

## The need for the proposed work

- 2.1 Lavarack Barracks redevelopment Stage 3 is intended to upgrade working accommodation and facilities and to provide the framework to later complete the overall Barracks redevelopment.
- 2.2 The Stage 3 redevelopment will also make provision for the relocation of the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade to Lavarack Barracks. The Defence Reform Program identified the possible disposal of Jezzine Barracks in the shorter term. Accordingly, provision has been made in the Lavarack Barracks Master Plan for the relocation of Headquarters 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade and its subordinate units from Jezzine Barracks.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.3 The Stage 3 redevelopment proposal is focused on providing facilities for 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade as well as some Training Command facilities.
- 2.4 Stage 3 will also fund residual road works and demolition deferred from the Lavarack Barracks Stage 2 Project.
- 2.5 The existing Lavarack Barracks facilities that are the subject of the Stage 3 proposal are over 30 years old and, according to Defence, do not adequately reflect the current structure or functionality required of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade to promote operational effectiveness and efficiency.
- 2.6 Defence contends that while some of the existing facilities are appropriate for adaptive reuse, their disposition militates in most cases against effective reuse as working accommodation for 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.7 The proposed redevelopment would enhance the overall effectiveness of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade and other Lavarack Barracks based units by:

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1 Defence, Submission, p.4.

2 Alternative uses of such accommodation extend to reuse of the Headquarters 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade area by 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade, and using selected old living-in accommodation buildings in proposed battalion areas for surge needs.

- grouping related Brigade functions;
  - providing facilities that reflect the work practices and functional relationships of the organisation;
  - improving morale by providing working accommodation to contemporary standards;
  - providing efficient maintenance and storage areas complete with environmental controls; and
  - alleviating occupational health and safety problems stemming from occupation of cramped and temporary accommodation.
- 2.8 The work will provide unit accommodation, training facilities, vehicle workshops and shelters, and enhancement of base infrastructure.
- 2.9 The specific need for the works are addressed below in terms of unit requirements.

## **Unit Needs**

- 2.10 The redevelopment proposal is focused on the following units:
- Headquarters 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade;
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment;
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment;
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Combat Engineer Regiment;
  - B Squadron 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment;
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Administrative Support Battalion; and
  - the Training Precinct.

## **Headquarters 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade**

- 2.11 Headquarters 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade comprises the Commander and his supporting staff. The Headquarters exists to command the Brigade and attached units. Headquarters Company and 103<sup>rd</sup> Signal Squadron provide implicit support to the Brigade Headquarters, while 1<sup>st</sup> Military Police Company and the Special Investigations Branch personnel are functionally best located immediately adjacent to the Brigade Headquarters.
- 2.12 The Headquarters and its immediate supporting units are currently accommodated in facilities at the western end of Robert Towns Boulevard.

The facilities are a mixture of purpose built office accommodation constructed in the mid 1960s and adapted storehouses that serve as offices, workshops and store facilities. The purpose built offices, mainly Headquarters 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade and Headquarters Company, have poor layouts unsuitable for proper information flow needed for efficient operation of a Ready Brigade. Existing office space is inadequate for current staff numbers resulting in overcrowding with attendant shortages in desk space, storage and filing, with physical difficulties in circulation.

- 2.13 Defence is concerned that the existing arrangement does not facilitate projecting a 'command hierarchy'. The buildings are not centrally located, thus placing the Commander and his staff in a location which is remote from the remainder of the Brigade.
- 2.14 In addition, lighting levels, power outlets and data connections are not commensurate with the required functionality. The security provided by the facilities is poor and there are multiple external entry points with most rooms having direct access to the outside.

### **Refurbish or replace?**

- 2.15 In its submission Defence argued that the nature of the existing buildings and lack of suitable space restrain refurbishing existing facilities to fully meet the requirements of a Ready Deployment Force. The location of the new Communication and Information Systems Centre delivered under Redevelopment Stage 2 was predicated on a relocation of the Brigade Headquarters to a central location, in line with the Lavarack Barracks Master Plan. According to Defence, a comprehensive redevelopment of the existing facilities is not as cost effective as constructing new facilities, given the location and nature of the existing facilities.
- 2.16 Defence contends that providing new purpose built working accommodation with the range of services and spatial dimensions required would fully meet unit requirements. This option would permit development in a central location which would enhance the Commander's access to his subordinate units. It would also release the current site and facilities for other uses.<sup>3</sup>

### **1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment**

- 2.17 The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR) are combat units consisting of infantry

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3 Defence, Submission, p.16.

soldiers who fight the land battle in conjunction with the other combat arms.

