

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Impact of Defence Training Activities and Facilities on Rural and Regional Communities – 12 July 2017

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Defence

Topic: 42nd Battalion in Rockhampton

Question reference number: 2

Senator: Gallacher

Type of question: asked on Wednesday, 12 July 2017, Hansard page 53

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 31 August 2017

Question:

CHAIR: The 42nd Battalion used to be based in Rockhampton. What happened there? If this is such an important tier 1 base and you had 600 soldiers based in Rockhampton, what was the rationale for those people moving out?

Mr Grzeskowiak: I might handover to one of my brigadierial colleagues.

Brig Bayliss: We did it with a Townsville based regiment a number of years ago.

CHAIR: You can take it on notice.

Answer:

- The Shoalwater Bay Training Area is a Category 1 Training Area, with the primary function to support Joint and Combined manoeuvre for force elements at or above Battle Group. The Area has the potential ability to support live fire training from land, air and sea. The Rockhampton Depot, while currently home to elements of the 31st/42nd Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment, is also used as a staging area for deployment to the Shoalwater Bay Training Area.
- In 2008, the 42nd Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment was merged with the 31st Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment, to form the 31st/42nd Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment. The merger reflected the fact that the combined Army Reserve size of the two units had been consistently below a total Army Reserve unit strength.
- In the six years prior to the merger of units, the average posted strength of the 42nd Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment was approximately 230 Army Reserves and 20 Regular Army personnel. This strength was spread across all locations for the unit in Rockhampton, Mackay and Gladstone. The physical presence of personnel from the Battalion at Rockhampton was approximately 160 to 170 personnel during that time.

- As at July 2017, the 31st/42nd Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment has approximately 54 Army Reserve and 6 Regular Army personnel parading in Rockhampton. The remainder of the 31st/42nd Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment personnel (196 Army Reserve and 12 Regular Army personnel) are spread across other depot locations in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Ayr and Gladstone.
- The 31st/42nd Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment is sustaining a healthy Army Reserve attendance, and remains an enduring capability for Army.