

Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

Proposed Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation
Project Broadmeadows Victoria.

Submitted by: Helen Franks

Dated: 9 February 2017

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1. The proposed repurposing and expansion of MITA has disregarded :
 - a. the needs of current low risk detainees and asylum seekers to be in safe accommodation with access to all current services
 - b. the needs of current low risk detainees and asylum seekers to have no contact or interaction with the intended detainees in the high security section
 - c. the needs of the existing local community, it's safety and amenity
 - d. our local Council who has not been advised of the proposal by the Department of Immigration and Boarder Protection to change the intended use of the site
 - e. the usual and accepted process of engagement and consultation with the local community.
2. The Federal Government fails the City of Hume again by assuming a low income municipality will accept whatever is proposed. Evidenced by the timing of the release – 1 December 2016 – and the original due date for submissions - 19 January 2017.
3. Equity in amenity, safety and consultation are the standards expected by Australians of our Government regardless of where they live.
4. A high risk detention centre is totally inappropriate in an inner Melbourne suburb. It has the potential to reduce safety for residents in line with that experienced by residents in Coburg and surrounding areas during the operation of Pentridge. Escaped prisoners/detainees having access to innocent residents, a multitude of hiding areas and easier means of stealing a vehicle to avoid capture.
5. A high risk detention centre doesn't prevent prisoners/detainees from rioting, setting fires or creating a dangerous situation with the potential to impact negatively on the local community.
6. There is a level insensitivity towards local residents who have settled in the City of Hume as refugee or asylum seekers. There is the potential to re-traumatise, create fear or heighten their existing anxieties as a result of lived experiences.

7. City of Hume residents are currently under pressure from the expansion of Melbourne Airport, Tullamarine Freeway expansion and the ongoing toxins leaching from the Transpacific Industries toxic dump in Westmeadows. These are pressures residents in other councils do experience.
Residents of the City of Hume object to being deemed or regarded as a “dumping ground” for the Federal Government.
8. It is imperative public community consultation sessions be held by the Federal Government and Department of Immigration and Border Protection.
9. To afford all members of our diverse community an opportunity to understand what is proposed and express their views consultation sessions in key community languages of Arabic, Turkish, Assyrian, Italian, Greek, Sinhalese, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Filipino and Hindi is essential. Sessions on weekends and evenings would enable many people to attend.
10. Promotion of these community consultations sessions can be promoted on local radio stations, placed in the Leader Newspaper, posters at the global learning centres and flyers provided to council and local community groups.
11. Increase in jobs as a result of the proposed development would be negligible following its construction. During the construction phase there is no guarantee jobs will be provided to local companies or trades people.
12. Federal Government funding to improving City of Hume residents amenities in the next budget with the expansion of public transport, specifically rail, and the full redevelopment of Broadmeadows Railway Station would demonstrate equity.
13. The development of the high risk detention centre could be constructed in another outer Melbourne area why this location?
14. Have alternative sites been investigated in the east and north eastern outer suburbs?
15. On studying the location of the other two high risk detention centres it is noted both will be located in low income areas. Is this a coincidence?
16. The potential risks to the community far outweigh any benefit in relation to potential long term jobs for the local community. If the land were developed for use by business and manufacturing it would provide greater job opportunities for the local community.

I oppose the development, expansion or alteration of the existing detention centre to accommodate high risk detainees.

Helen Franks