The Committee conducted a site inspection, public hearing and an in-camera hearing on the project costs on 12 June 2013 in Brisbane.
- 3.8 A transcript of the public hearing and the submissions to the inquiry are available on the Committee's website.

Need for the works

- 3.9 Gallipoli Barracks is one of the Australian Defence Force's (ADF) major bases and home to units of the 7th and 11th Brigades, as well as the headquarters of the 1st Division and the 16th Aviation Brigade. The on-base facilities are currently undergoing a major expansion, which will see the number of regular personnel based at Enoggera rise to about 5,600 personnel.
- 3.10 In conjunction with this on-base expansion, DHA has identified a need over the next five years to provide new housing for families of Defence personnel working in the Brisbane area. It is anticipated that all units will be occupied by Defence members.
- 3.11 DHA manages approximately 1,800 dwellings to support ADF members posted to the Enoggera base. At 27 February 2013, 1,695 families occupied Service Residences (SR) with an additional 396 families in private rental accommodation receiving Rent Allowance (RA). The proportion of families on RA is 19.5 per cent which is over the target of 15 per cent.¹
- 3.12 The Committee is satisfied that there is a need for the works.

Scope of the works

- 3.13 DHA proposes to replace the current townhouses with seven new townhouses and 48 apartments, all to be occupied by Defence members and their families.²
- 3.14 Subject to Parliamentary approval, demolition and site preparation is planned to commence by March 2014, with dwelling construction commencing from August 2014 and being completed by October 2015.³
- 3.15 The Committee finds that the proposed scope of works is suitable to meet the need.

Cost of the works

- 3.16 The overall project cost is \$24.6 million, including GST and escalated costs but excluding the cost of the land. The Committee received a confidential submission detailing the project costs and held an in-camera hearing with DHA on these costs.
- 3.17 The cost of the project will be met from DHA equity and debt funding. The cost will be recovered through the sale of individual lots and the sale of DHA constructed housing through its Sale and Lease back program.⁴
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1 DHA, Submission 1, p. 1.

2 DHA, Submission 1, p. 1.

3 DHA, Submission 1, p. 18.

- 3.18 The Committee is satisfied that the costings for the project provided to it have been adequately assessed by the proponent agency.

Project issues

Local traffic concerns

- 3.19 The site is located on Samford Road. Parts of the road are undergoing widening and one intersection is being upgraded. The site of the proposed project is several hundred metres from these road works and the two projects are unrelated.

- 3.20 DHA stated that the proposed project will not increase traffic to Gallipoli Barracks:

... the proposed development will not increase traffic to Gallipoli Barracks, as the future residents currently work in the barracks and transit there by local and wider road networks. DHA has proposed that provision of pedestrian and cycleway access, coupled with the opportunity for public transport to the city, has the potential to reduce slightly the traffic around the barracks. DHA engaged traffic consultants, TTM, whose report recommendation is, 'Given the volume of the traffic generated by the proposed development, it is not anticipated that there will be any noticeable deterioration of intersection performance in the vicinity of the subject site'.⁵

- 3.21 The Gaythorne and Mitchelton Urban Taskforce (GAMUT) made a submission to the inquiry that was generally supportive of the project but highlighted local traffic issues.⁶ DHA acknowledged this submission and indicated that it had been consulting with GAMUT throughout the development of this project.⁷

- 3.22 DHA provided some background to GAMUT's concerns:

Today, we know from work that Defence has done in traffic management that around 70 to 75 per cent of the Defence people gaining access to the base come from the north-west and north-east of the base. Many of those use an entrance to the back of the base and, consequently, to access that gate they need to drive

4 DHA, Submission 1, p. 17.

5 Mr P. Howman, DHA, *transcript of evidence*, 12 June 2013, p.2.

6 GAMUT, Submission 2.

7 Mr P. Howman, DHA, *transcript of evidence*, 12 June 2013, pp. 5-6.

down suburban streets. Of the people who will be living in this particular development at least 70 to 75 per cent would be from those northern suburbs anyway. It is the desire that once we have the swipe-card pedestrian and cycleway access onto the base they will utilise that, and therefore there will be a slight reduction in traffic.

The traffic study that has been done shows the total traffic impact in the area is quite small from our perspective. For example: the peak count is 2,064 vehicles per hour in the am between 7.30 and 8.30; and 2,151 vehicles per hour in the pm peak hour transit up Samford Road past our development. The impact of our development will be minimal.⁸

Committee comment

- 3.23 The Committee notes that DHA's assessment indicates that this project will have minimal impact on traffic at Gallipoli Barracks and in the wider locality.
- 3.24 The Committee appreciates DHA's commitment to consultation with GAMUT regarding local traffic issues.

Asbestos

- 3.25 The existing townhouses on the site were built in 1986.⁹ DHA stated that it would determine if asbestos or other hazardous materials were present in the townhouses prior to their demolition:

... DHA will conduct a Hazard Materials Survey, utilising the services of an independent, qualified company. If asbestos (or any other hazardous material) is discovered, DHA will ensure that the demolition contractor is fully aware of the hazard and employs the correct techniques for its removal and subsequent disposal.¹⁰

Committee comment

- 3.26 The Committee is satisfied that DHA would appropriately detect, manage and remove asbestos or other hazardous materials if they were discovered during the project.

8 Mr P. Howman, DHA, *transcript of evidence*, 12 June 2013, p. 6.

9 DHA, Submission 1, p. 2.

10 DHA, Submission 1.3, p. 1.

Final Committee comment

- 3.27 The Committee was impressed with the design of the project, particularly the noise treatments, sensitivity to neighbouring properties and orientation of the dwellings to look out to the central communal area.
- 3.28 The Committee notes that for each tree that will be removed from the site, three will be planted (either at the project site or at nearby DHA sites).
- 3.29 Further, the Committee notes that DHA has made reasonable attempts to consult with neighbouring residents and businesses regarding the project.
- 3.30 The Committee was satisfied with the evidence provided by DHA regarding the proposed project. The Committee is satisfied that the project has merit in terms of need, scope and cost.
- 3.31 Proponent agencies must notify the Committee of any changes to the project scope, time and cost. The Committee requires that a post-implementation report be provided on completion of the project. A template for the report can be found on the Committee's website.
- 3.32 Having regard to its role and responsibilities contained in the *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, the Committee is of the view that this project signifies value for money for the Commonwealth and constitutes a project which is fit for purpose, having regard to the established need.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the House of Representatives resolve, pursuant to Section 18(7) of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, that it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work: Redevelopment and construction of housing for Defence at Samford Road, Enoggera, Brisbane, Queensland.

Ms Kirsten Livermore MP
Chair
20 June 2013

