



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**  
Estate and Infrastructure Group



DGCFI-ID/OUT/2019/BS6265796

**Dr John McVeigh MP**  
Chair  
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr McVeigh

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION REPORT:  
FACILITIES FOR THE HMAS *WATSON* REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

This letter is to inform the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works of the nature and extent of community consultation undertaken by the Department of Defence as part of the HMAS *Watson* Redevelopment Project (the Project).

The aim of the consultation was to ensure the community, base residents and other stakeholders were:

- well informed about the project's details; and
- Provided the opportunity to raise any concerns or to seek further information so that, wherever feasible, Defence could address these in its program of works.

The stakeholder and community consultation activities listed below were delivered in accordance with the project's comprehensive community engagement strategy, namely:

- Advertising Community Information Sessions in the local newspaper "*Wentworth Courier*" on both 2 October 2019 and 9 October 2019. An example of Defence's advertisement is at [Annex A](#).
- Distributing approximately 660 project newsletters via letter box drop to all accessible residents and businesses surrounding the Base on 25 September 2019. A copy of the newsletter and the distribution area are at [Annex B](#).
- Inviting key stakeholders to receive a personal briefing about the Project, including State and Federal Members of Parliament, State Departments and Authorities, and Community Groups. A status of these briefings is at [Annex C](#). An example of the letter of invitation is at [Annex D](#).
- Conducting two Community Information Sessions at Watsons Bay Boutique Hotel on 10 and 12 October 2019 respectively. Level of attendance and type of information presented at the sessions is at [Annexes E and F](#).

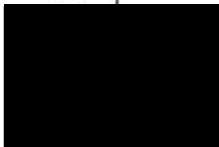
Information about the works proposed was well received at the stakeholder and community information sessions, and the feedback received from those consulted to date has been mostly supportive. The majority of the consultations drew comments on traffic and parking concerns, and the noise and vibration from the occasional Defence helicopter operations associated with the Base.

Of note are the concerns raised by Ms Hylda Rolfe, Secretary of the Sydney Harbour Association, including continued use of the site, Defence helicopter operations, lighting, landscape choices, exterior finishes, ongoing communications and traffic safety. Defence's response to these concerns, together with a summary of all key points raised by the community during the consultation process to date, are at Annex G.

Some community members took the opportunity to document their comments at the Community Information Sessions. These are at Annex H and include Ms Rolfe's comments.

Community consultation activities are continuing as indicated at Annex C. The outcomes from the ongoing briefings can be advised at the 31 October 2019 Hearing.

Yours sincerely,



**M. J. GALTON, DSC**  
Brigadier


16 October 2019

**Annexes:**

- A. Newspaper Advertisements
- B. Project Newsletter and Distribution Zone
- C. Key Stakeholder Briefings
- D. Example of Letter of Invitation to Key Stakeholders
- E. Community Information Session Attendance
- F. Feather Boards used at the Community Information Sessions
- G. Summary of Key Issues Raised by the Community
- H. Written Submissions from the Public at the Information Sessions

## **NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS**

Advertised in the Wentworth Courier 02/10/2019 and 09/10/2019.

ADVERTISEMENT	
	<b>Notice of Community Information Sessions HMAS Watson Redevelopment Project Watsons Bay, Sydney, New South Wales</b>
<p>The Department of Defence is holding two Community Information Sessions to outline proposed works at HMAS Watson, Sydney, New South Wales under the HMAS Watson Redevelopment Project. The proposed works are subject to Parliamentary approval. The aim of the proposed works is to upgrade facilities and infrastructure on the site to allow desired training and capability outcomes to be achieved. This work will ensure that the site is fit for purpose and can continue existing as the Navy's principal training establishment.</p>	
<p>You are invited to attend the following Community Information Sessions:</p>	
<b>Community Information Session One</b>	<b>Community Information Session Two</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Date:</b> Thursday, 10 October 2019</li><li>• <b>Time:</b> Drop in anytime between 4.00pm and 7.00pm</li><li>• <b>Location:</b> Watsons Bay Conference Room, Watsons Bay Boutique Hotel, 1 Military Road, Watsons Bay, NSW 2030</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Date:</b> Saturday, 12 October 2019</li><li>• <b>Time:</b> Drop in anytime between 10.00am and 1.00pm</li><li>• <b>Location:</b> Watsons Bay Conference Room, Watsons Bay Boutique Hotel, 1 Military Road, Watsons Bay, NSW 2030</li></ul>
<p>If you would like further information on the proposed works, please visit <a href="http://www.defence.gov.au/lid/HMAS-Watson/Default.asp">http://www.defence.gov.au/lid/HMAS-Watson/Default.asp</a>. Alternatively, you can contact the Defence Project Team via email at: <a href="mailto:cf.n2232.hmas.watson.redevelopment@defence.gov.au">cf.n2232.hmas.watson.redevelopment@defence.gov.au</a>.</p>	

