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Official Committee Hansard

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

**Reference: Development of land for Defence housing at McDowall in Brisbane,
Queensland**

THURSDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2005

BRISBANE

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**JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC WORKS**

Thursday, 24 February 2005

Members: Mrs Moylan (*Chair*), Mr Brendan O'Connor (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Ferguson, Forshaw and Troeth and Mr Forrest, Mr Jenkins, Mr Ripoll and Mr Wakelin

Members in attendance: Mr Forrest, Mr Jenkins, Mrs Moylan, Mr Brendan O'Connor and Mr Ripoll

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

Development of land for Defence housing at McDowall in Brisbane, Queensland

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Committee met at 11.12 a.m.

BEAR, Mr Richard James, General Manager (Development and Sales), Defence Housing Authority

KEMP, Mr Gavin Stewart, National Development Manager, Defence Housing Authority

KENNEDY, Mrs Bronwyn Margaret, Manager, Brisbane Housing Management Centre, Defence Housing Authority

LYON, Mr Keith Thomas, Managing Director, Defence Housing Authority

DAVIES, Mr Cameron Jonathan, Associate and Urban Designer/Planner, Deicke Richards Architects

KING, Mr Arno John, Senior Landscape Architect and Urban Designer, Deicke Richards Architects

CHAIR—Good morning. I welcome you all to this hearing. I would particularly like to acknowledge the Hon. Teresa Gambaro, the member for Petrie and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, in whose electorate this development falls. Thank you for taking such an interest in this particular development. I declare open this public hearing into the proposed development of land for Defence housing at McDowall in Brisbane, Queensland. This project was referred to the Joint Committee on Public Works on 6 December 2004 for consideration and report to the parliament. In accordance with subsection 17(3) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969:

- (3) In considering and reporting on a public work, the Committee shall have regard to—
- (a) the stated purpose of the work and its suitability for that purpose;
 - (b) the necessity for, or the advisability of, carrying out the work;
 - (c) the most effective use that can be made, in the carrying out of the work, of the moneys to be expended on the work;
 - (d) where the work purports to be of a revenue producing character, the amount of revenue that it may reasonably be expected to produce; and
 - (e) the present and prospective public value of the work.

Earlier this morning the committee received a briefing from Defence Housing Authority and inspected the site and proposed works. The committee will now hear evidence from the Defence Housing Authority, Origin Energy Asset Management Ltd, Defence Families of Australia, Councillor Norm Wyndham and Mr Terry Sullivan MP. I now call on representatives of the Defence Housing Authority. On behalf of the committee I extend our appreciation for what you did to facilitate our site inspection this morning. The committee has received a statement of evidence and six supplementary submissions from Defence Housing Authority. These will be

made available in a volume of submissions for the inquiry. They are also available on the committee's web site. Does the authority wish to propose amendments to the submissions it has made to the committee?

Mr Lyon—There is just one amendment. On page 2 of our submission we refer to the forecast we received from the Department of Defence of 1,137 houses. The Department of Defence has since advised us of the need for that figure to increase to 1,215 properties.

CHAIR—I now invite a representative of Defence Housing Authority to make a brief opening statement, then we will proceed to questions. You may be recalled at the end of this process.

Mr Lyon—This is an important development within the Brisbane area. We have a total demand for properties now of 1,215. Against that we have stock of 1,088 properties, which means that we are relying on the rental market for about 24 per cent. That is higher than we would like it to be. We would like to be able to guarantee the quality of housing that is required to support the ADF. The site is a good one. It is close to the Enoggera barracks. It enables us to build 50 new community standard houses in a very good environment. The DHA board has given its approval for the project to be submitted to this committee for consideration and report. We have received development approval from the Brisbane City Council. We still need to resolve a number of issues, though, with the Brisbane City Council. The committee was briefed on those this morning. We can elaborate if required. In short, we think this will be a very good development and will add to the quality of stock that we can offer to the Defence Force here in Brisbane.

CHAIR—I notice that in your submission No. 1 at paragraph 4.2 a report talks about a low probability of encountering significant areas of gross contamination at the site. I just wondered if you could give the committee a little history on the site, what gave rise to that concern and an assurance that, if any significant contamination were to be discovered, Defence Housing Authority would remediate or decontaminate those areas.

Mr Kemp—For quite a number of years this has been a residential site. There is no history of it ever having had any industrial type of use. It has always been a residential site. The preliminary geotechnical reports that we have had produced and which I have used in the submission are basically showing that there is a very low level on the site. Therefore, if we do continue with the project, we would continue to do geotechnical surveys just to ensure that there are in fact no contaminants. If any remediation was required—and we are not expecting any—obviously we would undertake that prior to putting anybody onto the site.

CHAIR—When you say there is a very low level, what sort of contaminants do you mean?

Mr Kemp—They are talking here about organochlorine pesticide concentrations, which are basically things you would use in your garden. As you saw today, it is a very large green area, so it is consistent with the usage by people who lived there prior to the sale of the defence housing.

CHAIR—Further, the geological report on the Rode Road development concluded that the site was suitable for subdivision and housing using construction techniques consistent with the site conditions encountered. What construction techniques will be used in the execution of the

works? Are there any conditions on the site that require special construction techniques, and has that been factored into the budget?

Mr Kemp—The soil classifications are fairly normal for the type of work that we intend to undertake. The commentary from the geotechnical report is quite simply stating that we would use normal residential construction techniques. There is no need to do anything special on the site because of its condition. It is suitable for the purpose we intend to use it for.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—In section 2.5 of your substantial submission you go through a mixture of delivery methods for defence housing. Can you explain in broad terms why you have chosen to take this option rather than the other three that are mentioned?

Mr Bear—It is the option that enables us to best tailor the type of construction for the tenants that we have. That enables us to design houses with good storage, good laundries and outdoor covered areas, which is something particular to defence families, who move around a lot. Often houses bought off a plan or in an existing subdivision do not take account of those special needs. So that becomes our priority.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—You can purchase houses.

Mr Bear—We do. We purchase nearly as many as we build and we also direct lease. We use all those avenues to meet our requirements. But in this case we would like to be able to build houses to our specifications to meet those specific needs.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—When you purchase houses, are they densely situated?

Mr Bear—We often would buy houses from an Austral land development. We would buy several houses in an area quite often.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—All of the houses being constructed or proposed to be constructed are detached dwellings. Is that right?

Mr Kemp—The 50 houses we are proposing to construct are four-bedroom houses and they are detached dwellings, which, from survey work, is the preference of Defence Force families. That is their No. 1 choice. They would prefer to have detached housing.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—The second preference was townhouses.

Mr Kemp—Yes, but vastly outweighed by detached housing.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Is that right?

Mr Kemp—Yes.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—How was the survey undertaken by DHA?

Mr Bear—I will give you the results of the survey. In Brisbane almost 90 per cent of respondents said that they preferred a detached dwelling. Ten per cent had a townhouse preference and the remaining two per cent had a unit preference.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Does that survey go to all prospective users of the houses?

Mr Bear—Yes. We survey frequently. We survey tenants when they move to see how they enjoyed the move and whether the move that they went through was good. We ask what they like about the house, the location, the schools et cetera. We survey all that on a regular basis, then we feed that back into how we then deliver the product.

Mr FORREST—Were they asked whether they preferred to live in a close community with neighbours or whether they wanted to be isolated?

Mr Lyon—We can provide you with more extensive information on the survey and survey results separately, but, yes, we do ask extensive questions. We are catering for a range of demands according to family composition, but our most significant shortage and the largest component is a standard house in the suburbs. Typically, we like to provide four bedrooms because that gives us maximum flexibility. It also meets our requirements for selling to the markets. Many of our tenants have pets, which are really important. Security is important, as are backyards, because of the kiddies. So this development will in fact meet our greatest need.

Mr FORREST—I think you have missed the point. Were they asked whether they wanted to get away from work completely and live in the suburbs like everyone else or whether they preferred to live in communities where there are 50 of them in close proximity? Were they asked that specific question? What was their response?

