

## **Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Storage Program Tranche 2 | Community Consultation**

From the inception of the Orchard Hills Defence Establishment in the 1940's, in the largely rural area of the Penrith City Council district, the region has now undergone a significant change of identity. Considerable investments in retail, the recent upgrade of the Nepean Hospital precinct and surrounding new suburbs around the Defence Establishment have transformed Penrith into a thriving city. Also, the significant growth of Sydney's population requires further land release for housing and business. The momentum is now increasing in the completion of the new Western Sydney Airport which will in the near future bring a significant increase in urban and business development and increased traffic along The Northern Road.

It is understandable that the facilities at this Defence Establishment are outdated, however, spending millions of dollars on guided weapons and explosives ordnance storage in the middle of a growing populous area is not a viable choice for this type of activity. In regards to the Western Sydney Airport, the flight paths and diverting emergency flight paths, may have implications for public safety in the neighbourhood if the Orchard Hills Defence Establishment is developed as proposed.

Of special interest is the valuable woodland on the Orchard Hills Defence Establishment site that needs to be preserved for future generations. Unfortunately, much natural flora was cleared for the development of the Western Sydney International Airport site (See Department of Defence, Orchard Hills Offset Area Offset Plan, June 2022).

### **Recommendation:**

Taking into account the vital need for our country's national security and defence capabilities, my recommendation, as a concerned member of the public, would be:

- To relocate the guided weapons and explosive ordnance storage to a less restrictive site for larger scale activities. This would take into account new weapon technology capabilities, for example, nuclear and AI devices;
- To have the Safeguarding Arc removed or contained within the boundaries of the Orchard Hills Defence Establishment and for the site to store non-explosive ordnance and/or the property be repurposed for other safer Defence activities;
- To extend the time frame for all interested parties to forward their submissions. There was no adequate media campaign to inform all neighbouring residents and interested parties of the proposed development, e.g. sending of letters, updates on social media, newsletters, etc. As a result, very few people were aware of the Orchard Hills Defence Establishment proposal in order to forward their submissions.

Name Withheld