## PROJECT NEWSLETTER

# NOTICE OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSIONS



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**

## HMAS Watson Redevelopment Project

### Watsons Bay, Sydney, New South Wales

The Department of Defence is holding two Community Information Sessions to outline proposed works at HMAS Watson, Sydney, New South Wales under the HMAS Watson Redevelopment Project. These works are subject to Parliamentary approval.

The project has been referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC) and further information is available on the PWC's website via:

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Public\\_Works/HMASWatson](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Public_Works/HMASWatson)

The aim of the proposed works is to upgrade facilities and infrastructure on the site to allow desired training and capability outcomes to be achieved. This work will ensure that the site is fit for purpose and can continue existing as the Navy's principal training establishment.



# **NOTICE OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSIONS**



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**

The Department of Defence is holding two Community Information Sessions to share information and ensure community members can ask questions and provide feedback on the proposed works.

The two Community Information Sessions will be held as follows.

## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION ONE**

**Date:**  
Thursday, 10 October 2019

**Time:**  
Drop in anytime between 4.00pm and 7.00pm

**Where:**  
Watsons Bay Conference Room  
Watsons Bay Boutique Hotel  
1 Military Road  
Watsons Bay  
NSW 2030

## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION TWO**

**Date:**  
Saturday, 12 October 2019

**Time:**  
10.00am and 1.00pm

**Where:**  
Watsons Bay Conference Room  
Watsons Bay Boutique Hotel  
1 Military Road  
Watsons Bay  
NSW 2030

If you would like further information on the proposed works, please visit the website <http://www.defence.gov.au/id/HMAS-Watson/Default.asp> or contact the Defence Project Team via email at:

[cfl.n2232.hmas.watson.redevelopment@defence.gov.au](mailto:cfl.n2232.hmas.watson.redevelopment@defence.gov.au)

**PROJECT NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION ZONE**



**KEY STAKEHOLDER BRIEFINGS**

STAKEHOLDER	ORGANISATION AND MEMBER	DATE OF CONSULTATION	NOTES
Federal Government	Local Member – Mr Dave Sharma (Federal Member for Wentworth)	Briefing was declined	<p><b>18 September 2019</b> – Defence sent a letter to Mr Dave Sharma MP providing project information, contact details, a site link and an invitation for a personal briefing.</p> <p><b>2 October 2019</b> – Mr. Sharma’s office declined a briefing due to prior diary commitments.</p>
	Local Member – Ms Gabrielle Upton (State Member for Vacluse)	Friday 25 October (yet to occur)	<p><b>18 September 2019</b> – Defence sent a letter to Ms Gabrielle Upton providing project information, contact details, a site link and an invitation for a personal briefing.</p> <p><b>25 September 2019</b> – Defence is scheduled to brief Ms Upton on 25 October 2019.</p>
State Government	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Mr. Ben Khan – Manager Sydney South Region	10 October 2019	<p><b>18 September 2019</b> – Defence sent a letter to Mr Ben Khan providing project information, contact details, a site link and an invitation for a personal briefing.</p> <p><b>10 October 2019</b> – Defence briefed the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service at the community information session at the Watson Bay Boutique Hotel nearby the Base.</p>

