

Issues and Conclusions

Options Considered

- 3.1 In its main submission Defence states that:

While other options were considered for home basing the Multi Role Tanker Transport, RAAF Base Amberley is considered as the only viable location...¹

The Committee sought more information on the other options considered by Defence, as they were not listed in its main submission.

- 3.2 Due to the confidential nature of some of the options, Defence could not provide detailed specifics of the options considered, however did mention that a number of options were considered. Current Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) location of RAAF Base Richmond was one option that was considered, but was ruled out due to the physical limitations for the operation of the newer and larger aircraft. The option of operating from a commercial airfield was also examined, but ruled out on financial and operational grounds.²
- 3.3 Defence continued that as the primary role of the MRTT aircraft is air-to-air refuelling of aircraft based at Amberley and Williamtown, RAAF Base Amberley represented a more cost effective option. Defence reassured the Committee that the work and research undertaken within Defence indicated RAAF Base Amberley as the optimum location.³

1 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 33

2 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 5

3 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 5

MRTT Location on Base

- 3.4 On the site inspection, the Committee viewed the proposed specific location for the MRTT aircraft accommodation on base. The Committee was interested in what options Defence had considered for the specific location of the MRTT aircraft on the Base. Defence explained that it had considered various locations on Base, however ran into issues of aircraft parking aprons being too soft for the large MRTT aircraft, and the requirement for extensive modifications to existing taxiways. Cost and constructability issues led Defence to choose the area adjacent to the 38 Squadron as the location for the MRTT aircraft accommodation.⁴

Project Delivery

- 3.5 Defence states in its main submission that subject to parliamentary approval, the redevelopment of RAAF Base Amberley is to commence in the latter half of 2005 and completed by December 2007.⁵ The Committee sought reassurance that pending parliamentary approval, Defence could deliver the project in the stated time frame.
- 3.6 Defence responded that it had used individual consultants and contractors for the three elements of the project: the MRTT works; the base services infrastructure; and the 9th Force Support Battalion (9FSB) project. Defence added that, subject to parliamentary approval, the works could commence quickly and completed as scheduled.⁶

Contracting Methodology

- 3.7 The Committee sought more detail on the contracting methodology employed by Defence for the project. Defence commented that in selecting particular contractors and contracting methodologies, it assessed the risk of the individual project elements and selected an appropriate project delivery method.
- 3.8 For the MRRT element of the Base redevelopment, Defence have a contractor engaged for the planning phase of the project, providing flexibility for further negotiation. Given the 9FSB element of the project is planned to be on a greenfield site, Defence opted for a head contractor approach which provides better value for money and control of the project. As for the works to the Base infrastructure, Defence opted for a

4 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 9

5 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 2

6 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 4

managing contractor approach, allowing for the Base's operations to continue throughout the redevelopment.⁷

Consultation

- 3.9 Defence lists in its main submission organisations consulted, or that Defence plan to consult, with regard to Base redevelopment.⁸ The Committee sought clarification on which organisations had been consulted to date and what issues had been raised throughout the consultation process.
- 3.10 Defence confirmed that all organisations listed in its main submission have been consulted. An example of consulting forum is the RAAF Amberley strategic advisory group which was established to discuss issues regarding the Base and also the development of the region. The group meets every two months and comprises of representatives from the Ipswich City Council, senior executives from the Base, the Chamber of Commerce and local industry members. All feedback from local community, relevant agencies and the advisory group has been positive in support of the Base redevelopment.⁹
- 3.11 The Ipswich Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported the project and indicated that it had not received any negative feedback or comments from the community. The Chamber added that its relationship with the Base was very good and any issues, such as increased traffic congestion and disturbance to the community, were addressed and communicated well.¹⁰
- 3.12 The Ipswich City Council further supported the project and informed that the once poor communication between the Base and the Council had since greatly improved, and the Council welcomed the opportunities of the Base redevelopment.¹¹

7 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 4

8 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 45

9 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 9

10 *ibid*, page 14

11 *ibid*, page 17

Local Impact

Workforce

- 3.13 The Committee enquired, given the size of the project, whether Defence anticipated any issues with shortage of skilled workers or supplies and materials. Defence assured the Committee that even though it had factored worker and material supply issues into the planning of the project, it does not expect trouble with finding skilled workers in the area. In the event of a skills shortage in the south-east Queensland region, Defence are confident that it would not be difficult to attract skilled workers to the area.¹²
- 3.14 With regard to the workforce involved with the project, Defence states that according to its latest estimates:
- ...we [Defence] are probably looking at more than 350 people employed across the three projects when they are all up and running.¹³

Traffic Considerations

- 3.15 The Committee enquired as to what initiatives Defence would be incorporating to minimise impact on the local community during the construction phase of the project. Defence acknowledged that the Base redevelopment would impact on the level of traffic accessing the Base. To minimise this impact, Defence have identified a separate access point for construction traffic.¹⁴
- 3.16 Defence's research indicates that much of the traffic flow issues would occur between the Cunningham Highway and the construction site. This route is used heavily by Base population, and Defence anticipate more impact on Base population rather than the local community. Contractors have agreed with Defence to use Southern Amberley Road to get to the construction site, thus avoiding the Amberley State School area on Rosewood Road. Defence also look to have traffic diverts for construction traffic so as to avoid the child-care centre.¹⁵ Defence expect the highest road loading period between the months of May and June, when the overlay work for the runway would be carried out.

