Australian Government
Defence

Air Commodore Ron Tilley
Director General
Capital Facilities and Infrastructure
[redacted]

[redacted]

Mr Graham Perrett MP
Chair
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Perrett,

CANBERRA DEFENCE PRECINCT TRANCHE 1 AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE ACADEMY LIVING-IN ACCOMMODATION PROJECT

Thank you for your letter dated 13 February 2024 in regards to Defence's submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for the Canberra Defence Precinct Tranche 1 Australian Defence Force Academy Living-in Accommodation Project. Defence has provided responses to the questions in your letter in the attachments to this letter for the Committee's consideration. The responses have been separated into a public and confidential submission as appropriate.

Defence has prioritised this project as it aligns with the Government's commitment to the Defence Strategic Review recommendation to invest in the growth and retention of a highly skilled Defence workforce. An accelerated delivery model has been implemented for the project, which resulted in Departmental and Government approvals being obtained within eight months, which would have typically taken between 1.5 and 2 years using standard development and approval process.

The project received Government Combined Pass Approval in November 2023 with an approved budget of $1,252 million. To achieve acceleration, the project's P80 cost estimate submitted to Government was based on the Master Plan and Feasibility Report, which was informed by 5% design instead of the usual 30% design.

Since the project was referred to the Committee, an updated P80 cost estimate has been prepared based on the Concept Design Report, which was informed by 30% design. The updated cost estimate is $1,018 million, which is $234 million less than the approved budget.

As the design continues to progress, value management activities are continuing to be undertaken, and the project cost estimate is anticipated to reduce further. The actual cost to deliver the project will not be determined until the design is completed and a contractor is engaged under a fixed price lump sum Head Contract.

It is requested the Committee continues to consider the project based on the Government approved budget of $1,252 million. We would be pleased to respond to any further questions at a briefing and a hearing.

Yours sincerely,

RM Tilley
Air Commodore
Director General Capital Facilities and Infrastructure

24 February 2024

Attachments:
1. Supplementary Submission to the Statement of Evidence
2. Supplementary Submission to the Confidential Cost Estimate

Australian Government

Defence

CANBERRA DEFENCE PRECINCT TRANCHE 1

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE ACADEMY

LIVING-IN ACCOMMODATION PROJECT

Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE
TO THE
PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON PUBLIC WORKS

February 2024

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Canberra Defence Precinct Tranche 1 – Australian Defence Force Academy Living-In Accommodation Project

Need/general

Question 1:

Please provide more information on how the current Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) Living-In Accommodation (LIA) facilities are not fit for purpose; including the health hazards posed; and non-compliance with current LIA policy.

Response:

1. In 2020, a review into the existing ADFA LIA buildings identified a range of conditions and non-compliances. A number of these findings informed the project's requirements; including:

a. Indoor amenity aspects are absent or non-functional. Natural light and ventilation to common areas is limited or absent, negatively impacting on students' wellbeing.

b. Floor layouts are segregated into corridors of four bedrooms, where poor behaviour can go unnoticed by other residents or staff. The common area only accommodates a quarter of residents at any one time and does not foster group working and excellence in education ethos.

c. Pathways, emergency and maintenance vehicle access, location of waste collection zones, parking, stormwater infrastructure and landscape are in poor condition, not fit for purpose or practically non-existent, representing safety risks associated with trip hazards and limited or no crime prevention through environmental design techniques.

d. External lighting is in poor condition, non-compliant with Australian Standards and contributing to safety risks in those areas.

e. Ventilation to shower/laundry areas is ineffective and contributes to the proliferation of mould.

f. The grounds around the buildings do not control movement and do not encourage more direct building access. Locations of existing amenities have been opportunistically selected without consideration for how they introduce new areas of vulnerability.

g. There is one small common room per 48 residents that can only accommodate 12 residents at a time. All shared facilities are limited in size and the 'cluster-plex' building layout results in poor lines of site, which means poor behaviour can go unnoticed.

h. The use of flat roofs and box gutters, poor material selection and ventilation have contributed in large part to extensive mould proliferation.