**ANNEX C to  
AF33748565  
OCTOBER 2019**

<b>State Government</b>	Property NSW (Place Management NSW)	Date and time to be arranged	<p><b>18 September 2019</b> – Defence sent a letter to Stacey Fishwick of Property NSW providing project information, contact details, a site link and an invitation for a personal briefing.</p> <p><b>26 September 2019</b> –Nikki Glenane at Place Management NSW expressed interest in a briefing – date and time to be arranged.</p>
<b>Local Government</b>	Municipality of Woollahra Mayor Cr Susan Wynne Cr. Peter Cavanagh (outgoing Mayor)	21 October 2019 (yet to occur)	<p><b>18 September 2019</b> – Defence sent a letter to Cr Peter Cavanagh providing project information, contact details, a site link and an invitation for a personal briefing.</p> <p><b>1 October 2019</b> – Defence is scheduled to brief Councillors and staff on 21 October 2019 at 6pm.</p>
<b>Community Groups</b>	Watsons Bay Association	10 October 2019	<p><b>18 September 2019</b> – Defence sent a letter to the Association providing project information, contact details, a site link and an invitation for a personal briefing.</p> <p><b>10 October 2019</b> – Briefing conducted by Defence with seven members form the Association (including Hilda Rolfe) on 10 October 2019 at 11.30am.</p>
<b>Business Groups</b>	Sydney East Business Chamber	Briefing declined	<p><b>18 September 2019</b> – Defence sent a letter to the Chamber providing project information, contact details, a site link and an invitation for a personal briefing.</p> <p><b>9 October 2019</b> – the Chamber declined the briefing.</p>

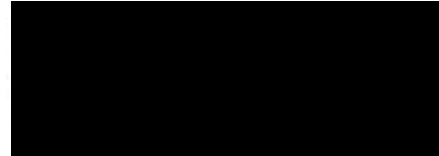


ANNEX D to  
AF33748565  
OCTOBER 2019

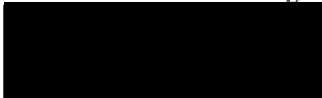
## INVITATION EXAMPLE



Australian Government  
Department of Defence  
Estate and Infrastructure Group



The Hon Dave Sharma MP  
Federal Member for Warringah NSW



Dear Mr Sharma

### HMAS WATSON REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES

On behalf of the Department of Defence, I would like to offer you a personal briefing on proposed works at HMAS Watson under the HMAS Watson Redevelopment Project, Sydney, New South Wales.

On 10 September 2019, the project was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC). Information about the project, which is subject to Parliamentary approval, can be found on the PWC's website:

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Public\\_Works/HMASWatson](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Public_Works/HMASWatson)

The proposed works aim to replace and upgrade facilities and infrastructure on the site to enable Navy's training and capability outcomes to continue to be achieved. This work will ensure that the site is fit for purpose and can continue as Navy's principle warfare and navigation training establishment.

If you or your representative(s) would like to accept or decline this offer for a briefing, please contact me via email at: [cfi\\_n2232.hmas.watson.redevelopment@defence.gov.au](mailto:cfi_n2232.hmas.watson.redevelopment@defence.gov.au). Defence has also established a project website: <http://www.defence.gov.au/id/HMAS-Watson/Default.asp>

For your information, two Community Information Sessions will also be held as follows:

#### Community Information Session One

- Time: 1600-1900
- Date: Thursday 10 October 2019
- Location: Watsons Bay Conference Room, Watsons Bay Boutique Hotel, 1 Military Road, Watsons Bay, NSW 2030.

#### Community Information Session Two

- Time: 1000 – 1300
- Date: Saturday 12 October 2019
- Location: Watsons Bay Conference Room, Watsons Bay Boutique Hotel, 1 Military Road, Watsons Bay, NSW 2030.

Yours sincerely



Lieutenant Colonel Doug Fox  
Department of Defence  
18 September 2019

## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION ATTENDANCE**

Defence conducted two Community Information Sessions at the Watsons Bay Boutique Hotel in Watsons Bay on the following dates:

- a. Thursday 10 October 2019 between 4.00pm and 7.00pm (12 attendees);
- b. Saturday 12 October 2019 between 10.00am and 1.00pm (10 attendees).

Attendees were predominately from the surrounding postcode area 2030, and two were from other suburbs. Defence's representation at the Community Sessions included members from the Project Team to address questions regarding the proposed works, and from the HMAS *Watson* Base to respond to questions regarding base activities.

