

Submission No. 2
(Multi role helicopter facilities)

SL 29/4/08

From: Ray Cox
Sent: Wednesday, 16 April 2008
Subject: Submission - Multi-role helicopter facilities -
Nowra/Albatross Naval Base

Wed 16/4

Dear Committee

Please accept this email and attachments as my submission on the above matter. Submission; I applaud the Federal Govt. on carrying out the redevelopment of the Albatross Naval Base facilities to accept the 6 MRH90 helicopters. No doubt these helicopters will replace some of the older Sea King machines and will be a major upgrade to our defence abilities.

My concerns regard the ability of helicopter crews at the base being able to train successfully 24/7 around the base without causing noise/vibration concerns to neighbours. Currently the base is surrounded by National Parks, State Forest, rural residential lots (nominally 5 acres etc) and farm land. Recently the local council (Shoalhaven City Council) and the NSW State Govt have proposed to increase the suburban living areas around Nowra to accommodate an expected increase of population over the next 30 years. This plan is called the "Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan - Creating Place" (NBSP). Part of the NBSP is the proposed building of a suburb of high density housing (for upto 10,000 people) 3 kms to the north of the naval base at the corner of Yalwal Rd. and Cabbage Tree Lane. To allow this to happen council has proposed to rezone private farm land, rural residential and State Forest into high density living areas. My concerns are that in allowing high density housing to be built so close to the base there will be a negative impact upon operations at the base with regard to training and other activities. If this development goes ahead as planned then there will be other developments approved in the future with the base eventually surrounded by urban sprawl, as per Richmond air base and Lucas Heights nuclear facility. I believe the Australian Govt. should instruct the local council and NSW Govt. not to allow or approve this development so near to this important national facility. Please find attached correspondence I have had with the defence ministers, past and present

Regards, Ray Cox

Mr Brendan Nelson
Minister for Defence
Suite MF 149
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2200

Ray Cox
69 Cabbage Tree Lane
Nowra NSW 2541
23/03/06

re: Proposed housing development near to Albatross Naval Base

Dear Mr Nelson

I would like to inform you of a Draft Plan being put forward to the community at Nowra, by the Shoalhaven City Council, which includes the development of medium density housing for 5,450 people on Cabbage Tree Lane, approx. 5 km to the north of Albatross Naval Base.

I am a local resident living on a small acreage (2.2 ha) in this area, which comprises many other small acreages plus some larger holdings. I, and my neighbours, have a genuine concern that the proposed development is not appropriate for the following reasons:

- the area to the west of Flat Rock creek and to the north of the Shoalhaven river is basically rural land, not 'urban sprawl'
- part of the development is on State forest
- helicopter's and other aircraft from Albatross regularly train over our land.
 - o I have spoken with the Commander of the base (Greg Tindall, ph 02 4424 1130) and the Air Field Coordinator (Lt Foster, ph 02 4424 1257) who have both said to me that they need to be consulted by Council when ever developments are to be undertaken within a 9 km radius of the base.
 - o The radius of 9 km is the bases approved area for training at any time of the day and night from ground level to 2,000 ft.
 - o As far as I can tell Council have not yet fully discussed this matter with the base. Council have used in their Draft Report a noise map obtained from Canberra (Corporate Services Information Group) which I believe only shows noise contours related to landing and taking off from the runways, not the activities associated with training.
 - o I believe that it is unfair (and possibly un Australian) for Council to push housing into the envelope of the bases training area knowing full well that the base management will be continually fielding noise complaints. Eventually the base would need to modify their training activities too the detriment of 'our men and women' serving with this service.
 - o The naval base is an important part of our countries defences and emergency services and I believe that the whole community needs to support their activities, especially when it concerns developers (with the approval of council) making quick money by building on green field sites near to defence bases and other strategic sites (eg's; Richmond air base, Lucas Heights facility etc)

I would appreciate your support on this matter and any comments you may have.

Thanks, Ray Cox

Attached; copy of the Council handout 'creating place'



SENATOR THE HON SANDY MACDONALD

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence
Deputy Leader of The Nationals in the Senate

Mr Ray Cox
69 Cabbage Tree Lane
NOWRA NSW 2541

17 MAY 2006

Dear Mr Cox

Thank you for your letter of 23 March 2006 to the Minister for Defence, the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, concerning the Draft Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan. As this matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities, your correspondence has been passed to me for response.

I am advised that Defence has reviewed the Draft Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan and has made a submission to the Shoalhaven City Council, advising that the proposed 'Future Living Area' will be affected by military aircraft noise. Defence has also requested that the Council takes this into account when it prepares its land use plans for the Shoalhaven Local Government area. I am also advised that Defence has requested an opportunity to meet with relevant Council officers, to reinforce the national and regional significance of HMAS *Albatross* and seek to protect it, in the longer term, from further urban encroachment.

Your interest in Defence matters is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Macdonald', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sandy Macdonald

The Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon
Minister for Defence
Suite M1 41
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2200

Ray Cox
69 Cabbage Tree Lane
Nowra NSW 2541
21/02/08

re: Proposed housing development near to Albatross Naval Base

Dear Mr Fitzgibbon

On the 23/3/06 I sent a letter to Mr Brendan Nelson (the then Minister for Defence), see copy attached, regarding the Nowra Bomaderry Structure Plan and its deleterious impact upon the Albatross Naval Base. Also attached is a letter from The Hon. Sandy Robinson (the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence) which was in response to my letter to the Minister.

I wish to raise with you my continuing concern about NBSP and in particular its proposal to build suburbia within 3 kms of the Naval Base. I am concerned that this development will badly impact upon the navy's ability to train properly, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. This proposed development is typical of short sighted councils/State Governments who continue to encourage and approve housing developments close to important national facilities.

I would like to quote an example of this, the RAAF Richmond Air Base, which only last year was talked about being moved for a number of reasons including nearby housing. It seems to me that the Albatross Naval Base is an ideal place for the relocation of the Richmond Air Base and now is the time for your department to act to ensure that housing and other inappropriate facilities are not built inside (say) a 5 km radius of the base.

The Albatross base should be surrounded by rural residential (3-5 acre properties), rural farming and crown/forested lands to ensure that noise/vibration complaints are kept to a minimum. Also security of the base would be enhanced by open land being around it.

I would appreciate you comments and support on this matter.

Regards, Ray Cox