Mr Bear—They were not asked that specific question, but we find that it varies. We try to provide a variety of options—somewhere we can have them in clusters and somewhere we can have them dispersed. When a member is posted to an area they get to make a choice. We are finding at present that they like to be near the base amongst colleagues that they can talk with.

Mr Lyon—I can answer your specific question in this way: DHA is responsible for allocating houses to tenants. Our whole philosophy is not to force or require people to take a particular house. We have a process which is a combination of an internet site together with case management. We let people know what stock we have available within their entitlement then they select the house. In some circumstances, there are people who say, 'We'd much prefer to get a house in the open market.' We facilitate that as well; we do it that way. Some people like to live in circumstances where they are in proximity to other members of the ADF and some dislike that. We very much leave it to the individuals concerned.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Are all of the houses to be constructed on this site four-bedroom houses?

Mr Bear—In this particular development, yes. In other developments we have a range of houses according to circumstances.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Is this to be primarily or entirely for defence personnel who have families?

Mr Bear—Yes.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Is it the case that there is a high proportion of defence personnel who are not currently either parents or indeed married?

Mr Bear—We have an interesting case in Brisbane where a young officer is married to a professional partner who works in the city. Their preferred lifestyle was a townhouse apartment by the river in the city where the spouse could walk to work and the member would travel out to the base. We were able to accommodate that requirement. We are continually talking with members. They are coming into our counter and being asked what they are looking for. Currently, across the country, the level of people satisfied with the houses we are providing is in excess of 92 per cent. That comes about because we try to listen to what they are saying and then deliver what they are asking for.

Mr FORREST—I would like to go into some of the design detail, because, with the Commonwealth involved with the association, it gives us a lead on energy rating and so forth—being here in sunny Queensland is a great opportunity. Could you run through the detail of the design and discuss whether we would be proud to say it is state-of-the-art and whether it would meet all the solar and energy conservation principles that the rest of the nation has to?

Mr Bear—First of all, our general policy is that every single new house we build to requirements will have a four-star energy rating. That is the starting point. From there we go into individual developments, and Mr Kemp can tell you a little more about that.

Mr Kemp—I will get Cameron Davies from Deicke Richards Architects to speak in bit of detail about that, but, generally speaking, we are using solar passive design. In other words, we are using what is available in the construction technique, such as the siting of the blocks and the overhang of the eaves, to basically shade the house and make sure is not sitting and baking in the sun.

Mr Davies—Yes, that is right. All the houses have to incorporate four- to five-star energy rating. Five-star is obviously the highest energy rating that is placed on the dwellings. That extends into the design of the subdivision. We also incorporate best-practice water-sensitive urban design principles, so we maximise the amount of stormwater infiltration and water polishing that occurs within the development. We also apply things, like good connectivity, which add to the sustainability of any new projects so that we are reducing automobile dependence by creating communities that are well connected with the services around them.

Mr FORREST—So they will have a rainwater tank and a dual garden supply for water, will they?

Mr Kemp—No, they will not.

Mr FORREST—Will they have double glazing?

Mr Davies—Double glazing is not that necessary in Queensland to achieve the four- and five-star energy rating; generous eaves overhangs and sufficient ventilation are probably the key issues in Queensland.

Mr Kemp—The designs that we are going to use and have used already are in existence in Mitchelton Chase, which is not terribly far from this particular site. It is important that we do not just use designs and take them to every part of Australia. Because of the uniqueness of the continent, the designs we are using in Brisbane are designed specifically for the climate in Brisbane. It is a very important that we are not just trying to load in something we may have used somewhere else in the country. They are obviously designed for the climate here.

Mr FORREST—What about gas supply? Are you trying to encourage alternative and competitive use of energy? Is this site supplied with gas?

Mr Bear—As a general policy across the country, we go for gas as the source of heating and hot water. In this particular development—we have got some evidence coming from the gas company later on—we will be looking to do gas heating energy. In addition, we do some other things; for instance, all water fittings will be AAA-rated. We are looking to do those sorts of things as they become available. We are also in discussion with the Housing Industry Association of Australia, who have what they call a GreenSmart protocol, and the development which the committee looked at last in Lee Point Road in Darwin is going to be developed entirely in accordance with that HIA GreenSmart protocol. We are looking at how we might extend that in a wider sense. It is very much a current activity within our organisation.

Mr FORREST—I hope you are giving some thought to water, because that is the big challenge, the new challenge.

Mr Bear—Water is a big thing and something that we are looking at. We have just built five houses in Canberra and we are collecting the rainwater at those houses and recycling it through the sewerage system. We are looking at those sorts of options, but they all have a cost and we have to look at the cost and the benefit and how we can fit that into what we have to achieve.

CHAIR—The ongoing cost to your tenants would be decreased in terms of water and energy conservation because they are both quite high costs to householders now.

Mr Bear—Particularly in terms of gas over electricity.

CHAIR—Would you think that that is not an important consideration?

Mr Bear—That is an important consideration in the energy source that we bring to the property.

CHAIR—And water, because that is becoming an expensive commodity as well now.

Mr Lyon—We certainly are conscious of that. Electricity is very expensive in certain parts of the country, like Darwin, so we are acutely conscious of those sorts of costs. Location is also important. A lot of members of the ADF, for example, can only afford one car and so proximity

to transport and reasonable proximity to the bases are factors that we very much take into account.

CHAIR—I want to go back to the water issue. I know that in Western Australia there are a couple of demonstration housing estate projects taking place where they are paying particular attention to water usage and reusing grey water. There are plenty of ecohouse demonstrations—there are some in my electorate, and I am sure in other members' electorates—which show there is very little cost involved if you are doing this in a new house. Certainly there is a great benefit for the occupants of the house over the life of the property in terms of reduced water consumption and water usage costs.

Mr Bear—They are the very issues we are working with on a policy front within the organisation as we speak.

CHAIR—Further to the question of water usage: what are you doing in particular to ensure that the landscaping is appropriate to the climatic conditions and minimises the use of water?

Mr Kemp—Basically, we only use native landscaping—native plants and shrubs—and we look to minimise the amount of area that requires water while still giving the correct level of amenity to the tenants. It is balancing the two, but we are very conscious of the fact that we cannot be seen to be pretending that you just have to pour water on the gardens to make them grow. It all comes down to your selection of plants and how you are going to handle that.

CHAIR—These are issues that become more and more important.

Mr Lyon—As Mr Bear has said, we are actively keeping ourselves up to date and, where we can, we are integrating elements into our housing. One of the things we are conscious of is that some of these newer technologies do not cost a lot, but they require continuing maintenance—particularly by the person living in the house—and we need to do further research to be sure that we do not impose an unreasonable burden from that point of view. If you are an owner/occupier and you have got a very strong environmental interest, you do not mind unclogging some of the things that get clogged up. That is something we are also watching.

Mr FORREST—I want to ask something in addition to the chair's question about public park areas: I know we are in Queensland, but they will not be irrigated or anything like that?

Mr Lyon—No.

Mr JENKINS—I want to continue this line of questioning, not only because of this inquiry but also because of my involvement with the House of Representatives' environment committee inquiry into sustainable cities. One of the notions being put up is that government agencies could be encouraged to be trailblazers with some of these things, and DHA gets mentioned. That then begs the question about how you fulfil your commercial obligations at the same time as being a test case for some of these things. A lot of the things you have mentioned are the problems that arise. As was just said, it is okay if the tenant is really into these sorts of environmental things and has a great commitment, but at the end of the day we have to encourage all people to be involved so that it is going to be a good piece of research. What sorts of incentives would it take for the authority to be more involved?

Mr Lyon—I do not think we would be looking for financial support. To some extent we see ourselves as pioneers. When we first went to Darwin, we put a lot of effort into understanding how best to keep houses cool and air flowing through. We created things like entrances into the roofs circulating the air, we put ventilators in the eaves and we had much larger eaves and so on. Those types of houses have been typically built in tropical areas with the following innovations taken by DHA. We are now actively looking at better ways of utilising water and grey water and so on, particularly in the larger developments, because you need to have the developments of this scale to make it economic. That is the work that we have under way, particularly with the HIA. From our point of view, if we can help facilitate the industry, not only will we get the product we want but the community will be more accepting.