At both sessions, Defence displayed the feather boards attached at Annex F to show the proposed works. Additional copies of the letter box drop newsletter (Annex B) were made available. Ms Hylda Rolfe attended both sessions.

The public was invited to submit comments in writing (comments provided at Annex G) and summarised at Annex H.

<b>POSTCODE</b>	<b>SUBURBS</b>	<b>ATTENDEES</b>
2030	Watsons Bay, Dover Heights, Rose Bay North, Vaucluse	20
2089	Neutral Bay, Kurraba Point	1
n/a	No postcode given	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>22</b>

## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION FEATHERBOARDS**



# **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

HMAS Watson is the Royal Australian Navy's premier maritime warfare and navigation training establishment.

The precinct is occupied and operated by the Navy's Training Authority Maritime Warfare division and provides a range of specialist and tactical training courses.

The HMAS Watson Redevelopment Project aims to improve the strategic layout of the site, in order to address deficiencies and compliance issues with the existing facilities. This will ensure that HMAS Watson is fit for purpose and can support the Navy's current and future training requirements.

### **HMAS WATSON REDEVELOPMENT (SUBJECT TO PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL)**



## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The HMAS Watson Redevelopment Project will address condition and compliance issues across the existing facilities and infrastructure, to ensure that the site can continue as the Navy's principal training establishment.

The project has multiple key work elements, including:

- Construction of a new training facility
- Upgrade and refurbishment of base engineering services
- Installation of new base security systems
- Refurbishment of existing galleys (kitchens)
- Construction of new living-in accommodation
- Upgrades to car parking facilities.



## SCOPE OF WORKS OVERVIEW



### **BASE-WIDE ENGINEERING SERVICES:**

There will be upgrades to existing engineering services and infrastructure.

- **TRAINING PRECINCT:**  
All current training facilities will be co-located into a new four-storey training facility.

- **BASE SECURITY:**  
A new base entrance building and upgraded security fencing and CCTV cameras.

### ● **GALLEYS (KITCHENS):**

Existing fit-out will be upgraded and new equipment will be installed.

### ● **ACCOMMODATION:**

Four new accommodation buildings and a new Medical and Enabling Services facility.

### ● **CAR PARKING:**

An additional 100 space car park.

## STAGING OF WORKS

To minimise the impact on the community during construction and make sure day to day operations can continue, the works will be staged over the construction period.



TRAINING PRECINCT (ARTIST'S IMPRESSION)



LIVE-IN ACCOMMODATION (ARTIST'S IMPRESSION)

### TRAINING PRECINCT:

The new training precinct will be constructed in three stages.

- Stage 1 will be constructed over the existing Helicopter Landing Site.
- Stage 2 will involve training functions being moved into the newly constructed stage 1 building and the construction of the new training precinct building.
- Stage 3 will complete the training precinct with all functions moving into the building and the construction of the new car park.

### LIVE-IN ACCOMMODATION:

The new live-in accommodation will be constructed in two stages.

- Stage 1 will involve the construction of 96 accommodation units.
- Stage 2 will involve the removal of two buildings, which will be replaced with three buildings containing 140 accommodation units.

## BENEFITS

HMAS Watson provides a wide range of specialist courses and tactical training for approximately 1,300 Navy personnel each year.



MEDICAL AND ENABLING SERVICES FACILITY (ARTIST'S IMPRESSION)

HMAS Watson was built prior to the use of technology for training and has not received a significant facilities or infrastructure upgrade since the late 1980s. The facilities now limit the type of training that can be delivered which poses a risk to the Navy's current and future capabilities.

A facilities and infrastructure upgrade is now critical to ensure current and future training is fit for purpose and that the site continues as the Navy's principal training establishment.

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## **NOISE AND VIBRATION IMPACTS**

The project will not have a significant noise and vibration impact. While some construction activities during certain phases of the work may exceed noise management levels, there will be minimal impact to the surrounding community.



TRAINING PRECINCT (ARTIST'S IMPRESSION)

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Measures will be implemented to minimise any noise and vibration impacts. These include:

- Review of construction methodologies, strategies and equipment selection
- Ensuring noisy work will only occur during standard work hours
- Ongoing monitoring and consultation with the community on noise impacts.