2. In 2022, Defence identified mould in some ADFA LIA buildings, which resulted in an intensive occupational health testing regime across all buildings. Affected buildings, or parts thereof, subject to remediation were not re-occupied until a health certificate was issued. 22 of the 23 ADFA Cadet LIA buildings have been remediated and are now occupied. One LIA building is in the final stage of mould remediation and will be completed in April 2024. The remediation project was designed to make the buildings habitable from a health perspective, and not to address the systemic capability and capacity issues, which is what the ADFA LIA project is required to address.

3. Whilst the current design generally complies with the Defence LIA policy, there are some notable variations, including the provision of larger communal areas and limited kitchen amenities. These variations respond to the use of the buildings for long-term accommodation, which is not anticipated in the policy.

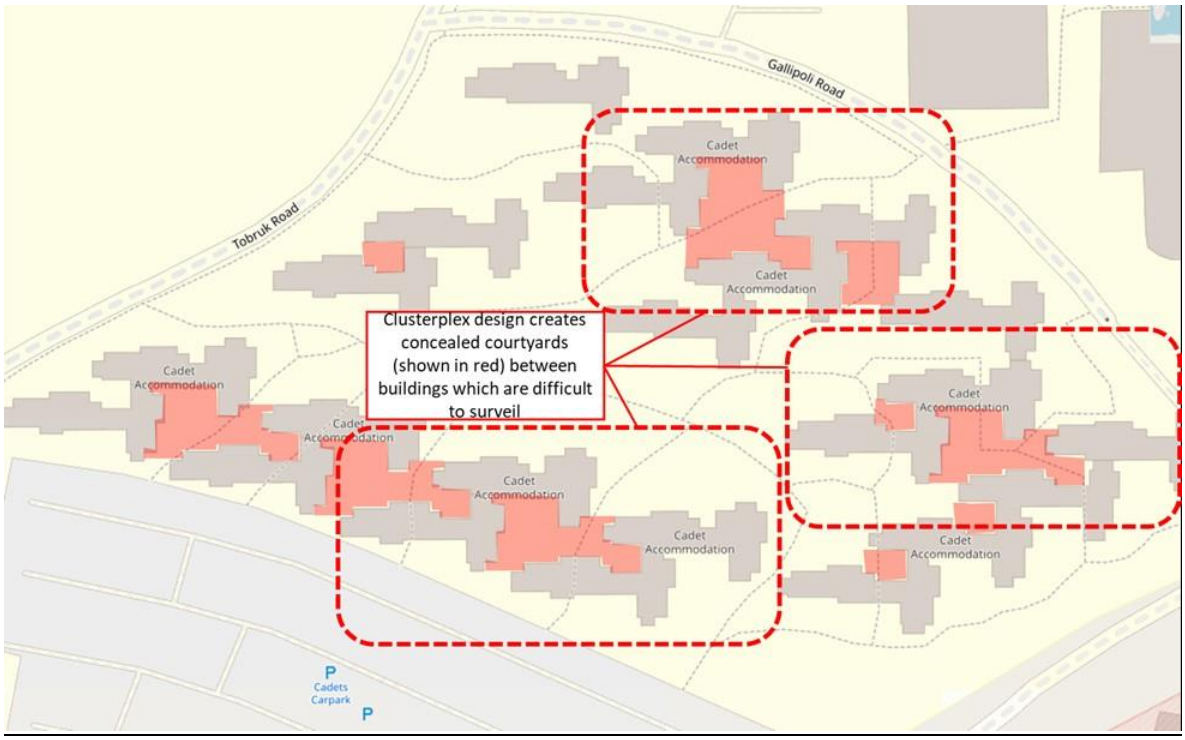
Question 2:

Please provide an explanation of how the current 'cluster-plex' design encourages unacceptable behaviour; what is meant by 'psychosocial risks' and how will the new design mitigate that risk? It would also be useful to have a short explanation of non-construction initiatives in place to prevent unacceptable behaviour at the facilities.