Mr JENKINS—But isn't one of your problems—and the housing in Darwin is an example because you have surveyed what your users require on the basis of available technologies for cooling—that you have had to go down the road, more often, of airconditioning? This is something that we have had a dialogue about. We understand, because you emphasised it, that you are open to making sure that you understand what your clients require, but that runs counter to what you are trying to put in place.

Mr Bear—We do a couple of things in Darwin for that very thing. Airconditioning in a home in Darwin is an entitlement for a defence member. We need to remember that they usually arrive in Darwin during December and January. The member goes off on exercises and the family are left at home at this pretty interesting time of the year. Yes, the houses are airconditioned. We do a couple of things. We make sure that the systems are split so that you are not airconditioning the whole house. We have them on timers so that you can put them on and if you have forgotten about them they come off. We also talk to the tenants and begin to work with them so that when they are settled in they begin to get into the Darwin way of thinking and use their airconditioning less and less. So there are those little things that we can do.

At the moment we are designing the layout, siting and orientation of the houses. The thing that we will be doing in Lee Point Road is not only taking full control over the siting of the 300 houses that we are going to build but also taking some control over the siting, the orientation and the street layouts of the houses that we will not be keeping for defence purposes but that will be sold into the market. They are the sorts of practical things that you can do to get a good outcome.

Mr JENKINS—So that I do not suffer the wrath of the chair too much by going off on tangents, can I ask whether there was anything with this McDowall development that you thought you might do that you decided not to do because of some of your attitudinal surveys? Or is it pretty straight up and down?

Mr Bear—Yes.

Mr JENKINS—One feature is the loop one-way roads, which are described as 'two non-standard examples of divided local access roads', with the swales down the middle. I was interested in Mr Lyon's comment about there usually being one-vehicle families. It was a concern, given the size of the lots and roads, that if there was a situation where there was a couple of vehicles, a boat, a trailer or a caravan then there would be a squeeze, with people parking on verges, in the swales or on the roads. Has that been pointed out to you?

Mr Kemp—The houses do have double garages—you are not just building for one. There is enough room on the verges to be able to park when you have a group of people around for an event or whatever. One of the benefits is that it does tend to slow the traffic down a little bit, so the safety of the suburb for small children who are playing is there as well.

Mr JENKINS—The next set of questions is directed especially to Mr Bear because they are about the possibly transient koalas. Having got that off my chest, anybody can answer the question.

Mr Bear—I am pleased that you asked that question. We have given a lot of attention to that. One of my consultant advisers who has some expertise with that would like to talk to us.

Mr JENKINS—Mr King, you might explain what you did and what your role was.

Mr King—I am a landscape architect, urban designer and horticulturalist—all three. My expertise is not environmental science, but I can answer some of your questions in relation to the trees from the point of view of what we are trying to do with regard to the koalas.

Mr JENKINS—I notice in the supplementary information on page 12 there is a list of the planting schedule. If you cannot do it at this stage, it might be helpful at some stage to identify the types of trees that would be used by transient koalas. The submission talks about the survey work that you based your outcomes on. I am interested in how indicative it was of transient koalas.

Mr King—My understanding is that there were scratch marks seen on trees, but we have no idea of their age. They could be from many years ago. In that area initially there was more acreage and there were more connections. As you are aware, the likelihood of koalas coming through that area has gradually become less and less with urbanisation, but they may still inhabit it. Our intention in developing the landscape was to retain those trees that were identified as being important for wildlife, and they include all the large eucalyptus trees. That was not only for the koalas but for many other animals that inhabit the site and will inhabit the site in the future.

As part of the supplementary information, there is a planting schedule list on page 12. You will note there is bushland revegetation, and with that there are a number of trees including *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, which we up here call forest red gum, but I believe in the southern states it is called blue gum—across the border you get a bit of a change. That is one of the favoured trees. There are also corymbias, which again are eucalypts. We have *Corymbia intermedia* and *Corymbia citrodora*. The intention is that we will be replanting those trees in the bushland revegetation areas. However, we would not be doing that in residential gardens because of the dangers from eucalypts with dropping branches and with the fire hazard.

Mr JENKINS—So, in any case, that is a representative list of plants that were already on-site or near the site.

Mr King—Yes, the planting list has been devised. It is site-indigenous vegetation, so it is based on plants that grow in that immediate area but also plants that have ornamental attributes

and do well in cultivation or close to people. Of course, there are many plants that do not do well in a more urban environment.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Some of the current mature trees are going to remain as well—is that right?

Mr King—Yes.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—The numbers shown are the heights of the plants, are they?

Mr King—The sizes there are pot sizes. This list of plants was developed for Brisbane City Council so that they would have some understanding of the types of plantings that we would be using and how big they would be when they went in.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—So how large are the forest red gums?

Mr King—At this stage we are suggesting 140 millimetres, which is a small pot size, and that is principally for the eucalyptus trees. They do not like disturbance, so often they do not succeed if you have them in a larger pot and they are slightly pot-bound. It is usually better to plant them young and, as you are probably aware, they grow very fast.

Mr JENKINS—In the one-in-a-hundred-year deluge that Melbourne suffered a few weeks back, trees toppled over left, right and centre, but not too many of the trees that toppled over seemed to be natives—although there was a lot of native damage from broken branches, which is another matter. Given the importance of the hydraulics of the site to the swale, does that mean there are special plantings along those swales?

Mr King—Yes, that is correct. I believe you are referring to the trees.

Mr JENKINS—Yes.

Mr King—On page 12 we list street and park trees. There is a list of six species. In selecting trees for those areas we have selected ones that are known to be very stable. They do not readily drop limbs or blow over and have a history in Brisbane of being excellent street trees. In breaking up our planting selection we have looked at parkland and revegetation areas in terms of one palette of plants that would be most suitable; we have looked at the creek channel and biofiltration—that is, removing sediments and pollutants on site before they go into waterways—in terms of another palette of plants that would be appropriate; we have looked at the street tree selection; and, again, we would have another palette of plants that we would be proposing for the individual gardens.

Mr JENKINS—As the chair would be aware, the opposition is very interested in the silting of channels and making sure that they are open—usually on the Central Coast of New South Wales. In this case you have used different filtration systems—and there is a question about the maintenance. You have described them as 'biofiltration systems', and I forget how they are described in the submission. Do these things have to be cleaned out? What is the maintenance involved in making sure that these systems continue to do the job of retaining the silt rather than it going further down the stream?

Mr King—I guess with any form of landscaping there is always maintenance. Yes, there would be maintenance involved in these channels as there would be for any other facet of the landscape.

Mr JENKINS—And then that becomes the responsibility of the Brisbane City Council?

Mr King—Yes, and that is why they are concerned. They want to know what we are doing—the intention—and what plants we are using. Basically what happens is that these biofiltration areas collect silt, so over many years that builds up. At this stage it is a fairly new technology, but there are examples in Brisbane that are 10 or 15 years old. They suspect that after about 10 or 15 years there is a necessity to rechannel and replant those areas.

Mr JENKINS—I apologise that I was unable to go to the inspection, but from what I have seen about the way stormwater and everything is being dealt with here it is pretty state of the art. Does the treatment through swale rather than old-style kerb and channelling have a greater cost?

Mr Kemp—I would suggest it would be much cheaper and that it is a much more sensible, natural way to go. It creates opportunity. You can see the opportunity we have here in the park. So I guess I never even went down that avenue, so to speak.

Mr JENKINS—I wanted to get it on the record, because my bones told me that, without having to put physical infrastructure in, it would be cheaper—

Mr Kemp—It is. That would be more expensive.

Mr JENKINS—But it must end up going back into the existing system, given that you are a bit of an island in older, established subdivisions and development. Does that create difficulties where your outflow off-site goes into the existing system?

