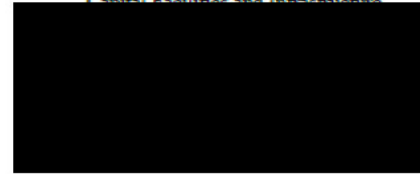




Australian Government
Defence

Air Commodore Ron Tilley
Director General
Capital Facilities and Infrastructure



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

Dear Mr Perrett,

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE TAKEN DURING THE HEARING INTO THE CANBERRA DEFENCE PRECINCT TRANCHE 1 AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE ACADEMY LIVING-IN ACCOMMODATION PROJECT

1. Thank you for your letter dated 17 May 2024. This letter provides a response to the Committee's further questions.
2. **Question:** *The Committee seeks to understand whether Defence will consider engaging with the NCA about increasing the height restrictions at the Australian Defence Force Academy for this project, with a view to increasing the height of these buildings to six stories. If Defence is not considering changing the design of the current project, please give detailed reasons for that decision.*
3. **Response:** Defence is not proposing to engage with the National Capital Authority (NCA) to increase building height restrictions at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) for the Living-In Accommodation (LIA) project. However, Defence will engage with the NCA to seek an amendment to the National Capital Plan (NCP) to increase building height restrictions for future projects at ADFA and the Royal Military College Duntroon.
4. Defence is not considering changing the design of the current project for the following reasons:
 - a. While the NCA has offered to draft an amendment to the NCP for the project, including reducing the consultation period to two weeks, Defence understands that the full process could take between three and six months, and there is no certainty of approval.
 - b. An increase to the building heights could infringe the obstacle limitation surface for Canberra Airport, which would require approval from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) through the Canberra Airport Group. This process could also take between three and six months, and there is no certainty of approval.

- c. Assuming approvals from the NCA and CASA are provided, redesigning the LIA buildings will take between three and four months, which will delay the current project schedule. This delay would result in ongoing risks related to the psychosocial safety and the wellbeing of Trainee Officers associated with the current LIA buildings. Also, ADFA will not be able to meet its current growth targets and deliver its training requirements.
- d. The current design addresses psychosocial hazards and provides a high level of residential amenity. The number of buildings, the number of storeys per building, the number of rooms per storey, and the staged construction of the buildings, has been carefully considered in the current design and is considered to offer the best outcome for the project.
- e. A redesign of the LIA buildings would require a full review of design standards to ensure all certifications and other technical requirements for the increased building heights are met, particularly in relation to fire protection and mechanical services.
- f. Increased building heights would require the buildings to be spaced further apart to address sun shading and proximity issues, and could potentially impact existing trees that are planned to be retained.

5. **Question:** *Although this was briefly mentioned at the hearing, could you please give further detail on the cost differences between the proposed project and fewer, higher, buildings. Could you please also give the Committee an estimate of how much land would be lost for future use on the ADFA campus by not doing so.*

6. **Response:** The cost to build fewer six storey buildings would be approximately \$6 million less than the cost to build four storey buildings. However, the delay to the project schedule to obtain approvals from the NCA and CASA, and redesign of the buildings, is estimated to be between six and 12 months, which would result in additional costs. The additional costs are estimated to be between \$25 million and \$37 million, depending on the length of delay.

7. Defence does not consider that land will be lost for future use as the proposed site for the new buildings is in the current LIA precinct. Also, fewer, higher buildings would require additional space between the buildings to address sun shading and proximity issues. Defence considers the land will be utilised efficiently, as there is no major change to the current LIA footprint and there is no other future master planned use of the site.

8. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further clarification.

Yours sincerely



RM Tilley
Air Commodore
Director General Capital Facilities and Infrastructure

23 May 2024