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19 August 2014

Our Ref: HW2009-457/20/69

Mrs Karen Andrews MP  
Chair, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
C/- Committee Secretary, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mrs Andrews

**Submission: AIR 6000 Phase 2A/B New Air Combat Capability Facilities Project**

I refer to recent correspondence from Air Group Captain M. W. J. Brown AM requesting Hunter Water's comments in relation to the proposed new and upgraded facilities on RAAF Base Williamtown that will support the F-35A Lightning Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program.

Hunter Water Corporation (Hunter Water) has reviewed the Department of Defence's submission to the Standing Committee on Public Works (titled *Statement of Evidence to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works: Facility Requirements for the New Air Combat Capability*, dated June 2014), and wishes to make the following comments.

Hunter Water is a state-owned corporation responsible for the provision of water and wastewater services to approximately half a million people in the Lower Hunter region. Hunter Water collects and treats drinking water from a number of catchment areas including the Chichester Dam Catchment, the Williams River and Grahamstown Dam Catchment, and the Tomago Sandbeds Catchment. Each of these catchments is gazetted as a designated 'Special Area' under the *Hunter Water Regulation 2010* (NSW).

RAAF Base Williamtown is located within the Tomago Sandbeds Special Area. High quality drinking water is extracted from a large unconfined aquifer within this catchment by Hunter Water under a licence issued by the NSW Office of Water. Unconfined aquifers are recharged directly from surface infiltration and are therefore highly susceptible to pollution.

The Tomago Sandbeds Catchment has a total area of approximately 109km<sup>2</sup>, and a total accessible volume of 60 billion litres. This represents approximately 20% of the Lower Hunter's total water supply. The recent Lower Hunter Water Plan (LHWP), produced by the NSW Metropolitan Water Directorate as a comprehensive whole of government approach to planning, reiterated the importance of the sandbeds during normal climatic conditions but also identified the critical role of the sandbeds during times of drought.

The LHWP concluded that the Tomago Sandbeds are critical to Hunter Water's ability to respond to drought, and can be used to supply up to a third of the Lower Hunter's drinking water supply during times of significantly reduced rainfall. RAAF Base Williamtown presently covers approximately 8% of the Tomago Sandbeds Special Area.

Whilst Defence's submission makes it clear that civilian approvals and standards are not required for works at RAAF Base Williamstown, legislated conditions do apply to civilian development within the catchment areas in order to protect the region's drinking water supply from potential contamination by pollutants. Given this, Hunter Water has a longstanding cooperative relationship with the Department of Defence in relation to onsite construction and operations at RAAF Base Williamstown.

Hunter Water's groundwater modelling shows that the proposed Air Combat Facilities' infrastructure is within the draw zone of the drinking water bores that supply drinking water to the Lower Hunter region. In addition to the information in the Statement of Evidence provided to the Parliamentary Committee, Hunter Water requires:

1. Modelling of the risk of runoff and spills to the drinking water bores should be undertaken as the proposed JSF Operational Precinct is located less than 50 metres to the east of Hunter Water's Tomago 7 Station for groundwater extraction. It is requested that this modelling be provided to Hunter Water for review.
2. Defence increase the number of sampling locations and frequency surrounding new infrastructure, in particular between the Operational Precinct and Tomago Station 7, for groundwater quality during the construction and operational phases. It is requested that Hunter Water be consulted to determine locations of new monitoring bores.
3. All new aircraft standing, maintenance and storage areas be appropriately bunded, with stormwater from these areas to be captured and treated/pumped out to prevent the potential risk of oil and grease spills entering the groundwater catchment.
4. Hunter Water has extensive ground water extraction infrastructure within Defence land as shown on the plan at Annexure A, which is protected by registered easements and implied covenants under the *Hunter Water Act 1991* (NSW). There is currently unresolved easement issues surrounding the newly constructed ordnance facility which must be finalised prior to any further works being undertaken. See plan at Annexure B.
5. Defence must ensure access to Hunter Water's critical infrastructure is not impeded throughout the development phase and ongoing. This infrastructure remains critical to Hunter Water's ability to provide water to customers in the Lower Hunter.
6. Defence must provide additional detailed information regarding the nature and extent of the development particularly where it could potentially impact upon Hunter Water's assets.
7. Given the importance of water quality and supply to the community, Hunter Water requires a Deed to be entered into with Defence covering responsibilities for monitoring and sampling water quality during construction and ongoing with appropriate measures to be implemented by Defence if the water quality is jeopardised.
8. All onsite construction activities undertaken as part of the upgrade works be performed in a manner which reflects the sensitivity of the local environment as a drinking water catchment. It is further requested that all staff working during both construction and operational phases of this development be aware of the significance of the area. It is suggested that this could be undertaken as part of site induction and refresher courses for contractors, Defence and APS personnel.
9. All spills of petrochemicals, or other hazardous materials, in unbunded areas be rectified as soon as practicable as per industry best practice, and be reported to Hunter Water as soon as practicable.

