



Australian Government

Department of Immigration and Citizenship

Submission No. 01.2

(RPC Manus Island)

Date: 19/04/13

SECRETARY

19 April 2013

The Hon Kirsten Livermore MP
Chair
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Livermore

Submission on the Manus Island Regional Processing Centre Project

I am writing regarding the submission provided to the Public Works Committee by the department on 20 March 2013.

It has come to my attention that information at Part 2.5 of the submission regarding limitations with the Temporary Centre did not reflect the situation at the centre at the time the submission was lodged.

The observations about the Temporary Centre included in the submission are based on a visit to the Centre at the end of November 2012, and do not reflect the current infrastructure and amenities at the Temporary Centre.

Accordingly, I would like to take the opportunity to update the Committee on upgrades and developments at the Temporary Centre:

Living arrangements and amenity

The submission noted that the canvas tents and wooden floor boards deteriorate quickly, and that each tent has reticulated 240v power that can be unsafe in the wet conditions. The department has arrangements in place to address these concerns:

- When the Department of Defence established the temporary facility, they repaired existing electrical infrastructure and put in place additional cabling and fittings to the tents and hard walled buildings. Since then, the electrical distribution infrastructure has been upgraded progressively. These works commenced in November using a local PNG company and are ongoing.
- The department has an ongoing process for monitoring, repairing and replacing electrical items as needed. G4S, the garrison services provider, is contracted to provide facilities maintenance services at the site, and to monitor, report on, and address any issues of concern.

people our business

- Drainage is monitored regularly to minimise opportunities for moisture to affect the floorboards; and
- Floorboards are replaced or repaired as required as part of a regular facilities maintenance program.

Health and well-being

- Fans have always been available to provide cooling for transferees. Additional ventilation has been installed in the family rooms, and additional fans have been placed in all tents, donga rooms and breezeways. Some rooms have been air-conditioned, such as the school, internet room and recreational marquees. A key consideration is that air-conditioning is not common in the local community, and community equity issues are taken into consideration when making decisions about infrastructure.
- A rigorous mosquito vector control program was implemented when the centre was established in late 2012, and drainage is monitored on an ongoing basis to identify and rectify any potential issues. Health Services are well established, covering both primary and mental health care services.

Recreational activities

- A range of recreation and educational services are now provided by service providers, including English language classes and handicraft classes. To support this, the school room has been upgraded and air conditioned and a library is in place.
- Internet access is provided for up to nine hours per day.
- A gym is currently being installed, and shaded recreation marquees are in place.
- These initiatives are supplemented by an increasing program of activities. Examples include sports days, and cultural and religious celebrations.

Potential for tension

Service providers have established incident management protocols and procedures:

- Appropriate services and activities are in place to meet the needs of transferees, and consultative meetings are held regularly so that transferees can raise any issues of concern. Recreational activities are in place including access to the internet.
- As with arrangements at Australian immigration facilities, there are arrangements in place to respond to incidents if required.

Processing

A Refugee Status Determination process is currently being finalised with the PNG Government:

- Appropriate infrastructure is being put in place to support the commencement of the PNG refugee status determination process. This will include air-conditioned interviewing facilities.

Clearly the need for permanent facilities remains high, given temporary facilities are not sustainable in the medium to long term. The department is progressing a site survey of Portion 244, which is referred to in the department's submission. A procurement strategy is

also being negotiated with the PNG Government, so that the tender process for the Managing Contractor (MC) for the construction works can commence and an MC appointed. The intention is to progress design work only, so as to facilitate urgent construction of the permanent facility. The commencement of any site works would be subject to the outcomes of your Committee's current inquiry.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a supplementary submission to the Committee in relation to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Martin Bowles, PSM