

To: Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works 28/8/2022

Inquiry: AIR7000 Phase 1B Remotely Piloted Aircraft System Facilities Project

Dear Honourable Committee Members,

I am a concerned citizen with respect to how Australia has become a proxy for US force posturing, particularly with China, contrary to our own sovereign interests for peace and prosperity within our region. I thank the Committee for the opportunity to make a submission.

It seems incongruous that Defence in its current submission makes no reference to its 2020 submission for works at RAAF Tindall which appear to be ongoing and which they indicated would take 7 years to complete.

Defence's current submission, AIR7000 Phase 1B Remotely Piloted Aircraft System Facilities Project at a cost of \$427.1 million (excluding GST), makes no mention of the following:-

- a) an ongoing 7 year development at Tindall costing \$1.174 billion (excluding GST),
- b) whether those ongoing works are on budget,
- c) whether, and if, cost savings from those ongoing works can supplement the cost of this new submission,
- d) how their current submission can be integrated with the ongoing works to effect any cost savings in duplication,
- e) are the ongoing works capable of being modified to incorporate any infrastructure requirements etc for the current submission.
- f) the separated cost component of the Tindall works within the total project cost.
- g) whether the United States Air Force will be utilising the proposed facilities for conducting remotely piloted aircraft training exercises as indicated in item 4.11 below.

I urge the Committee to request answers of Defence in this regard.

I cite below relevant aspects of the previous Inquiry and the Committee's 2020 Report which are relevant to this current Inquiry.

2020 Inquiry commenced 25th February 2020 and Report May 2020

RAAF Base Tindal Stage 6 Redevelopment and United States Force Posture Initiative Airfield Works

Defence indicates an estimated project cost of \$1.174 billion (excluding GST) with future sustainment costs of \$10.4 million.

4.11 Additionally, Defence told the Committee that ‘The United States Air Force will also conduct training from RAAF Base Tindal under the Enhanced Air Cooperation component of the United States Force Posture Initiative.’⁶

4.12 When asked by the Committee if Defence planned on submitted future proposals for works at RAAF Base Tindal, Defence stated:

Not works that would then build on what we've done. There's no immediate one that does staged redevelopment work as such. What you will see from us in the future, though, will be some air capability projects, but they are above and beyond what we're doing here...[and] other capabilities from Air Force—for instance, unmanned aerial vehicles, which will require some of their own facilities above and beyond what we're doing...⁷

4.13 Defence further stated that it was not likely that base development works or further investment in the in-ground infrastructure would be required for some time given the investment for this project.⁸

Committee Recommendation

4.41

Proponent entities must notify the Committee of any changes to the project scope, time, cost, function or design. The Committee also requires that a post-implementation report be provided within three months of project completion. A report template can be found on the Committee’s website.