Hunter Water suggests an initial meeting with Defence in the planning phase to set out the constraints of development would be beneficial to both parties.

To schedule a meeting, or if the Committee requires any clarification on the above comments, please do not hesitate to contact me

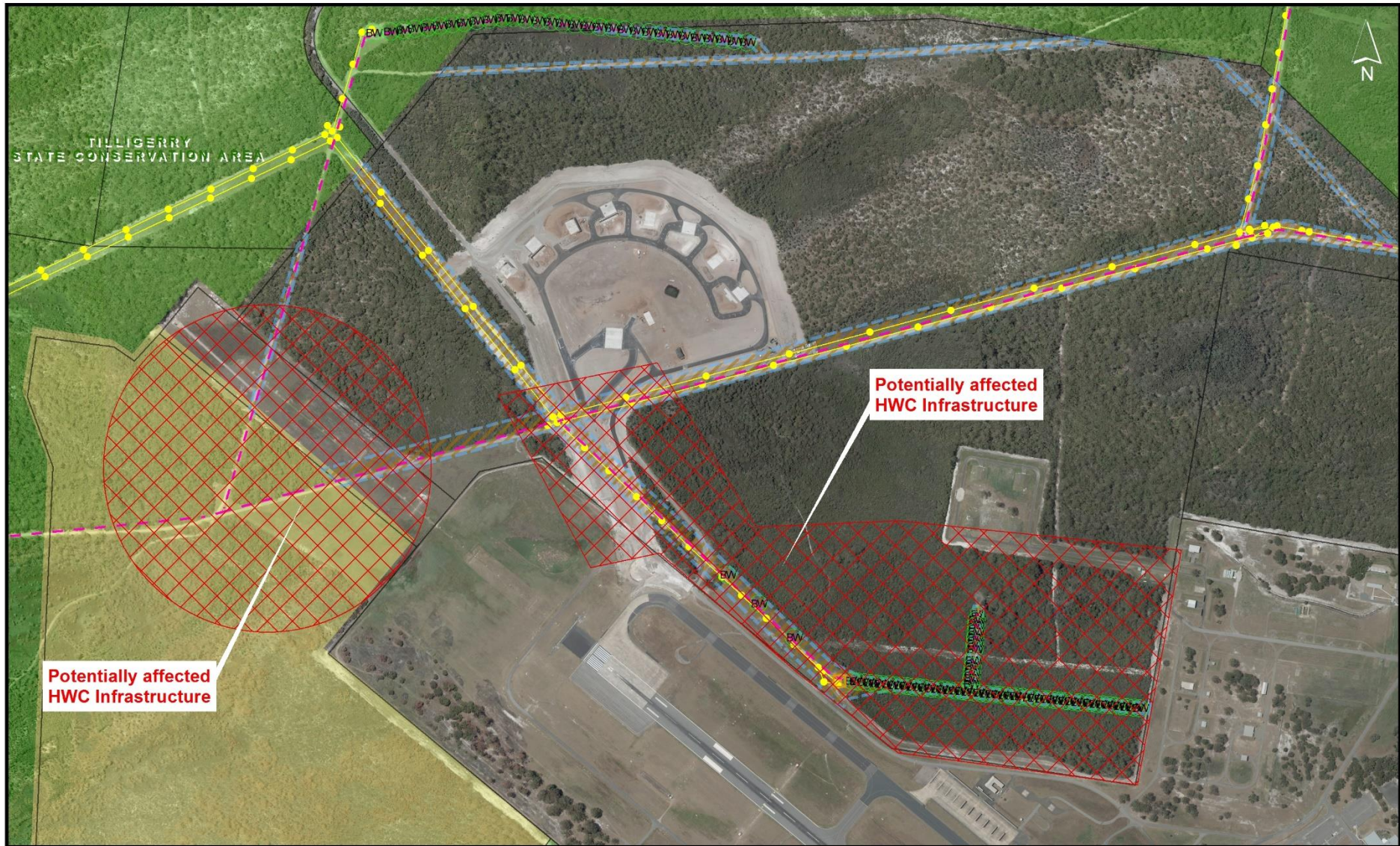
Yours sincerely

**MALCOLM WITHERS**  
**Senior Developer Services Engineer**

Cc: Ms Sharon Claydon MP  
Federal Member for Newcastle  
Committee Member, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