Response:

4. The existing ADFA LIA comprises 23 accommodation buildings arranged in groups of 2-4 buildings, to create clusters, with each cluster consisting of semi-private courtyards at grade. The buildings are constructed on a sloping site, which further exaggerates the semi-private grouping or 'cluster-plex' formation of the buildings. A graphic showing the semi-private courtyards is provided at Figure 1. The red dotted lines show groups of buildings that create a cluster, with the red shading showing the external courtyards.

Figure 1



5. Concerns relating to safety and psychosocial wellbeing of Trainee Officers have been identified and documented through a number of reviews – including the Grey Review (1998), Broderick Report (2011) and Defence Abuse Response Taskforce Report (2014); all of which identified the residential environment as a contributing factor to unacceptable behaviour.

6. Concerns about the state of the existing ADFA LIA were also raised during the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, noting that the ADFA cadet accommodation had been described in previous reports as a 'breeding ground' for unacceptable behaviour. This is in large part of a result of the outdated design of the current LIA creating concealment opportunities internal and external to the buildings, with limited ability for surveillance.

7. The 'cluster-plex' design does not encourage unacceptable behaviour. Rather it has been identified as being a contributing or causal factor. Specifically, the following features of the current LIA buildings prevent appropriate mitigation of unacceptable behaviour:

a. bedrooms clustered in groups of four have short, concealed corridors;

b. inadequate capacity of common areas resulting in Trainee Officers needing to find alternate areas to socialise/congregate (including, for example, in bedrooms);

c. inability to implement surveillance, both within and external to the LIA building, through CCTV and other measures;

d. shared bathroom amenities within short concealed corridors;

e. concealment opportunities internal and external to the buildings; and

f. poor lighting within the LIA precinct, car parks and between the LIA buildings and car parks.

8. Psychosocial hazards are factors in the design or management of a workplace, the work environment and workplace interactions that increase the risk of work-related stress that can lead to psychological or physical harm. Psychosocial hazards can in some cases contribute to mental ill-health, sleep disorders, musculoskeletal injuries, chronic disease or fatigue related injuries. Psychosocial hazards such as poor physical environment (as experienced within the ADFA LIA) may not create psychosocial risks on their own, but can be a contributor to other hazards such as conflict or poor workplace relationships, harassment (including sexual and gender based), bullying, violence and aggression.

9. The external and internal elements of the existing buildings are not suitable for refurbishment due to the poor sightlines and concealment opportunities. The new buildings will reduce the potential of psychosocial hazards.

10. The new buildings will include spaces that are well-lit, well-organised and conducive to surveillance, which can deter criminal activity, enhance community wellbeing and increase the feeling of safety. The new buildings emphasise elements like proper lighting, clear sightlines, natural surveillance, and controlling access to spaces. The spaces have been designed to avoid dead ends and maximise visibility of all shared spaces, corridors and points of access and egress.

11. To prevent unacceptable behaviour in the existing buildings, ADFA has implemented a range of non-construction initiatives that include:

a. installation of proximity card access to accommodation blocks and individual rooms to improve security;

b. creation of a staff office (using an existing bedroom) within each LIA building to increase staff presence during working hours; it should be noted that the cluster-plex design of the buildings means the staff member is limited in their ability to see or hear what is happening in other parts of the building;

c. embedding Residential Support Officers within the buildings to provide welfare support after hours;

d. development of a comprehensive psychosocial safety risk assessment, which continually reviews the effectiveness of policies, procedures, education and training to reduce risks as far as reasonably practicable.