Mr Kemp—We are using the point of discharge. On the right-hand side of the map you can see where it says, 'Rode Road'—that is the junction with Ifield Street. That is actually a 1,200 millimetre diameter pipe. We do not pass water beyond that point. We hold the postdevelopment flow and we release it at the predevelopment level, which means we do not inundate downstream. So we use the area upstream of that as a detention basin and basically hold the water and allow it to settle. We then pass our water back down as they have always had it, so it comes down as a predevelopment flow, and therefore we are not damaging or impacting on anybody downstream of us.

Mr RIPOLL—I will just ask the department a couple of simple questions in terms of some of the bureaucracy of putting together a development. In general terms there are the local government authority, the Brisbane City Council, the community and other people involved. Can you give the committee some sense of the support you actually have for this development of that particular site?

Mr Kemp—I did not quite get the full list there.

Mr RIPOLL—It was just the local government authority, community and anyone else who might have a stakeholder interest in that site. Have they been supportive? Is it generally the view of the DHA that this is a good thing?

Mr Kemp—Brisbane City Council have been extremely supportive of what we are doing. They have worked with us to actually come up with a solution for this site. They have a particular interest in it as an emerging community. It is part of their latest policy how to do a form of urban infill. They wanted to be involved to see if they could assist us in coming up with solutions that met the principles they had laid down. I must admit, I have appreciated their involvement. They have not been a pushover; I do not want anyone to think that. They have worked with us, but they have made sure that what we are proposing is in fact a good idea and should be incorporated.

With regard to local consultation, obviously under the planning instruments you do have to do notifications as required. We have done all those but, in addition, we have held information nights and explained the project to local residents. The project generally has been well received. There have been concerns expressed to us about what our development looks like in terms of what is happening in the surrounding area. We have attempted to address as many of those concerns as we can. We had one in particular from Laurina Crescent residents. We actually put a DA in twice. The first one had Laurina Crescent as a method of getting onto Keona Road. Laurina Crescent residents spoke with us about that. They were not happy. They asked us if we could have a look at an alternative. By way of example, we then sat down with Brisbane City Council and said, 'If that's not such a great idea, what could we do? Could we try this?' and they worked through that to give us the eventual approval on Keona Road. I would say it has certainly been very cooperative in terms of feedback from local people and from Brisbane City Council.

Mr Bear—I think the bottom line is that the first drawing we did is not the drawing we have come up with. That was trying to accommodate those public consultation meetings that we had.

Mr RIPOLL—So broadly speaking we can say that it has gained good support. Can you also clarify for me whether the development, as it stands today, is in keeping with past developments or future developments in the area? Is it in keeping with the style of the area?

Mr Kemp—In terms of the image at the area of Rode Road, much of the architecture will pick up on the existing architecture of existing suburbs around there, including even on the far side of Rode Road. Obviously you are using modern materials and trying to bring some uniqueness to your design, but it is always the intention that the development should integrate with the suburb. It is not meant to stand out in the sense of people looking and saying how odd it looks with what else is around. But it will not be an exact copy. We will be picking up on the elements and trying to pick up on the language of surrounding developments so we have an integration but still a uniqueness, if that is not a contradiction. Certainly it will not be just a straight mimic.

Mr RIPOLL—Mr Jenkins just earlier raised the issue of water flows and the environment. Have any specific restrictions been placed on the development in terms of anticipated overflows or water flows, particularly out to Ifield Street?

Mr Kemp—The only restriction is that the development can only pass on the predevelopment flow levels. In other words, at the land as it was today at the site inspection, the water volumes that are produced in a storm are expected and known. Anything that we increase by putting in a lot of roofs and hard surfaces, with roads—any of that excess capacity—has to be contained on our site so that we do not inundate below the legal point of discharge, which is at Rode Road and Ifield Road. So they will not see anything different than they have seen up to now. We will hold back the capacity until such time as it dissipates out through the stormwater system to the north.

Mr RIPOLL—In your submission you state:

The width of the future resumption has been advised by Brisbane City Council ...

What is that width? What is the future widening, in metres, of Rode Road?

Mr Kemp—Within the DA we agreed to provide capacity for the expansion of Rode Road and give them a 4.226-metre resumption of land to allow them to have the capacity for future widening of Rode Road. That was agreed as part of the DA. Does that answer your question?

Mr RIPOLL—Yes.

Mr FORREST—Haven't they subsequently requested that that be increased?

Mr Kemp—One of the departments of Brisbane City Council have come to us with a proposal. They wish to undertake works at Rode Road and Ifield Street which involve a signalled intersection. The project team and engineering team working on that particular project, which are obviously separate from the infrastructure team which looked at our DA, came to us to ask whether we can have a look at what can be done to accommodate that intersection, which obviously requires widening. We are working through that with them at the moment to see how we can accommodate what they want and minimise any impacts that we have on our site. Jointly we both agree that the intersection is required, certainly on the case they put forward. We do believe it may assist in the utilisation of parkland and connections to places like Flockton Plaza. It would allow people to the north of Rode Road to actually integrate with our development. So there is a plus for the community in that as well. We are quite happy to work through the detail of how we can deliver that.

Mr Bear—But, to be more specific, there is an outstanding issue on the arrangement to be finalised with the Brisbane City Council on putting in that controlled intersection.

Mr RIPOLL—I will deal with the specific width of that later when the Brisbane City Council is here.

Mr FORREST—That must be just at the intersection—

Mr Bear—Yes. One of the options is to have a bigger area of resumption, but there are a number of options that range from that area through to no area at all.

Mr RIPOLL—The issue of headworks is always involved in every development in terms of shared costs and so forth. Can you give us some idea of how the headworks are to be shared or paid for? What are the arrangements with the BCC?

Mr Bear—The headworks will all be paid for in accordance with the laid-down Brisbane City Council requirements. They are all in their detailed manual. When you get your development application they are standardised in that format.

Mr RIPOLL—Back to the koalas: from the expert advice you have had and the work you have done, was it your view that everyone is happy with the outcome for the trees and the koalas? My interpretation was that is not an issue for the development and it can be easily dealt with. Is that correct?

Mr Bear—That is correct.

Mr RIPOLL—In terms of the overall plan for the future development of the site and any adjacent sites, does DHA have any plans to further develop that site or is it just limited to what you are currently doing?

Mr Bear—We have no further plans to develop that site.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Clearly the bears have a very good advocacy group on the committee! Can I ask you to take us through the objections that there were to the site and how they have been resolved? I do not need specific references but I think it is important for the record that the department does explain what objections there were and how they have been resolved.

Mr Kemp—The key objections to the DHA plan came from two adjoining neighbours and another party who lives close by the site. There were many minor issues, but the major points they wanted to raise with us were that the size of the allotments proposed by DHA, they believed, were in conflict with the planning scheme and were not in the general character of the area; the DHA proposal did not adequately integrate or allow for development of the surrounding area; the proposal did not accord with the previous structure plans which had been developed for the area; and deficiencies existed with the proposed traffic network, particularly the access onto Keona Road.

These matters were discussed and were the subject of a number of subsequent reports because appeals were lodged in the Land and Environment Court. In essence, coming up to the hearing date, the appellants pulled out of the appeals. Discussions were held with the appellants about the reports that had been prepared. Basically, these discussions led to some minor changes being made to our scheme but not on these major items. We managed to demonstrate to the appellants that, in terms of their size, the allotments were in accordance with the planning scheme and had been supported by Brisbane City Council and that, in fact, Brisbane City Council were looking for a variety of allotment sizes and did not wish to see the subdivisions being developed with all lots being of a similar size—in other words, the largest lots. We did manage to demonstrate that DHA's proposal was more in the mid range rather than at the low end of the range. In fact, developments close by were on smaller lots than we were proposing and involved townhouses as

opposed to detached housing. Therefore, the second question of the integration was more or less asked and answered by giving that information.