Air Group Captain M. W. J. Brown AM  
Project Director – In Service Support  
F-35A Lightning II (Joint Strike Fighter) Program  
Department of Defence

Annexure A – plan showing Hunter Water’s Critical Infrastructure and current registered easements



HWC Infrastructure - RAAF Base Williamtown

Plot Date: 19/08/2014

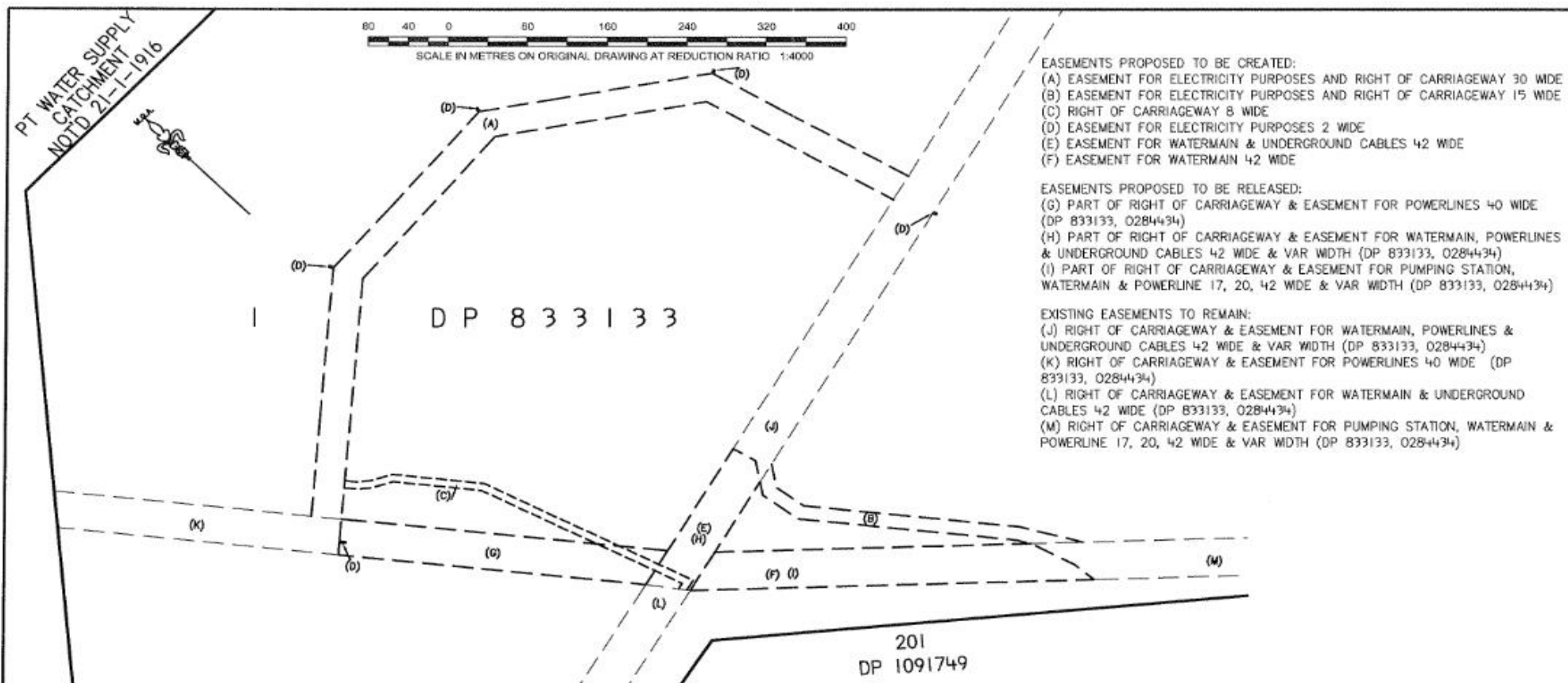
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Legend					
	HWC Easement		Water Pump		High Voltage Pole
	HWC Easement		Bore Pump		High Voltage Line
	National Park		Raw Water Main		
	Crown Land				