# TRAFFIC IMPACTS

A traffic impact assessment has determined the project will not have significant traffic impacts.

Measures will be implemented to minimise any impacts. These include:

- Preparation and implementation of traffic control plans
- Ongoing monitoring of traffic control measures
- Careful selection of heavy vehicle routes and clear communication with the community about them.



FRONT ENTRY PASS OFFICE UPGRADE (ARTIST'S IMPRESSION)



FRONT ENTRY GUARD HOUSE UPGRADE (ARTIST'S IMPRESSION)

## **VISUAL IMPACTS**

The project will not have a significant visual impact. The majority of views to the proposed development areas are screened by existing visual buffers including vegetation, topography or buildings.

Measures will be implemented to minimise impacts, including:

- Boundary planting and increased vegetation
- Carefully designed buildings and facades to minimise visual intrusion.



**VIEW OF SYDNEY CBD**

### **LADY BAY BEACH**

There are some potential impacts to the amenity and privacy of users of Lady Bay Beach. Specific measures have been implemented in the project design to ensure that visual impact on Lady Bay Beach is minimised.

# ENVIRONMENTAL AND HERITAGE IMPACTS



ENVIRONMENT OF WATSONS BAY



ROCKS AT WATSONS BAY

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Minor vegetation clearing will occur on select areas of the perimeter of the base to allow for fencing upgrades. This vegetation clearing will only be conducted after detailed consultation with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Standard environmental controls will be implemented to minimise any impacts. These include:

- Erosion, sedimentation and runoff controls
- Weed management.

The proposed redevelopment of the base entry is located within the southern bushfire prone area. The selection of building materials will comply with current codes and standards to ensure safety.

## HERITAGE

The HMAS Watson site contains a number of heritage structures and Aboriginal heritage sites. These include historic military structures and five known Aboriginal heritage sites, consisting of rock engravings and potential habitation shelters.

Heritage structures will be monitored, and measures will be implemented to minimise any potential damage. These include:

- Establishing exclusion zones around heritage items.
- Implementing a strict unexpected finds protocol.

## **SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES RAISED DURING CONSULTATION**

### **Key themes**

Stakeholders generally expressed an active interest in hearing about HMAS *Watson* and supported the proposed redevelopment works. There was a keen interest to understand what activities are undertaken at the Base; many community members had a personal or historical connection to the Base, and highly valued South Head and the Watsons Bay area.

While they did have some prior concerns with respect to the proposed project, once briefed they generally understood the need for the works and appreciated Defence's acknowledgement of anticipated community concerns. They appreciated Defence's approach to both minimising impacts where practicable, and consulting with the community. Many were concerned about the works increasing the population at the Base and were pleased to hear this was not the case.

A common concern amongst community members, including Ms Hylda Rolfe in her attached letter, was the impact on them during construction, such as construction traffic and workers, and how the limited parking in the Watson's Bay local area outside the Base will be protected from this. Given high visitor numbers to Watson's Bay and the National Park areas, and the current constrained parking situation, it was suggested workers park on base or outside of the local area altogether and utilise a shuttle system. Using the feather boards, Defence explained the measures likely to be taken (briefing construction delivery drivers and monitoring volume of vehicle traffic), the types of traffic and vehicles to be managed, and that onsite parking will be seriously considered.

A second common concern was related to helicopters around the Base, also raised by Ms Rolfe. Residents discussed the noise and vibration impacts of helicopter movements. The site-seeing and Search and Rescue helicopter operations around South Head were acknowledged as beyond Defence's control. The operation of Defence helicopters visiting the Base were discussed directly with HMAS *Watson* Base representatives at the community sessions.

In addition to the two common concerns documented above, other specific concerns are documented below.

### **Primary specific concerns**

- **On-going use of area for a Defence base** - some members of the community, including Ms Rolfe, expressed a desire for the area to become a National Park.
- **Visual Impacts** – residents, including Ms Rolfe, were concerned about the visual impacts of the work, in particular the areas that are visible from the walking track. It was requested that materials and design consider how they can complement the natural surroundings. One community member complimented how sympathetic the design of the new training precinct building is to its surroundings.

