



From The President

Navy League of Australia

Navy League of Australia Response to Questions on Notice for Senator Jacqui Lambie

Ref: Email 11 May 2026, 10.56am, Kelly Yoon; Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee - Management of Defence estate assets - Written questions on notice

Does the Navy League hold any other assets that are leased to Defence?

Yes. The Navy League also owns a property in Fremantle that is leased to Defence for the use of TS PERTH. A memorial to HMAS PERTH II was recently constructed on the site, and it has since been placed on the national register of significant memorials.

What feedback has the Navy League received from Defence Estate regarding the Devonport site over the 15 years of the current lease?

None, other than routine maintenance requests from an external agent.

If there are other facilities, what feedback has been provided on those assets?

Local advice indicates that Devonport does not have any alternative facilities suitable for accommodating all three cadet units with their equipment, operational needs and access timings.

How does Defence Estate usually engage with the Navy League as a lessor?

Engagement is conducted through an external property management agent acting on behalf of Defence based in Melbourne's CBD.

Has the Navy League been engaged in relation to the property since the audit's public release?

Approximately one week after the Audit's release and the announcement of the intended divestment, the League received an email from Defence's FAS SEG advising of the divestment decision and instructing us to await further direction. We have since reached out to Defence on three occasions, not to complain but to explain our proposal which meets and exceeds the Audit's Terms of Reference for Devonport. So far we have been told the Proposal will not be considered.

The Navy League has proposed co-locating all Devonport cadet units at your facility. Has this been discussed with the other cadet units, and what is their position?

The three One-Star Heads of Cadets have received the co-location proposal. Army has inspected the site. However, they are unable to respond as the matter is being managed by SEG as an estate issue rather than a cadet capability issue.

What construction work would be required?

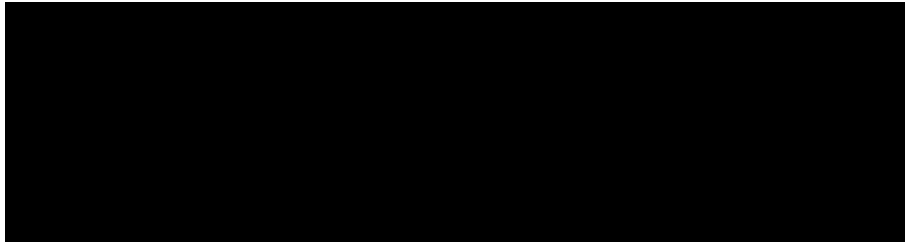
The existing building can comfortably accommodate one additional cadet unit. Additional purpose-built facilities would be advantageous, and the League fully supports Defence utilising the entire site (2 hectares) for this purpose. We have proposed that Defence fund the construction of new buildings, with ownership transferring to the League so that we can assume responsibility for ongoing maintenance. This would be supported by a 50-year exclusive-use agreement for Defence.

Has any cost–benefit assessment been undertaken comparing your proposal with the audit’s recommendation?

No. Defence has indicated a preference for a rental model based solely on hours of use—three hours on a weeknight and one weekend per month. This model does not account for equipment storage requirements, or the frequent out-of-hours use typical at the Devonport site, particularly given its accommodation and kitchen facilities being used by cadets and instructors from all over Tasmania during weekdays.

Has the Devonport facility been used in a civil aid role?

Not to date. However, the site is well suited to such a role. Its secure layout, office, lecture theatre, planning spaces, equipment storage, accommodation and messing facilities make it an ideal forward operating base for civil support operations. The need for this sort of capability was proven during the most recent NSW Northern Rivers flooding event where cadet facilities housed ADF personal for the disaster recovery effort.



Mark Schweikert
Federal President
Navy League of Australia