IMPORTANT:  
ANY INFORMATION SHOWN ON THIS PLAN MAY NOT BE UP TO DATE AND THE CORPORATION ACCEPTS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS ACCURACY.  
SEWER/WATER/RECYCLED WATER UTILITY DATA  
©HUNTER WATER CORPORATION



Annexure B – plan showing unresolved easement issues



- EASEMENTS PROPOSED TO BE CREATED:
- (A) EASEMENT FOR ELECTRICITY PURPOSES AND RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY 30 WIDE
  - (B) EASEMENT FOR ELECTRICITY PURPOSES AND RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY 15 WIDE
  - (C) RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY 8 WIDE
  - (D) EASEMENT FOR ELECTRICITY PURPOSES 2 WIDE
  - (E) EASEMENT FOR WATERMAIN & UNDERGROUND CABLES 42 WIDE
  - (F) EASEMENT FOR WATERMAIN 42 WIDE
- EASEMENTS PROPOSED TO BE RELEASED:
- (G) PART OF RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY & EASEMENT FOR POWERLINES 40 WIDE (DP 833133, 0284434)
  - (H) PART OF RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY & EASEMENT FOR WATERMAIN, POWERLINES & UNDERGROUND CABLES 42 WIDE & VAR WIDTH (DP 833133, 0284434)
  - (I) PART OF RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY & EASEMENT FOR PUMPING STATION, WATERMAIN & POWERLINE 17, 20, 42 WIDE & VAR WIDTH (DP 833133, 0284434)
- EXISTING EASEMENTS TO REMAIN:
- (J) RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY & EASEMENT FOR WATERMAIN, POWERLINES & UNDERGROUND CABLES 42 WIDE & VAR WIDTH (DP 833133, 0284434)
  - (K) RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY & EASEMENT FOR POWERLINES 40 WIDE (DP 833133, 0284434)
  - (L) RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY & EASEMENT FOR WATERMAIN & UNDERGROUND CABLES 42 WIDE (DP 833133, 0284434)
  - (M) RIGHT OF CARRIAGEWAY & EASEMENT FOR PUMPING STATION, WATERMAIN & POWERLINE 17, 20, 42 WIDE & VAR WIDTH (DP 833133, 0284434)

NOTE: DIMENSIONS & AREAS ARE SUBJECT TO ADJUSTMENT ON FINAL SURVEY & COUNCIL/AUTHORITY APPROVAL  
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DO NOT SCALE DIMENSIONS SHOWN IN METRES

<p>PLAN SHOWING EASEMENTS PROPOSED TO BE CREATED &amp; PROPOSED TO BE RELEASED WITHIN LOT 1 DP 833133</p> <p>AT WILLIAMTOWN</p>		<p><b>C R HUTCHISON &amp; CO</b> PTY LTD CONSULTING SURVEYORS 19 Grainger St (PO Box 87) LAMBTON NSW 2299 - DX 7881 NEWCASTLE NSW TELEPHONE: (02) 49 523011 FAX: (02) 49 527656 EMAIL: surveyors@hutchisonandco.com.au © Copyright. For conditions of use, refer to README1ST document.</p>	REVISIONS		
			<p>DRAWING No.: <b>16394/23</b> A3</p>		
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