- **Lighting** - some community members, including Ms Rolfe, requested the level of general base lighting at night be considered, and any new lighting be downcast and shielded.

Defence is addressing this as a general design principle, balanced with the purpose of the lighting.

- **Opening of public walkway** – several members of the community expressed a desire for Defence to open a public walkway through the Base along the eastern-side cliff-top. This would provide them a second pathway to Hornby Lighthouse and a more direct path from the Gap Bluff paths to the Lighthouse.

There is not currently any plan to allow public access through the Base along the cliff-top to the Lighthouse.

- **Surrounding bushland and vegetation** - it was requested that the issue of weeds in the bushland surrounding the base be considered. Efforts to remove the weeds to support and protect the indigenous species should be undertaken.

It was suggested the community member share this concern with NSW National Parks and Wildlife as it covers NSW Government land (not the Commonwealth land accommodating HMAS *Watson*). Defence advised it would be undertaking weed management associated with the proposed works within the Base, and would continue to support NSW Parks and Wildlife with access to those areas outside the Base.

- **Microbats** - concern for the microbats in the area of South Head was raised.

The resident was relieved to note that these microbats and their likely roosts were proactively considered in Defence's Environmental Report, and that specific environmental protection measure will be put in place as a result.

- **Length of consultation period** – what was perceived to be a short time for the community to gather their information and make a submission by the 18 October 2019 closing date was raised as a concern, including by Ms Rolfe. Community members requested an increased timeframe by the Committee in future.
- **Timing of consultation** – holding the Community Information Sessions during school holidays was a concern for some residents who had holidays planned and therefore could not attend. Concern was expressed, particularly by Ms Rolfe, regarding the timing of the consultation in relation to the project's timeline; it was felt that this restricted the community's opportunity to comment on such advanced designs, thus making it difficult for Defence to consider the community's thoughts.
- **Ongoing communications** - it was suggested an online bulletin board be utilised during the construction phase of the Project to keep community members up to date. It was also suggested to use email to inform of any short notice changes or works. Ms Rolfe was also keen for ongoing contact.

On 13 September 2019 Defence established an online Project website which was passed on to the community on 25 September 2019. The website includes a contact email address. Defence will also link in with the strong community network HMAS *Watson* has established.

- **Relocating the helipad to Wilson Field** – in addition to Ms Rolfe’s other points documented above, Ms Rolfe raised a considerable objection regarding relocation of the helipad that is being built on Wilson Field. Except in emergencies helicopters should not be overflying the old, fragile, historic and closely-developed residential Camp Cove precinct. Ms Rolfe also suggested that a potentially ongoing demand for helicopter access in the general vicinity would mean the present helipad location on Base is obviously a useful option.

Defence acknowledged the resident’s concerns and questioned if she had noticed the operation of several Defence helicopters using Wilson Field as a landing zone in recent weeks. The community member could not recall any recent concerns. HMAS *Watson* staff have confirmed this consideration is raised routinely with helicopter operations teams, including since the community members concerns were raised. HMAS *Watson* staff also raised this with another local resident during a Defence helicopter operation using Wilson Field since the community information sessions and no concerns were raised.

**SUBMISSIONS FROM THE PUBLIC AT THE INFORMATION SESSIONS**  
Contact details have been protected, unless directed otherwise.

**HMAS WATSON  
REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**



SUBMISSION FORM

**PLEASE WRITE YOUR SUBMISSION IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW**

Hello,

I support the development of the Navy Training Facility at South Head.

My concern is the surrounding bushland & native vegetation. I strongly support the care & protection of indigenous species & I strongly support the removal of all weeds & exotic species. The bushland surrounding the base is in very poor condition. Weeds, including a lot of Lantana thrive in the area - if you could please make this a matter which could be improved ~~before~~ during the construction, it would benefit the local area & environment.

**HMAS WATSON  
REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**



SUBMISSION FORM

**PLEASE WRITE YOUR SUBMISSION IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW**

*Please see attached comments.*

*Hydra Hall*

*41 Grosvenor Wharfedale Bay 2030.*



### ***HMAS WATSON redevelopment project – some initial comments***

#### ***General issues:***

The planning and costing of the project are already far advanced. This preceded advice to the general community that such a project was contemplated, and so the detail has been developed without reference to current local or other civilian concerns and ideas. That is regrettable.

