



Australian Government

Department of Finance and Deregulation

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Senator the Hon Jan McLucas
Chair
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Chair

**Villawood Immigration Detention Facility Redevelopment -
Response to PWC Recommendations**

The Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance) and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) would like to thank the members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for the opportunity to attend the public hearing into the Villawood Immigration Detention Facility Redevelopment project on 22 September 2009, and for the recommendation to the Parliament that the project proceed. We note that your report to Parliament contained several recommendations, and we would like to take the opportunity to provide a detailed response to those recommendations.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the facilities at Villawood Immigration Detention Centre currently known as 'Stage 1' be demolished as part of the current program of works.

Finance and DIAC agree in principle with this recommendation. The demolition of 'Stage 1' is not currently in the scope or budget of the Redevelopment project. Finance and DIAC agree that if funding is available, through project savings, or through other means, that Stage 1 will be demolished at the completion of the redevelopment. However, even if funding is not available, DIAC has no intention to re-use Stage 1 once the redevelopment is complete.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Department of Finance and Deregulation present the detailed design for the redevelopment of Stage 2 and Stage 3 of the Villawood Immigration Detention Facility to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for examination prior to construction commencing.

Finance and DIAC note the concerns identified by the PWC in regard to Stage 2 and 3. Finance and DIAC are happy to present the design to the Committee for approval at the completion of the Planning Phase of the Managing Contractor contract and before construction commences. Due to the use of a Managing Contractor delivery strategy the level of design on Stage 2 and Stage 3 may not be at the level of 'detailed design', but it will be of sufficient resolve to understand the layout of the buildings, and the associated target costs.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Department of Finance and Deregulation ensure that the detailed design for the Villawood Immigration Detention Facility address the management plan for potential surge conditions.

Finance and DIAC agree with the recommendation and will prepare a detailed management plan that addresses potential surge conditions during the design phase of the project. The redevelopment design and the management plan will be aligned to ensure surge conditions can be managed in a manner which allows for the optimal amenity for people in detention and does not significantly compromise the minimum space available per person.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Department of Finance and Deregulation present the final costs of the Villawood Immigration Detention Facility redevelopment project to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for examination prior to construction commencing.

Finance notes the concerns identified by the PWC and will engage with the Committee at the end of the Planning Phase. The redevelopment project is being delivered through a Managing Contractor methodology. Final costs will not be known until all trade packages have been tendered. Trade packages are tendered progressively, and therefore final costs will not be known until Stage 2 and Stage 3 are under construction. However, the managing contractor is required to set a Target Cost at the completion of the Planning Phase of their contract. The design is unlikely to be at 'detailed design' stage but it will be of enough resolve to provide the Committee with an expected cost of Stage 2 and Stage 3 to a reasonable degree of accuracy.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship rename the sections within the new Villawood Immigration Detention Facility with names that are non-institutional in nature. In addition, all staff should be actively discouraged from the ongoing use of the terminology 'Stage 1, 2 and 3' in order to reinforce the name changes.

DIAC agrees with this recommendation, and will ensure that DIAC staff, the Detention Service Provider's staff and agencies are regularly reminded of the change in terminology.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship refer the Standards for design and fit out of immigration detention facilities to Standards Australia Limited for review and accreditation.

DIAC agrees with this recommendation and will pursue opportunities with Standards Australia to achieve accreditation of the Standards.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, as a matter of priority, provide each person detained at Villawood Immigration Detention Centre with access to an adequate lockable space in which to secure their personal belongings.

In addition, the Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship ensure that the detailed design for the new Villawood Immigration Detention Facility incorporate the capacity for each new detainee to secure either their room or to secure their personal belongings in an adequate lockable space.

DIAC agrees with this recommendation. The manner in which personal belongings are secured in the existing VIDC varies from central storage to lockable rooms. DIAC agrees to implement options to provide people in detention with lockable storage in which to secure their personal belongings as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship cease the use of the loudspeaker system to page detainees at the Villawood Immigration Detention Centre as soon as possible and implement a method of contacting detainees that respects their right to privacy.

DIAC agrees with this recommendation and the procedure for paging a person in detention will be reviewed in consultation with the Detention Service Provider. DIAC will examine ways to minimise the use of the loudspeaker system and the increased use of personal contact for scheduled appointments and activities.

Less intrusive forms of personal communication with people in detention will be examined during the detail design phase of the project, and this might include personal pagers, interactive television and mobile phones, so that the use of the loudspeakers is limited to fire or emergency announcements only.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Department of Finance and Deregulation and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DOFD/DIAC) ensure that the local community is kept informed about security, noise, traffic and light management at the Villawood Immigration Detention Facility (VIDF) site throughout the redevelopment.

Further, the Committee recommends that DOFD/DIAC ensure that plans for the redevelopment of the VIDF are consistent with the stormwater, biodiversity and heritage management plans of the Bankstown City Council.

Finance and DIAC agree with this recommendation. The local community is an important stakeholder in this project, and this is recognised in the project's Communications and Stakeholder Relations Plan. The local community will be kept informed of project issues throughout the redevelopment, and the management of issues such as security, noise, traffic and light spill will take community concerns into consideration.

A Conservation Management Plan is currently being produced for the whole of the site. The plan is being developed in consultation with the Bankstown City Council, the NSW government and the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and will inform the design development.

In addition to addressing the Heritage Schedule of the Bankstown Local Environment Plan, the site planning and redevelopment design will be consistent with the Bankstown City Council's biodiversity, stormwater and flood storage strategies.

Again, we thank the Committee for the time taken to review the Villawood Immigration Detention Facility Redevelopment project, and look forward to presenting the requested additional information to the Committee as the project progresses. In the meantime, should you require further information or clarification please contact Rick Scott-Murphy on (02) 6215 2720.

Yours sincerely



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Jackie Wilson
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14 December 2009