

KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL



SUBMISSION

**REPORT TITLE : KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL SUBMISSION - AIR 7000 PHASE 1B
REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM FACILITIES PROJECT**

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Katherine Town Council welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee regarding this project. Council has been briefed by representatives of the Australian Defence Force on the Phase 1B Project and is comfortable with the information provided.

Council notes that the Committee may, in its report on a public work, recommend any alterations to the proposals for the work that, in its opinion, are necessary or desirable to ensure that the most effective use is made of the moneys to be expended on the work.

In making this submission, Katherine Town Council would like to encourage the Committee to consider the impact of the RAAF Base Tindal component of the Project on the local township of Katherine.

Housing

It is noted that the Project anticipates approximately 1,150 personnel will be provided with employment opportunities across both RAAF sites. It is not clear how this number is broken down across the two sites. Council also understands that there is likely to be around 200 construction jobs associated with the RAAF Base Tindal component of the Project.

As the hub of the Big Rivers Region, Katherine has and is, experiencing a housing crisis caused in part, by the large infrastructure spend that has commenced, and is ongoing for the next seven (7) years at RAAF Base Tindal. The influx of contractors and construction companies to the region has stretched the stock of public, private and industry housing to breaking point. The ability for these companies to outbid the local market, has distorted the market, making housing affordability extremely challenging. This has caused major impacts throughout the town on the ability to attract, employ and retain Council staff, teachers, nurses and retail business staff. There does not appear to be a plan to generate additional housing to meet the anticipated growth that this project will generate. This also flows on to associated childcare spaces (already an 18 month wait list) and to other social infrastructure such as schools nearing capacity.

It should be noted that the release of further residential and commercial lot subdivision being planned for Katherine East is still some years away from releasing developed lots to the market.

Waste Minimisation

It is noted that the Defence submission states that Katherine does not have recycling. It is true that Katherine does not have domestic kerbside recycling, nor a dedicated Materials Recycling Facility, however Council does encourage the sorting and separation of waste streams being brought to the Katherine Waste Management Facility (WMF), whereby some of these streams can be further recycled. Council's fees and charges encourages this practice by offering a significant discount for separated waste streams versus co-mingled.

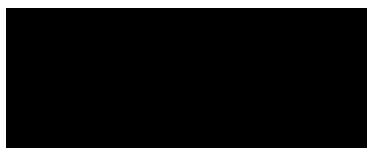
Despite this, it is evident from existing Defence projects, that for expediency, there is a reluctance from contractors to separate waste at the source, and these costs are passed back through to the Australian taxpayer through higher contracted unit rates. This creates more work for Council's limited workforce at the WMF and potentially leads to unnecessary material streams going to landfill.

Leased Areas

It is noted that the Defence submission states that the Katherine Civil Airport is leased to the Katherine Airport Corporation. It is in fact leased to Katherine Town Council. Council is currently reviewing its Master Plan for this leased area and welcomes the opportunity to review the lease boundaries and access arrangements to the Civil Airport that will maximise the potential of this key strategic community asset.

Katherine Town Council's intention in making this submission is to encourage the Committee to look at the potential impacts on the surrounding and wider community of the Big Rivers Region and to consider what, if any direct community infrastructure benefit(s) could be generated directly through the Project proposal.

Yours sincerely



Brendan Pearce
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