It raises the issue that constructive comment made now and involving any substantive change may well be vain if it implies significant time/cost of making retrospective change to the planning, on-site location, design, detail, components or costing of the project that have already been negotiated/estimated within the ambit of Defence administration.

Perhaps more importantly, the advanced state of the project apparently precludes any serious public consideration and assessment of the continued use by Navy of the Watsons Bay site itself. South Head has topographical, geological, area constraints and neighbourhood features which restrict its potential continuing relevance to maritime training in the modern world and offer no apparent advantages other than entrenched and partly out-dated capital. These issues require careful assessment, especially in relation to their inherent tendency to inflate construction costs and restrict operational options.

An outstanding omission in the presentation of the project lies in the proposed retrospective relocation of the helipad to the Wilson Field. The proposal is highly objectionable on the grounds that originally led to its relocation away from Wilson Field to its present position. Except in emergencies, helicopters should not be overflying the old, fragile, historic and closely-developed residential Camp Cove precinct. That they have caused real distress and damage in the past seems to have been overlooked or ignored in the development of the proposal.

While the high incidence of suicide at and around the cliffs of South Head/Watson's Bay implies an ongoing demand for helicopter access in the general vicinity, the present helipad location at WATSON is obviously a useful option. There may be others.

Early and informed consideration of this issue could surely have led to a different disposition of buildings and/or design modifications that would accommodate a helipad on-site at WATSON without reverting to the Wilson Field or the Camp Cove precinct environs. Even at this late stage, it remains practical to make design/placement changes to meet that objective. Marginal increments to costs related to the exercise can and should be viewed as the outcome of premature project design.

#### ***Specific issues:***

Assuming the project is approved, some immediate aspects require careful consideration. They include these:

- ◆ *Lighting* on-site should be downcast and shielded to avoid intrusion into the night sky and potential confusion with the Hornby Light signals, and so as to maintain the wooded tree-scape of the surrounds of Sydney Harbour National Park.
- ◆ *Landscape* renewal should generally conform to *genus loci* species, and largely favour Eastern Suburbs banksia scrub.
- ◆ *Exterior finishes* should avoid undue use of reflective glass; external colour palettes should utilise *sub fusc* finishes so as to blend with the sandstone rock and treed landscape.

- A contact telephone number and electronic address for use by the public in registering concerns/complaints should be displayed at the main entry at all times.
- *Public pedestrian safety* along the Cliff Street/WATSON Entry roadway will need close attention during construction. The existing handrails should be supplemented. Pedestrian volume could usefully be reduced by construction of the steps to the Cliff/Victoria Streets carpark that has been previously proposed by NPWS; this should be negotiated and preferably finalised with NPWS.

Hylda Rolfe

\*\*\*\*\*

Hylda Rolfe is Secretary of Sydney Harbour Association, established in 2010, as successor body to Sydney Harbour and Foreshores Committee (est. 1979). The Association is an unincorporated body of individuals interested in Sydney Harbour, and so would welcome inclusion in information dissemination by Defence relating to this project, and to other Defence activities that impact on the Harbour.

At all times the Association is concerned to ensure that the catchment, foreshores, waterways and islands of Sydney Harbour are recognised, protected, enhanced and maintained

(i) as an outstanding natural asset, and  
(ii) as a public asset of national and heritage significance,  
for existing and future generations.

Mail contact for the Association is: PO Box 265 ROSE BAY 2029.

The views expressed above have been (hastily) conveyed to the Association's Committee, and endorsed.

Hylda Rolfe  
12/10/19

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## HMAS WATSON REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT



### SUBMISSION FORM

**PLEASE WRITE YOUR SUBMISSION IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW**

- please consider a 'cloud' bulletin board for communications, with email used only for changes of plan at short notice
- please consider how to park all tradesman vehicles on site. Parking outside the base is limited and highly valued by visitors and residents

**HMAS WATSON  
REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**



SUBMISSION FORM

**PLEASE WRITE YOUR SUBMISSION IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW**

*A most interesting proposal  
Softened colours and harmonious  
building forms — well done*