Previous structure plans were relied upon by the appellants, while we came in with a new structure plan, which is shown here. The answer to that is that structure plans are developed and, as somebody develops a piece of land, a new structure plan has to be produced to allow for that. The previous structure plans were cast aside because of the approval of the Briggs development, which is to the north-east of our site. Therefore, when drawing up our structure plans showing how this whole area would work, we had to take into account that Mr Briggs already had an approved DA. We also had to work out how we would integrate with him and how we would allow for reasonable development of adjoining subdivisions—in other words, that we would not land lock them and we would work out how they could work properly with us. Again, we managed to demonstrate that previous structure plans had become old and that our plan was current and useful and complied with the planning requirements.

CHAIR—As there are no further questions, I think we are all done. Thank you very much.

[12.09 p.m.]

CRONIN, Mr Anthony Paul, Field Operations Manager, Origin Energy Asset Management Ltd

VOGLER, Ms Andrea Louise, Queensland Residential Business Development Manager, Origin Energy Asset Management Ltd

CHAIR—Welcome. Does Origin Energy Asset Management Ltd wish to propose any amendments to the submission it made to the committee?

Ms Vogler—No amendments, but there is probably a little bit of extra information.

CHAIR—We now invite you to make a brief statement in relation to your submission, and then we will proceed to questions.

Ms Vogler—I just wanted to clarify that the DHA has been and continues to be a strong supporter of natural gas. We work with them to reticulate defence housing projects and we have done so in the past. Unfortunately on this particular occasion we provided some incorrect information to their consultants when they inquired about gas availability, which is why they assumed that it was not available to the site at McDowall. In fact, we can provide gas infrastructure—that is, gas mains, gas service inlets and gas meters—to each of the homes at the site. We have designed and assessed that based on the subdivision layout that is included in the DHA's submission. Based on that and the scenario of gas hot water and gas cooking going into each of those homes, we can provide that infrastructure at no cost to the DHA.

Mr FORREST—I would just like to clarify why there was confusion about the information given. We understood that the main was too far away.

Ms Vogler—It has taken a bit of time to determine, and it was only a couple of weeks ago we that found the cause of it. Origin's internal call centre has an intranet site and unfortunately they had the suburb of McDowall listed incorrectly on their site. It was just a case of the information being wrong when it was looked up by the call centre, and we have now rectified it.

Mr FORREST—You have gone to a lot of trouble to tell us that.

Mr RIPOLL—While you are here you may as well give us a bit of an understanding of the arrangement between Origin gas and DHA. If you do provide the infrastructure, is there an obligation for DHA to then connect each home and use it?

Ms Vogler—Yes. We have done an assessment of the site based on the assumption that DHA will install gas hot water and gas cooking into each of those homes connected up and use it. On that scenario, yes, it is viable for us to do it at no cost DHA.

Mr RIPOLL—So it is a contractual arrangement that you have dependent on the agreement and on whether you bring infrastructure in?

Ms Vogler—Yes. If the DHA only wants to put gas appliances into a portion of them, we can assess that, and it may still be perfectly viable for us.

Mr RIPOLL—Is that currently under negotiation?

Ms Vogler—We will have discussions with the DHA. I believe my contact with the DHA is off on sick leave at the moment.

Mr FORREST—That arrangement is no different than any other development you might have?

Ms Vogler—No. It is no different than any other development.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for taking the time to come in and set the record straight on the gas energy issues.

Proceedings suspended from 12.14 p.m. to 12.50 p.m.

SCRIMGEOUR, Mrs Wendy Catherine, Senior Representative, South Queensland, Defence Families of Australia

CHAIR—Welcome. The committee has received a submission from Defence Families of Australia. The submission will be made available in a volume of submissions for the inquiry. It is also available on the committee's web site. Does Defence Families of Australia wish to propose amendments to the submission before the committee?

Mrs Scrimgeour—No.

CHAIR—I now invite you to make a short statement.

Mrs Scrimgeour—Defence Families of Australia is an organisation comprised of defence spouses and families. It was established in 1986 and is run by volunteers who are spouses of defence members. Defence Families of Australia aims to improve the quality of life for defence families by providing them with a voice to the Minister for Defence, the Chief of the Defence Force and the chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force. We also provide advocacy for defence families.

Today I am speaking on behalf of the Australian Defence Force members and their families posted to Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera. From a defence families perspective there are two key benefits offered by the proposed Rode Road development. The first is location within an established community, and the second is close proximity to work. Let me explain. The housing development would enable defence members and their families to move into an established community. The unique nature of military life often means frequent moves around the country due to work commitments, so families need to quickly fit into their new neighbourhood, finding schools, shops, child care et cetera. Being located in an established community also assists the new family to maintain emotional stability, especially as the serving member may not be around to cushion the new move. Also, living close to work—only eight kilometres away—is very important when working hours are diverse and, at times, very demanding. It is also convenient for families with one car, as Gallipoli Barracks is a bike ride away, and it means families have easy access to facilities at the barracks, like the pool, gym, mess et cetera.

The Defence Housing Authority provides quality housing for serving members, as seen in the Mitchelton area located two kilometres from the back of Gallipoli Barracks. This same type of housing is proposed for the Rode Road project. For the last year I have lived in Mitchelton with my husband, a serving member of the Australian Army, and my eight-month-old son. We live in a 'married patch'—an area consisting of 76 homes which house defence families. When friends and family visit our home they often remark on the quality, modern housing and the quiet, attractive area we live in, and we agree.

We have made some close and supportive friends living in the married patch. Because we are all defence families we understand the strains of life that are familiar to us all, such as spouses being deployed overseas and going away on exercises and courses. Our neighbours have proven to be supportive, both emotionally and practically. I have also felt safe when my husband has been away from home due to work commitments. Once again, the close-knit community is

supportive at this time. Living with responsible and respected community members gives me a sense of living in a secure environment.

The military lifestyle is not easy. We move from place to place with very little notice at times. The two keys to decreasing the strains of this lifestyle include moving to an established community and living close to work. The Rode Road development would have both of these benefits. A happy and settled family enables a serving member to focus on the job at hand, and increases job satisfaction and retention in the Australian Defence Force. It really is that important.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for a very good overview of some of the issues that affect defence families. I am obviously very supportive of the development and I personally do not have any questions.

Mr RIPOLL—Could you give us your view about the size of the blocks? It has been raised previously, I think, that they are 450 square metre lots. In your view, is that large enough for a family or is it a bit tight considering the size of the houses? They are quite reasonably sized houses.

Mrs Scrimgeour—If they are the same size as the one we are living in they are ample.

Mr FORREST—Could I ask your view on how people in your position feel about living in what I call a cluster community or whether you would want to get away from work, forget it and be just an ordinary mum and dad living in the broader community. I understand that people have preferences and that DHA, as best they can, attempt to satisfy those. What is the prevailing view?

Mrs Scrimgeour—I think the majority like to live together where they are supported and you have something in common with your neighbours straightaway, so you can form friendships quite quickly and easily. I think the vast majority of families would feel like that.

Mr FORREST—You are obviously fairly happy with this outcome. Is there anything else you want to bring to the committee's attention about your colleagues in other locations around Australia that perhaps we could be mindful of? There is a pretty good outcome in Brisbane. Does your group have concerns in other locations?

Mrs Scrimgeour—Before coming to Brisbane we lived in Townsville for two years. We were just as happy there. We lived in units there but it was in clusters again. We were very happy. I do not know of any concerns in Townsville about the housing situation.

Mr FORREST—Thank you for your submission.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—You have raised the advantages that come with being accommodated in the same areas as other defence personnel families. Do you see disadvantages? Do you see that it could be rather clubby? One of the things I think about any profession is one of the benefits would be that they integrate into the community and do not just rely upon each other socially but actually build relationships beyond their own work colleagues and so on. Whilst there is an aspect peculiar to defence personnel, I do not think you are any different from

anyone else. Can you see that there could be disadvantages from having accommodation all together rather than spread throughout the suburbs of Brisbane, for example?

