

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Saturday, 12 March 2022 12:31 PM

To: Committee, Public Works (REPS) <pwrc@aph.gov.au>

Subject: submission: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications—Cocos (Keeling) Islands West Island—Seawater Reverse Osmosis plant and Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

To the committee,

This is a project to increase the supply of clean drinking water to the Island to lay infrastructure for military and tourism developments. Little information is given regarding whether the locals will have a stake in the development or be mowing the lawns and cleaning the toilets. Admissions are made as to the damage to the ecology that the air base has caused driving local residents toward greater dependence on foreign imported equipment to access drinking water. Each Indo-Pacific geostrategic atoll will serve as a showcase of the Western development model.

There has been poor consideration of the politics of geostrategic expansion. Any development and change of the demographics of the atoll must be balanced with considerations for the local population. Demographic shifts will serve to marginalize and disenfranchise the resident Malay population in particular on Home Island. It is a unique situation where an Australian territory is majority Muslim. Contingent upon the 1984 referendum was the assumption that they would share in Australia's wealth. Regardless of representations made, with special consideration of the power imbalance and negotiating strength, Significant improvements to the standard of living enjoyed and facilities must be offered to local residents. In this regard I would suggest a Moroccan led delegation assist with understanding the aspirations of the local residents due to their specialized talent of diplomacy between Muslims and Western states.

To begin the discussion I would suggest the construction and fit out of a junior sailing club and workshop as a feeder to maritime employment. A private yaught and small dry dock for joint commercial, educational and training purposes so that the young people can gain internationally recognized commercial qualifications and experience in that sector while maintaining connection to country. Ultimately stakeholder consultation will inform development.

The greater Indo-Pacific strategy relies on perceptions of the ongoing socio-economic development of the extant populations that partner with Australia.

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