12. The new buildings will allow ADFA to implement further initiatives that are not possible in the existing buildings, including:

a. increased staff ratios and presence (two staff per floor of 32 Trainee Officers, rather than one staff per block of 48 Trainee Officers) to monitor and influence behaviours as well as enhancing on-site support to Trainee Officers; and

b. surveillance (CCTV recorded footage) in corridors and common rooms, in line with contemporary university standards.

Question 4:

Was the option of permanently locating the Trainee Officers outside of the ADFA campus considered/costed, noting the experience in recent years of housing Trainee Officers at the University of Canberra during the ADFA black mould remediation?

Response:

13. In September 2023, the Defence Chiefs of Service Committee considered and assessed a range of accommodation options to meet ADFA's needs for the next 40-50 years, including off-site accommodation in the Canberra region. The assessment was performed through the lens of risk and Defence's mandate to provide a safe, secure and appropriate environment for ab-initio Officer training and tertiary education which supports recruitment and retention of a highly skilled workforce.

14. The experience with temporarily accommodating 250 Trainee Officers at the University of Canberra in late 2022 and 2023 reinforced the importance of maintaining the residential model at ADFA for the future. The temporary arrangement was highly disruptive to ADFA and its Trainee Officers, caused a disproportionate burden on supervisory and duty of care arrangements (with corresponding risks), required external transport, messing, laundry, cleaning and other support services, impacted traffic congestion at ADFA, caused separation within peer cohorts (e.g. it was not appropriate for international Trainees and some other categories of Trainees to be accommodated off-site), and was generally not well-received by Trainee Officers. Defence does not consider this model to be suitable going forward.

15. The continued model of ADFA accommodating all Trainee Officers onsite remains essential to its value proposition as a world-class education and military training institution. The risk to Defence through the lens of reputation, safety and well-being of trainees, and attraction and retention of the future integrated force outweigh any potential benefits that distributed accommodation may have offered.

Design

Question 5:

Please provide more information on the 'active energy management program' on site, the likely generation and use of the rooftop photovoltaic panels. Also whether all the facilities will be air-conditioned and heated, and if that is controllable at individual room level.

Response:

16. The active energy management system refers to the Building Management System (BMS), which will be used to optimise the performance of the buildings by controlling key elements of the building systems and allowing diagnostics to be performed by building maintenance staff.

17. Rooftop photovoltaics have been sized at 10kW (i.e. approximately 24 panels) per LIA building. All LIA bedrooms will be heated and cooled with individual room controls that can be individually set by the room occupants.

Question 6:

Please provide more information on the provision of communications infrastructure, noting the likely heavy usage of internet by the Trainee Officers, including information about whether the Trainee Officers and/or staff will have access to Defence networks (and if so at what level of security classification).

Response:

18. All network infrastructure for use by staff and Trainee Officers will continue to be on the University of NSW network as currently provided in the existing LIA buildings. ICT infrastructure will be provided in accordance with University of NSW standards and the Defence Communications Cabling Standard.

19. The Trainee Officers will have access to a building-wide Wi-Fi network throughout each building that will cover the individual bedrooms and all communal areas. In addition, hard-wired data ports for direct connection of devices will be provided at the desk in each Trainee Officer bedroom and in the offices for the supervisory staff.

20. The Defence network will not be provided for use by staff or Trainee Officers. When required, both staff and Trainee Officers will continue to access the Defence network using the contemporary secure remote access system which is likely to evolve in the future. There is no requirement for access to Defence classified networks in the LIA.

Question 7:

Please provide more information about the collection and storage of roof water, for example, number, size and location of tanks, and information on whether it is anticipated that roof water will supplement or supply 100% of the irrigation / toilet flushing needs of the LIA.

Response:

21. Each LIA building will have a 30 kilolitres underground rainwater harvesting tank that will be located beneath the LIA buildings. This water will be filtered, pumped and re-used within the LIA buildings for toilet flushing with mains water back-up. The precinct landscape design specifies low irrigation native plants watered from mains supply where required.

