

Thursday, 23 August 2001 SENATE 26575

31st Conference of Presiding Officers and Clerks, Norfolk Island

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—I present the report of the 31

st Conference of Presiding Officers and Clerks which was held in Norfolk

Island between 31 July and 4 August 2000, together with the *Hansard* record of the conference.

COMMITTEES

Public Works Committee

Report

Senator CALVERT (Tasmania) (3.55 p.m.)—On behalf of the Parliamentary Stand-ing

Committee on Public Works, I present report

No. 8 of 2001, entitled *Lavarack Barracks Redevelopment Stage 3, Townsville*. I move: That the Senate take note of the report.

I seek leave to incorporate my tabling statement

in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The statement read as follows—

Madam President, this report relates to the proposal for the third stage of the redevelopment of the Australian Army's Lavarack Barracks in Townsville. It involves the upgrading of working accommodation and facilities, in particular for the 3rd Brigade, and of facilities for other units located at the Barracks.

The Committee has found the proposed work necessary and recommended it proceed.

Need

Many of the existing facilities at Lavarack Barracks

are more than 30 years old and, arguably, have reached the end of their functional life.

According to Defence, the facilities do not adequately

reflect the current structure or functionality of the 3rd Brigade—which is the major land component of the Ready Deployment Force of the Australian Defence Force.

I hasten to add that, following the Committee's inspection of the Barracks, we would agree with this view. Facilities, such as the Headquarters building, are inadequate for current operational needs.

We believe the redevelopment work will enhance the overall effectiveness of the 3rd Brigade and other units based at Lavarack Barracks.

There are a number of benefits. They include:

the better grouping of related Brigade functions;

facilities that better reflect current work practices and functional relationships;

improved morale as a result of Defence personnel

having working accommodation and

facilities that meet present day standards;

more efficient operations flowing from improved

maintenance and storage areas; and

fewer occupational health and safety problems by getting rid of cramped temporary accommodation.

Refurbish or rebuild

Defence's submission to the Committee presented

options for addressing problems at Lavarack Barracks.

Essentially, they were:

refurbish existing buildings or rebuild.

The Committee has concluded that the rebuild option is the better option.

In passing, I note that the Committee had to seek additional information from Defence before it could be convinced rebuilding was the best option.

Scope and cost of the project

I would like to make some brief comments on the scope and cost of the project.

An issue for the Committee was that, while Defence

has a capped budget of \$170 million for the project, the estimated cost is \$230 million.

The difference between \$170 million and \$230 million is explained by Defence as savings, which

could be made by value management and other cost-saving measures within the project.

It is self-evident that the scope of the works proposed

by Defence will not be achieved unless

Defence can make the savings.

While I think it is fair to say Defence is confident it will make the savings, the Committee would prefer to see similar projects presented differently.

In this context, the Committee is currently interested

in the benefits achieved from what is known as "alliancing", where the total project cost is fixed.

Alliancing, is a team-based approach to building design construction.

Alliancing was used to design and construct the new National Museum here in Canberra. In this case the project was on time and under budget.

Other issues

The Committee has commented on a number of other issues in the report. They include:

Heritage matters;

Environmental issues; and

Consultation with other stakeholders.
I do not propose to comment in detail on these issues at this stage.

Conclusion

As I indicated at the beginning of my remarks, the Committee supports the Stage 3 redevelopment of Lavarack Barracks.

The Committee has therefore recommended that the proposed work proceed at a cost of \$170 million.

Madam President, in conclusion I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my fellow Committee members and Secretariat staff and in particular, Gillian Gould and Tiana Gray. The tabling of this report is the completion of one of eight current inquiries. While it is a very heavy workload, I am optimistic of our ability to finalise the inquiries this year. I commend the Report to the Senate. Question resolved in the affirmative.