Mrs Scrimgeour—I did not think I would like living in a married patch, but having met my neighbours, because I do go out and actively meet them—there are people who do not like to meet their neighbours still, the same as in any other place—I have found, as I stated, that they are very supportive and very friendly. There are lots of mums at home with their kids, so that is great for me. But we do not just associate with each other; we go to churches and playgroups outside.

Mr JENKINS—Is there an ideal size for a cluster? Could a cluster be too big so that you would be too isolated? This is a cluster of 50 with suburbs around it. I think you said you were one of 76. There must be a good balance between being associated with other defence families but then having that experience that you have just relayed about being involved in a wider community. Is there a potential for these clusters to be too big or even too small?

Mrs Scrimgeour—I probably would not like to see them a lot bigger because that might reduce the established community, as in the schools and the other groups that would be available—I keep thinking of playgroups and kindy gyms because that is where I am at. One of the really important things about this project was to come into an established community where there were swimming pools and private hospitals right down the road—those things are really important. But if the cluster were so big it might be in an area that was not established.

Mr FORREST—I have had a little afterthought about child care. This is ideally sited, with child support all around it, but what is the tendency for couples with children with child support from your group? I imagine some of the spouses are working themselves—they may even be involved on the military side. There is obviously a big need.

Mrs Scrimgeour—There is a big need for child care. That is something I do not know a lot about.

Mr FORREST—I am just worrying that next the DHA will be coming to see the committee about building child-care centres.

Mr RIPOLL—We can only hope!

Mrs Scrimgeour—There is a child-care centre directly behind the barracks.

CHAIR—Thank you.

[1.02 p.m.]

SULLIVAN, Mr Terry, Member for Stafford, Queensland Parliament

CHAIR—Welcome, Mr Sullivan. Thank you for taking the opportunity to meet with the committee.

Mr Sullivan—I am the state member of parliament for Stafford, which is the electorate adjoining this one. Because some of this development will have an impact on the electorate, I have an interest in it and I have made a small submission to the committee.

CHAIR—The committee has received a submission from you. The submission will be made available in a volume of submissions for the inquiry and is also available on the committee's web site. Do you wish to propose any amendment to the submission you have made?

Mr Sullivan—No.

CHAIR—I invite you to make a brief opening statement and then the committee will have a question or two.

Mr Sullivan—Thank you for the opportunity to appear. I do not really have much to say. I support the development that is proposed. I mentioned in my submission that I presume that the normal processes of applications for development would have been proceeded with. Towards the end of my submission I raised a couple of issues, largely to do with traffic flow and future development. At the briefing this morning on site those questions were generally answered by the DHA personnel and their advisers, who were able to answer those questions. I really do not have any major additional contribution other than to say I look forward to the development. It seems to fit in with the South East Queensland Regional Plan of residential infill to stop the urban sprawl, and this seems to be a practical step that deserves support.

CHAIR—Thank you. I think the committee were quite impressed this morning with the inspection and noted the rapid development taking place in the inner north of Brisbane. We presume that this must put some fairly heavy demands on local government in particular and state government in terms of infrastructure. Would you like to elaborate on that? We are aware of the plans to improve and expand Rode Road.

Mr Sullivan—Yes. Dot point 1, I think, on page 2 of my submission is looking at ensuring that long-term future needs for traffic flow would be addressed. One of the DHA personnel was able to assure me that the number of developments, both from this site and from the adjoining private developments, would not put excessive pressure on the existing road network. I know that the Trouts Road-Rode Road intersection is problematic to some degree at the moment. We have a growing work force and, with the airport development due to expand massively in the next decade, there will be a lot more traffic east-west from the inner western suburbs to the airport. I simply wanted to make sure that the planning regime was in place for future accommodation and to determine whether the Keona Road and Trouts Road intersections needed any upgrade to accommodate the needs of this and future developments. I was assured by the

town planning and other personnel who were there that the movements were quite within the range that the existing road network can cope with.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Who is the state member who represents the given area?

Mr Sullivan—Rod Welford, the member for Everton, who is the Attorney-General. Trouts Road is the western boundary of my electorate and so this is in Rod's electorate.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—I am not sure whether he has raised any concerns or if you have spoken, but are there any concerns that you are aware of that he has with the development?

Mr Sullivan—No, I am not. As you would appreciate, being a minister, a lot of his electorate work is left to his office staff—you met with Ian Turner this morning, who is a very experienced EO. Ian has an interest in traffic and, as you heard, has a background in a defence area as well. He just loves talking tanks and traffic flows.

Mr RIPOLL—Hopefully, there will not be any tanks going up Rode Road!

Mr Sullivan—If the local federal member needs a hand, I am sure that Ian would assist. Ian and I had a brief conversation about a week and a half ago, and he had looked through the DHA submission. I am certain that Ian would have suggested to Rod Welford the raising of issues if they had believed there were some. At that stage, Ian had seen my submission and had commented along the lines that they are the sort of issues he would be looking at and if the normal processes have been gone through then that is fine.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—We heard earlier that there were objections, initially at least, and that those objections were largely resolved—we heard evidence to that effect. Do you know of any objections? Have any constituents made objections directly or indirectly to you regarding the proposal?

Mr Sullivan—No, they have not. Because they are Rod's constituents, if they had gone to a state member, they would have gone to Rod. My understanding is that they had not contacted his office and that, because the letterbox drops for the public meeting came from the city council, the previous councillor and the current councillor would have been the contact point. So, no, I am not aware of any, other than having read in the DHA submission of, I think, four local residents who put in an objection. The DHA submission, from memory, said that in January or February this year it would either be resolved by negotiation or it would go to the land court. I am not aware of the process of those objections.

Mr RIPOLL—In your view, does this development suit the amenity of the area? Is it an appropriate development? Does it have any impact on any possible other developments in that locality that would impact either on your electorate or on the existing electorate?

Mr Sullivan—I think it is an appropriate development. It is part of that broader south-east Queensland residential infill that must occur if we are to stop suburban sprawl. But with that, obviously, will come some pressure. The most immediate pressure is traffic flow. With my office on Gympie Road, which is Highway 1—the main road out to the north—I have seen, in the 12 years that my office has been there, a significant increase in traffic flow—we are aware of that.

There will also be some pressure on local schools and other services but I believe that is a pressure that is part of the normal growth. As you would be aware, just to the south of this proposed development is the Flockton Street complex, which has the medical centre, the North West Private Hospital, the tavern and shops. There is room for expansion there. I believe that it is ideally suited. The location has ready access to the main highway north for those who want to go to Bribie Island or the Sunshine Coast. It has relatively good access to the airport—with the Stafford Road intersection and the East-West Arterial Road roundabout an exception, though there are road works going on there—so I think it is ideally suited for that area.

Mr FORREST—I would be interested in any insights you could offer about the community's view of defence personnel, particularly in a large clustered community like this. Do you have any view on what the community's attitude to this is? Are they all-embracing?

Mr Sullivan—There has not been any comment made by a constituent to me about the development. I understand from other activities that I see in the electorate that these people would be welcomed in the way that those from any other redevelopment that occurred would be. There are other areas nearby, both within my electorate and in surrounding areas, where residential developments have occurred in the last number of years and that are simply seen as another 10, 20 or 50 houses going up and 50 families coming in. I do not think that the local community would tag a group of residents. There is one exception. Sometimes with public housing there is a debate about tagging people but, with regard to whether they are defence personnel or from a particular industry that has developed there—and there is a large number of families from the service and construction industries coming in—I do not think the local residents see them as a group apart. I would see them as welcoming them as they would welcome any family.

Mr FORREST—You do not see any need to have some processes in place so that they feel accepted and integrated into the community around them?

Mr Sullivan—I would not have thought so. We had an informal discussion this morning on site. I did not have the exact dates but I was saying that I think it was in the seventies when a large number of defence homes around the Rutherford and Chuter Street area were sold to the Department of Housing because of significant downsizing at the Enoggera Barracks at that stage. Where there were streets and streets of defence housing, there was a certain tagging or naming of those houses but I do not think what you are developing is going to stand out as anything different from the street nearby where there has been a development—what is its name?