Question 8:

Please provide more information about security measures, whether there is general perimeter security, or in individual buildings, how the access is to be controlled, the presence or absence of security personnel in the buildings, the presence or absence of security cameras in the LIA, and any additional security measures in relation to the carparks and other outdoor facilities.

Response:

22. ADFA is an open base with no perimeter fence. Perimeter fencing is not being provided to either the LIA precinct or car parks. Security measures applied to the LIA buildings include electronic access control and video surveillance cameras.

23. Access is controlled to the LIA buildings via a standalone electronic access control system managed by ADFA. External video surveillance will be provided in carparks, pedestrian pathways to the LIA buildings, and within corridors and common areas in the LIA buildings.

24. The video surveillance system internal to the buildings and car parks will not be monitored but recorded for post-incident review. The video surveillance system external to the buildings will be an extension of the existing system that is centrally monitored by Base security and includes a duress alarm system activated by buttons mounted on the video

surveillance poles. There will be no direct presence of security personnel within the LIA buildings. Base security undertake regular patrols of the entire base, including the pedestrian pathways throughout the LIA precinct.

Question 9:

Please provide more information on the materials selected for the interiors and how they contribute to 'wellness, hygiene, robustness, functionality and maintainability'.

Response:

25. The interiors of the LIA buildings have been designed to enhance Trainee Officer wellbeing with a hierarchy of spaces, comprising large open common areas with structure and materials exposed to support collaboration and a sense of community. Each floor within the accommodation buildings will offer a varied colour palette with natural materials and neutral tones to help Trainee Officer navigation and wayfinding.

26. Materials will be selected for longevity and, where possible, will be natural and robust; avoiding use of applied finishes such that they are low maintenance and easily cleaned. For example, timbers will be high-quality hardwood allowed to grey off rather than requiring treatment every year, colour selections of resilient flooring will be selected to: minimise staining and scuffing, reduce the need for constant cleaning and buffing, and large format tiles for walls and floors to minimise grout and enhance ease of cleaning by minimising hard to clean surfaces.

27. Routine cleaning of bedrooms and communal areas will be undertaken by Trainee Officers with deeper cleaning undertaken by Base cleaning staff. The selection of appropriate materials for the interiors has been undertaken in conjunction with ADFA and Base maintenance and cleaning personnel.

Question 10:

Please provide more information on the number and location of accessible rooms and facilities within the LIA and the accessibility level in the carparks.

Response:

28. A room compliant with the *Disability Discrimination Act* is provided on the ground floor of each LIA building, with accessible parking spaces immediately outside the LIA buildings in lieu of having dedicated spaces within the carparks.

Question 11:

Will the carparking have electric vehicle and electric bicycle charging? Are there other facilities for bicycle storage nearer the accommodation?

Response:

29. The carparks will be suitable for electric vehicle parking at any level of the carparks. Provision for future electric vehicle and electric bicycle charging is provided for the carparks. Facilities for electric bicycle storage and charging is provided in the carparks. General bicycle storage is provided in the LIA precinct.

Question 12:

Please provide more information on the expected life of the main materials used in the construction, and the expected usable life of the facilities as a whole.

Response:

30. The design life for the project structure and primary construction is 50 years in accordance with Australian Standards. The primary LIA structure is concrete floors, walls and columns with minimal maintenance requirements and a steel framed roof. The carparks are reinforced concrete with minimal maintenance anticipated.

Question 13:

Please provide information regarding why the design includes an ensuite per room instead of a shared facility as per most Defence LIAs.

Response:

31. The ADFA LIA precinct is a unique environment which is not comparable to other Defence LIA precincts. It is the only LIA which accommodates 17-22 year-old trainees for a period of three years; with some trainees spending four years to complete their studies. The majority of time spent at ADFA by Trainee Officers relates to their undergraduate university studies. Accordingly, the LIA is more appropriately comparable to that of civilian universities rather than other Defence LIA.

