



Australian Government  
Department of Defence  
Defence Support Group

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

18 JUL 2006

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LETTER

Acting Director General  
Infrastructure Asset Development  
BP-1-B001  
Department of Defence  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
William.grice@defence.gov.au  
Tel: 02 6266 8101  
Fax: 02 6266 8103

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SUBMISSION .....12.....

Mr R Knight  
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir

**FACILITIES UPGRADE TO SHOALWATER BAY TRAINING AREA,  
ROCKHAMPTON (SWBTA), QLD**

Reference A. Letter from the Member for Capricornia dated 12 Jul – Submission 9

In her submission to the Public Works Committee on the matter of the Upgrading of Facilities at Shoalwater Bay Training Area for use by the Joint Combined Training Centre, the Federal Member for Capricornia asks for consideration about reducing the impact of additional training on the surrounding community and the environment.

The Department of Defence is and would like to be considered as a good corporate member of the community. In May 2005 the Government approved a \$7.4 million Commonwealth grant of capital funds over two years for the upgrade and selective sealing of access roads to Shoalwater Bay Training Area as Defence's specific contribution to Livingstone Shire's roads of access programme.

Defence is open and transparent about the environmental effects of its activities. Defence has established an Environmental Advisory Committee which is a meeting of neighbours and interested groups to discuss activities that affect Shoalwater Bay Training Area. The project commissioned a Public Environmental Report and as part of that process the members of the Environmental Advisory Committee had a tour of the proposed sites and all issues were addressed.

There is no evidence that Depleted Uranium munitions, or vehicles equipped with Depleted Uranium armour, have ever been used or tested by Australian or foreign forces at Shoalwater Bay Training Area, or any other Australian land training range. Depleted Uranium munitions are not in the Australian Defence Force inventory and therefore not permitted for use by foreign forces, including the United States.

Claims that military training has an adverse effect on environmental heritage or wilderness values at Shoalwater Bay (or indeed elsewhere) are simply not supported by the facts. Military training areas in Australia are generally large areas where access is closely managed and natural ecosystem processes allowed to function. Defence has strict environmental guidance on how to use a training area in a sustainable manner. Therefore the possibility of contamination of soil and water in and around Shoalwater Bay is extremely unlikely.

I trust that this additional information satisfies the Committee.

Yours sincerely



**William Grice**  
Colonel  
Acting Director General Infrastructure Asset Development

18 July 2006