12 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 13

13 *ibid*, page 12

14 *ibid*, page 11

15 *ibid*, page 12

Hazardous Materials

- 3.17 Defence's main submission states that as part of the MRTT works, a Maintenance Complex is proposed to accommodate equipment, personnel and facilities. The design of the complex incorporates an external hazardous waste collection point.¹⁶ The Committee enquired as to what hazardous materials would be collected, and what procedures were in place for disposal.
- 3.18 Defence assured the Committee that the Base has procedures for the handling of hazardous waste, and meet all of the standards for hazardous waste collection and disposal. In the case of MRTT and 9FSB facilities, hazardous waste issues mainly relate to fuel spillage. These facilities will have triple interceptor technology incorporated into the design to capture any spillages that may occur.¹⁷
- 3.19 Defence added that MRTT fuel tank work, where fuel spillages may occur, is not carried out on a frequent basis. However:
- The work activity is strictly controlled using appropriate personal protection equipment and procedures. The building services inside the hangar also allow for mechanical fuel vapour exhaust systems.¹⁸
- Any trade waste that is generated is collected in sump areas, treated and disposed off site. All drum trade waste and bulk liquid waste is removed for disposal under contract.

Building Services

Building Management Systems

- 3.20 In its main submission Defence states that facilities on the Base will incorporate building management systems, metering and other provisions to monitor and measure energy use and to allow regular energy audits.¹⁹ The Committee sought further information on the benefits of the building management systems and the other provisions being utilised to measure energy use.
- 3.21 Defence responded that all elements of the project have complied with the Department of the Environment and Heritage's *Ecologically Sustainable*

16 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, attachment 4, paragraph 8

17 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 6

18 *ibid*

19 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 70

Development Design Guide for Australian Government Buildings. Defence also plan to incorporate multiple metering points into building design to be able to accurately monitor energy consumption and adjust usage accordingly. Currently, Defence have utilise a single point of metering with the supply authority to measure and monitor energy usage.²⁰

Air Conditioning

- 3.22 In its main submission Defence outlines that new facilities will “generally” be air-conditioned.²¹ The Committee sought detail on exactly which facilities were to be air-conditioned and what types of air-conditioning units would be used. Defence clarified that personnel areas would be air-conditioned, however areas such as vehicle shelters would not. Air-conditioning units to be used in the project make use of a mixed-mode operation system, enabling units to utilise natural ventilation in appropriate climate conditions. Therefore, air-conditioning would not be used unnecessarily outside hotter and cooler periods of the year. The air-conditioning units will be air-cooled, rather than water cooled, to ensure no danger of Legionella Bacillus.²²

Water Reticulation

- 3.23 Defence states in its main submission that none of the proposed sites for new facilities present any particular civil engineering problems²³, however on the site inspection Defence explained issues that had arisen with regard to water reticulation. The Committee wanted clarification on these issues and how Defence propose to overcome them.
- 3.24 Defence informed the Committee that the existing water reticulation system has pipes that run underneath the runway. While this was suitable at the time they were laid, the pipes have since been stressed by vehicles and aircraft traffic and deteriorated in quality. This project addresses the water piping issue by diverting the water main to the southern side of the airfield. Ipswich Water also proposes to establish another water main from the northern side of the airfield, resulting in dual feed into Base.²⁴
- 3.25 Extensive topographical and geotechnical surveys have been, and will continue to be, carried out to identify any potential soil or underground

20 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 7

21 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 73

22 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 8

23 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 78

24 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 10

services issues. Surveys have shown that some water and sewer lines require maintenance, which will be addressed as part of this project.²⁵

Security

- 3.26 Given the large amount of works proposed for the Base, the Committee enquired as to effect on the Base's defence capability during the construction phase of the project. Defence explained that whilst there will be interruptions to Base services due to infrastructure works, the managing contractor project delivery provides for flexibility as to how the work is staged and carried out. Defence also assured the Committee that:

In terms of operational capability, the plans have been worked so that we [Defence] retain our full F111 and Caribou capabilities throughout the construction period.²⁶

- 3.27 While on the site inspection, the Committee were shown the new site for the electrical substation. Given the location of the new substation would be off-base, the Committee expressed concern over possible security issues. Defence explained to the Committee that the off-base location of the new electrical substation provides 24-hour access to authorised electrical technicians without having to gain access to the grounds of the Base, be it for regular maintenance or in the case of emergency.²⁷

Future Projects

- 3.28 Defence states in its main submission that:

...further redevelopment of RAAF Base Amberley is included in Defence's unapproved Major Capital Facilities program for consideration later this decade.²⁸

The Committee was interested in what future redevelopment for RAAF Base Amberley was anticipated. Defence were unable to elaborate in detail of future projects, however stated that subject to parliamentary approval of the current project, further redevelopment of the Base is anticipated. Future works would cover issues not addressed by the current project before the Committee.²⁹

25 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 10

26 *ibid*, page 12

27 *ibid*, page 10

28 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 43

29 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 13

- 3.29 Defence indicated that certain elements proposed as part of this project will have capacity for future expansion. The design philosophy extends to project elements such as mechanical services and building design. Buildings will be designed to be able to handle an increase in staff number, or a change in function.³⁰

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the proposed RAAF Base Amberley redevelopment stage two, QLD, proceed at the estimated cost of \$285.6 million.

Hon Judi Moylan MP

Chair

2 November 2005

³⁰ Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 7