32. As the ADF seeks to continue to grow the diversity of its workforce, ADFA is seeking to attract a higher percentage of female Trainee Officers. In response to issues relating to psychosocial safety and documented incidents of unacceptable behavior, ensuites are proposed to remove the risk of incidents occurring in shared bathroom facilities. There is also a requirement to future-proof the design of the LIA for 50 years and to ensure ADFA is competitive in seeking the highest quality candidates who can choose where they wish to live while they undertake their university studies.

Question 14:

How does the project plan to comply with the ACT Government's commitment to becoming a net zero emissions city by 2045?

Response:

33. Defence is committed to an ecologically sustainable development and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and this is a key objective in the design and development of the project. With specific regard to the ACT Government's Climate Change Strategy, the project is addressing the following:

a. Transport – provision for cycle traffic and pedestrian access has been provided. There is an existing public transport route that passes the LIA precinct.

b. Buildings and Energy – the energy to the LIAs will be 100% renewable through a combination of onsite solar and 100% renewable energy drawn from the grid. No gas connection is proposed.

c. Waste – sorted waste provisions will be provided for the LIAs; and

d. Land Use – the project proposes to reuse the existing LIA and carpark sites.

34. In a broader sense, Defence is committed to achieving a 43% reduction in emissions by 2030, and net zero by 2050. Defence has in place a Net Zero Strategy to drive action to reduce emissions and accelerate the transition to clean energy. The strategy responds to legislative requirements of the *Climate Change Act 2022* and the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy. The strategy includes four main aims:

a. accelerate emissions reductions with secure reliable renewable electricity;

b. transition current fuels to low emissions alternatives;

c. increase energy efficiency and investigate carbon sequestration on the estate to reduce emissions and costs; and

d. embed a One Defence approach to net zero with enabling functions and resources.

Construction

Question 15:

Please provide more information on traffic control and management, including anticipated traffic flows and impacts of the staggered construction model on parking at each stage.

Response:

35. The contractor will be responsible for the creation and maintenance of the traffic management plan with close liaison with ADFA to minimise disruption through the different construction stages.

36. The Site Management Plan to be prepared by the contractor will include how they will manage construction traffic for subcontractors and suppliers to minimise the impact on ADFA operations. The contractor will be required to provide parking for its workforce that is separate to the existing carparking on site. Sites for this temporary carparking have been proposed and agreed with ADFA for the duration of the construction period.

Other

Question 21:

What is the current status of the NCA approval process? Please give a summary of the NCA comments on the proposal to date, any additional information that Defence has provided to NCA and the likely timeline for final approval.

Response:

37. Engagement with the National Capital Authority (NCA) commenced in August 2023 and to date there have been four formal meetings to discuss the progression of the design and the compliance with the National Capital Plan. No concerns have been raised on the design development to date, and the 50% design documentation was submitted to the NCA in January 2024 for review. The 90% design documentation is scheduled for review and approval in April 2024. The NCA Major Works Approval is scheduled for June 2024.

Question 24:

Please include information on the design and construction options considered by Defence. Were university accommodation providers, Defence Housing Australia or other entities with experience consulted in the design and planning phases and/or lessons learned shared?

Response:

38. Options to address ADFA's LIA capability and capacity deficiencies were not limited to the three options in the Statement of Evidence. Options assessed included Defence Housing Australia housing and rental assistance arrangements. Defence assessed the reputation and wellbeing risks to Defence, and attraction and retention of members, outweigh any potential benefits that distributed accommodation may offer.

39. A review of contemporary university accommodation has been undertaken, including an inspection of contemporary student accommodation facilities at the Australian National University. Elements of student accommodation that are provided at universities have been incorporated into the design, such as floor layouts that allow surveillance by the use of straight corridors, ensuites to bedrooms and common areas for social interactions.