Mr FORREST—Ifield?

Mr Sullivan—No. The private developments that are going on there would be the same and people will just welcome the families into their area.

CHAIR—Thank you. There are no further questions.

[1.20 p.m.]

WYNDHAM, Councillor Norm, Councillor for McDowall Ward, Brisbane City Council

CHAIR—Thank you, Councillor Wyndham, for your attendance today. The committee has received a submission from you. The submission will be made available in a volume of submissions to the inquiry. It is also available on the committee's web site. Do you wish to propose any amendments to the submission you have made to the committee?

Councillor Wyndham—No, only that I do have a little more information on what council is doing in the Ifield Street area.

CHAIR—I invite you to make a brief statement about the submission you have made and then we will proceed to questions.

Councillor Wyndham—The development there has been dealt with by me and a previous councillor. Most of the environmental issues had been dealt with before I was elected to the position. Since then, there has been very little from the public regarding the environmental issues there. Most of those had been taken care of, particularly in the parkland et cetera which abuts Rode Road. There had been further developments regarding entrance into the smaller road, Laurina Crescent. Therefore it has been changed over to the Keona Road site, which is still not perfect—but not everything can be perfect in this world. I believe some of the lot sizes have been increased to alleviate issues with people who had larger allotments abutting this development.

Also, in the submission I raised the issue of the lights at Ifield Street. We are still proceeding to try to establish the road width et cetera on Rode Road, which we are trying to set aside for four lanes in the future, as well as a right turn lane into Ifield Street—Ifield Street probably being the preferred road of the three going on to Rode Road opposite the development, while the other two are smaller roads and give poor access onto Rode Road—due to a school and what I guess you could call rat-running, to achieve a solution out of Voigt Street. Therefore council is proceeding with those lights at Ifield Street. As you would be aware, there are still a few goings-on about whether we need more land or whether we put in an embankment et cetera. But the approval by the locals for the development itself is generally favourable. It had previously been acreage allotments that been there for a long time, and there had already been quite a bit of degradation in some of the environmental areas. That more or less sums it up.

CHAIR—I think you have pretty much answered the main questions I had, which related to traffic management. We saw the site today and drove along those roads. It is obvious that there is very rapid development taking place, which does put pressure on the road system. But it is clear from what you have said that you are happy that the best possible outcome has been produced, given the natural constraints of the locality in terms of egress from and ingress to the development. Is that a correct assessment?

Councillor Wyndham—That is correct. There is still quite a bit of concern about the speed of traffic on the Keona Road entrance and about the intersection itself. Having looked at it, as I

have, you would have seen that the visibility is probably better than the public perceives. There would have been similar visibility, had they gone through the original process and come out of Laurina Crescent.

CHAIR—We did query the visibility, given that there is quite a big bend in the road there, but Defence assured me that they were going to do quite a bit of work to achieve greater visibility.

Councillor Wyndham—I am pleased to hear that.

CHAIR—I think that is about it for me, but I am sure the deputy chair will have some questions.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—There was a reference in the DHA submission to the public meetings that were held.

Councillor Wyndham—Yes, there were public meetings last March.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—Were you involved?

Councillor Wyndham—No, I was not involved. That was just before my election. I took the line that, to be democratic, people should have more of a say than the person who is running for the position.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—But you were not actually at any of the public meetings?

Councillor Wyndham—I did not attend either of them, but I did have people there who informed me of what was going on.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR—What was your general impression about the extent and nature of consultation with the local residents?

Councillor Wyndham—I think it was quite good, actually, because Laurina Crescent being a narrow road was probably the main issue for many of the locals, since many of the environmental issues had been addressed prior to a lot of that.

Mr RIPOLL—I understand that you are here in your capacity as the local councillor for that area and also representing the Brisbane City Council. Is that right?

Councillor Wyndham—Yes, that is right.

Mr RIPOLL—In what capacity are you representing the city council?

Councillor Wyndham—It is my area, therefore I am going ahead with this Ifield Street lights issue and keeping the council informed about what is happening at Ifield Street, as well as Ian Hawsworth, who is managing that project.

Mr RIPOLL—There were a number of issues raised by people making submissions, particularly the issue of some significant landscape trees and the possibility of transient koalas coming through that region. Is the Brisbane City Council satisfied that the current conditions and development are satisfactory and that there will be no great impact?

Councillor Wyndham—Yes, they have addressed that through the DA process. There is a small watercourse that comes down there too. I notice that there is an easement produced on one of the blocks there—an 1,100 metre block—where they have a building envelope of about 550 metres to allow that watercourse. I have been led to believe that most of the trees that were of concern are maintained in that parkland area.

Mr RIPOLL—That is in keeping with the wider area, the broader region of that development?

Councillor Wyndham—That is right, and proposed future developments as well. On one side there is a development proceeding or being put forward at the moment and on the other side an application is in that has been held back for the while.

Mr RIPOLL—I asked of the DHA earlier if there were any restrictions placed on anticipated water flows. You have just mentioned there is some sort of watercourse.

Councillor Wyndham—It is a dry course generally, but it is certainly a watercourse.

Mr RIPOLL—But the council is satisfied that that is not an issue?

Councillor Wyndham—Yes, and that feeds in directly under Ifield Street.

Mr RIPOLL—The only other issue was that of the structure plan. The current development obviously is needed in the area. We have heard from evidence that it is in keeping with the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan. Obviously there is a lot of need in that area. Does this development have any future impact on other developments, or are there any issues from the council's perspective in terms of how that works in the overall scheme of thing for the amenity of that area?

Councillor Wyndham—Reasonably well, I think. We do have one person who has objected a few times, but I think their situation is that they want the biggest bang for their buck. They are trying to change everything so they do not have to build a road. Other than that, having looked at what is proposed for the future, I do not see any issues. In fact, it would be better that we try and negotiate with the other developer to get not so much the best bang for his dollar but the best outcome for the community.

Mr JENKINS—Firstly, I thank my Queensland colleague Mr Ripoll for asking the 'transient koala' question.

Mr RIPOLL—We have been pursuing the koalas for a while.

Councillor Wyndham—I have seen a koala, but only about two kilometres from that area. I do not know if he would travel that far.

Mr RIPOLL—That is pretty transient.

Mr JENKINS—That is a transient koala! How does this proposal from DHA stack up when compared to other infill developments in the local area—not only with respect to the outcomes envisaged but also with respect to the processes they have undertaken to get to this stage?

Councillor Wyndham—I think I should congratulate them. There are other developments in the area that cause a lot more concern—and people are still talking about the outcomes—because they are a lot more dense. In that area, which was once an acreage, I think people stand back a bit when they hear the word ‘townhouses’ or even ‘small lot developments’. But I think this has been alleviated by people being told it is similar to what has previously been produced by DHA, and they have been able to go and have a look at other developments that have been put up. I think that in general most people feel it is something that will not take away from the area. That is not to say it will enhance it. A lot of people believe it would still be nice to keep the acreages, and we obviously have to respect that. They like that open space even if they do not own it. To know they are surrounded by trees is just one of those things. I think most people are accepting that the development is certainly better than some of the previous ones.

CHAIR—Councillor Wyndham, thank you very much.

[1.33 p.m.]

BEAR, Mr Richard James, General Manager (Development and Sales), Defence Housing Authority

KEMP, Mr Gavin Stewart, National Development Manager, Defence Housing Authority

KENNEDY, Mrs Bronwyn Margaret, Manager, Brisbane Housing Management Centre, Defence Housing Authority

LYON, Mr Keith Thomas, Managing Director, Defence Housing Authority

CHAIR—I now recall witnesses from the Defence Housing Authority, and I remind them that they are still under oath. Mr Lyon or Mr Bear, would you like to respond to some of the points raised? I am sure that one or two members of the committee will have additional questions.

Mr Lyon—I have only one point I would like to raise: the size of the developments. Several members of the committee raised questions about concentrations. I think this is a pretty important issue, and it is certainly one we have given a lot of thought to. Generally speaking, we would not like to see concentrated developments in communities, and certainly no larger than the one we did at Mitchelton in about 1975. Indeed, wherever possible, we try and spread our developments throughout the community. We use the language, ‘pepper and salt’ to describe that. Sometimes that is not possible. In situations where it is economic to acquire a lot, if we were not under the same pressure as we are at the moment in housing people in Brisbane, what we would like to do would be to sell some of the lots directly to the communities so that we could get a mixture of Defence families and non-Defence families. In a couple of circumstances—and the committee has seen this—it has been necessary to bring larger concentrations. Notably, in places like Darwin that has simply been unavoidable. But we are conscious that there should be limits to what we do, and wherever we can we seek to do that.

Mr JENKINS—Going to the point about the size of the clusters and things like that—and given that you are trying to achieve an overall goalpost figure across Australia—on this site, how much flexibility, on the basis of lot sizes and things like that, did you have about the number of lots that you achieved?

Mr Lyon—In this particular case we were primarily looking for detached housing, based on the advice of our Brisbane office. That set the limit. We were not looking for medium density style housing or more intense development. That set the demand side. The question about individual lot sizes came out of addressing the normal development approvals and dealing with the professional issues that have been discussed here about watercourses and a range of other things.

Mr JENKINS—The figure 50 comes about because that is what you could put on the land?

Mr Lyon—No. I think the previous witness gave some insights into this: if we had sought to maximise the development return, we would have come up with a development here that was

bigger—that had a larger number of houses than 50. We did not do that because we were looking for a quality development with detached housing. From DHA's point of view, we are very conscious that we are not in it just from a development point of view; we are in it for the long-term. That influences the numbers. To some extent we have traded off maximising the immediate profit for sustainability and livability.

Mr JENKINS—My next question can quite easily be taken on notice. I am wondering if there is an idea of the cost of the fauna friendly culvert and, more importantly, whether the hydraulic nature of the culvert, making it fauna friendly, diminishes its effectiveness.

Mr Lyon—We would like to take that on notice and write a considered response.

Mr JENKINS—Whilst it is not germane to this inquiry, it is germane to other things that I am pursuing.

Mr Lyon—I am happy to help.

ACTING CHAIR (Mr Brendan O'Connor)—They are no big deal, but I want to address five themes, just out of interest. Three existing dwellings are shown on the site. What is the future for those? There are also indications that the public park area in Laurina Crescent is to be enlarged. Who is paying for that, or is that just showing us what the future might be? I am also interested in child care. I am curious about the funny size of lots 19 and 20. I imagine it is due to a foot thoroughfare, but it leaves a funny block. My other theme is to do with the plan that shows the schematic housing layout. One thing that you took great pains this morning to tell us was that there would be a variety of housing, but on page 7 of the plan you have shown us the houses are all identical. Those are my five themes. We will start with the existing houses—will there be a bulldoze job, will you sell them off or will you incorporate them into the subdivision?

Mr Kemp—It is a requirement of the development application that existing houses be demolished, and they have been demolished, cleared and made safe.

Mr FORREST—There was no opportunity to flog them off to be relocated?

Mr Kemp—No, they were basically taking up far too much land and you would obviously get more use off that land than you would just trying to sell what were very old houses. They were not modern houses; they were old houses from the 1950s and 1960s.

Mr Bear—The material was salvaged. It went through a salvage process.

Mr Lyon—On occasions, where we can, we have relocated houses. We have relocated a number to local government councils in regional Queensland, and they have been used in the community.

Mr FORREST—Moving all the freeway houses out of Melbourne is big business in Victoria.

Mr Lyon—Precisely, but it is my recollection that these houses were basically fibro and not really amenable to being relocated.

Mr FORREST—The Laurina Crescent subdivision: on page 5 in one of the schematics it shows an enlargement of the public park area.

Mr Kemp—Can you tell me which one you are referring to?

Mr FORREST—On page 5 there is a note which says, ‘Enlarge Laurina Crescent subdivision park.’

Mr Kemp—That is on land belonging to a neighbour, Mrs Kerr. The requirement for that is that part of the DA process in putting in the structure plan is that you have to take account of what is happening on adjoining properties. That is merely a note. It is not something that we would be doing. It is not part of this. It is not DH land and it is not something we are undertaking to do on somebody else’s land.

Mr FORREST—Lots 19 and 20 have funny shapes that constrain the way lot 20 can be built on.

Mr Kemp—Lot 20 is showing a pedestrian link. There was discussion this morning and this afternoon regarding the choice between Laurina Crescent as the exit to Keona Road and Street One entering onto Keona Road direct. What you are looking at there is a pedestrian access. We retained a pedestrian access through to Laurina, which allows at some future date for the council, if it ever wanted to, to open that up as a road access. Part of what you see there is the arrangement for garbage vehicle turnaround. They can come in, turn around and leave again. That is all it is. It is just for the refuse. You may not believe it, but among the major sets of people one has to deal with are the waste disposal departments in the likes of the Brisbane City Council. They have some sway, because it is very important that their refuse vehicles are able to navigate subdivisions. We have had to spend quite some time working with them in that regard to ensure that vehicles can get in and get out.

Mr FORREST—You have been more than generous in my view. That makes lot 20 peculiarly shaped.

Mr Kemp—Lot 20 is still 510 square metres, and we do have a house- type design that will fit on that.

Mr FORREST—One of the other witnesses talked about child care. On this plan you show its proximity, which is quite handy. Has some assessment been made of the capacity to absorb whatever the demand might be from your side? Could you run us through any negotiations you have had?

Mr Lyon—Not specific to this site. Child care is a huge issue. With regard to this particular site and the traffic and other issues with ecology, commercial type facilities like child-care facilities are not really suitable. You will recall a development the committee looked at in Queanbeyan. We set aside the former clubhouse—the pitch and putt—for child care. At the moment we are in the process of assessing tenders to create a child-care centre. Where there is a demand and we can contribute, we will. In this particular case it is not suitable.

Mr FORREST—My last question is about the schematic which shows the housing sites, as they are spread out. It shows the houses as being all the same—they are all identical. Is that just how it is on the schematic?

Mr Kemp—Could you tell me which item you are referring to?

Mr FORREST—I refer to item 7—house types.

Mr Kemp—The footprints there are schematic. That is the best way to describe it. It is just a standard way of showing a house on a block. Although they look identical, and they are identical to an extent, that is not what we are going to put there. In fact, there are seven different house types on the site. Those seven house types would then be further differentiated by elevation and different colour schemes and finishes externally, which would be complemented by different colour schemes internally. So, effectively, you would end up with hardly one house looking the same as another, and certainly not the same as its neighbour.

Mr FORREST—At what stage do you make those decisions? For example, lots 1 to 6 have identical floor plans.

Mr Kemp—In item 7 you can see house types 20, 18, 14, 2, 3, 33 and 32. In fact, the numbers down the side refer to the house design. By way of example, item 8 shows plans and elevations of house type 2, item 9 shows house type 18 and item 10 shows house type 33. So we have shown three examples of what we are doing. Obviously another four designs will be incorporated into the development, as well as changes in elevation, colour, texture et cetera.

Mr FORREST—So are you assuring me that lots 1 to 6 show that they will not all be identical little boxes?

Mr Kemp—Lots 1 to 6 will have house type 20 on them and they will be differentiated by way of elevation and colour.

Mr FORREST—I see. That is all from me.

ACTING CHAIR—As there are no further questions, on behalf of the committee I thank the witnesses who have appeared today and, indeed, the people who assisted with the inspection this morning. I also thank the local federal member and parliamentary secretary who was in attendance, and Hansard.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Ripoll**):

That, pursuant to the power conferred by section 2(2) of the Parliamentary Papers Act 1908, this committee authorises publication of the evidence given before it and submissions presented at public hearing this day.

Committee adjourned at 1.48 p.m.