- 2.18 The two units are housed in facilities located in the central precinct of the Barracks. They are situated on Robert Towns Boulevard with 1RAR on the northern side and 2RAR to the south.
- 2.19 The facilities are a mix of purpose built offices, stores, training and maintenance facilities mainly constructed in the mid 1960s. They are now deemed functionally inappropriate and ageing.
- 2.20 Both battalions currently experience significant security, occupational health and safety, training and operational problems with their existing facilities.
- 2.21 Interspersed throughout the battalion areas are living-in accommodation blocks which, in the current configurations, have reached the end of their useful life. These are being replaced with new facilities as part of the Stage 2 redevelopment works. In most cases the older buildings are targeted for demolition unless adaptive re-use as surge accommodation is warranted.
- 2.22 The messing efficiencies being delivered under Stage 2 with the construction of three combined messes to service the entire base have rendered the existing ageing 1RAR and 2RAR messing facilities redundant.

### **Refurbish or replace?**

- 2.23 Defence concedes that refurbishment is possible but redeveloping the existing facilities to fully meet the requirements of both 1RAR and 2RAR would involve refurbishing a large number of facilities and replacing other facilities.
- 2.24 Refurbishing would be constrained however by the physical location of some of the existing facilities and their construction materials and design. Typical problems would include the functional dislocation of existing buildings and the differing quality of old versus new buildings. The refurbishment option is not capable of providing the appropriate facilities and most efficient layouts for the working accommodation in each of the battalions. Adaptive re-use of living-in accommodation blocks may be possible for surge requirements.
- 2.25 On the other hand, building new facilities will provide purpose built and effective working accommodation, with a range of services and functionality to meet the battalions' operational requirements.

- 2.26 Defence advocates replacement of working accommodation in favour of refurbishment because of the following advantages:
- operational efficiency, stemming from both internal configuration and site location;
  - flexible building systems which would enable facilities to be adaptable to meet the battalions' needs over the next 20-30 years; and
  - shared facilities between the battalions where possible.
- 2.27 Defence claims that new construction on the current 1RAR and 'spare' battalion site will provide a cost effective solution that meets the battalions' work requirements to the fullest extent.<sup>4</sup> Refurbishment of selected existing living-in accommodation blocks is appropriate for surge accommodation and contingency bedspace, with rationing to be provided in the new Stage 2 combined messes.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Combat Engineer Regiment**

- 2.28 The 3<sup>rd</sup> Combat Engineer Regiment provides direct combat engineer support to the Brigade including demolitions, obstacle construction and breaching, and road and bridge construction. The unit undertakes its role with a significant quantity of large construction plant and equipment.
- 2.29 The Regiment occupies facilities at the western end of the Barracks area south of Robert Towns Boulevard. To the west of the Regiment is the Western Precinct Living-In Accommodation, with 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Administrative Support Battalion's Forward Repair Group No. 1 to the east. The Regiment's facilities are a mixture of open compounds, vehicle parks, offices, stores training and maintenance facilities mainly constructed in the mid 1960s.
- 2.30 Defence submitted that the existing facilities are generally aged, in poor condition and inefficient in layout. The existing structures do not lend themselves to adaptive re-use due to inadequate size, poor ventilation and layout, and the lack of services.
- 2.31 Further, the Squadrons of the Regiment are fragmented, which diminishes work efficiency. Amenities such as lunchrooms, showers and toilets are cramped and unventilated. Workshop facilities are located remote from users, and are inadequate in size and in building services. This has necessitated maintenance work on vehicles, plant and equipment being undertaken in the open.

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4 The Committee was advised that the current master plan does not preclude reestablishing a third battalion at the Barracks in future.

- 2.32 The existing pollution control systems which process discharges from the operation and maintenance of 3<sup>rd</sup> Combat Engineer Regiment's plant and equipment require investment to fully comply with current environmental standards. Almost all vehicles are located in uncovered compounds open to the weather. In addition, workshops and stores facilities do not fully comply with workplace health and safety provisions. Current facilities produce a significant noise and visual impact on the new living-in accommodation and mess in the Western Precinct.

### **Refurbish or replace?**

- 2.33 Defence submitted that 3<sup>rd</sup> Combat Engineer Regiment's facilities are generally in poor condition and unsuitable for adaptive re-use.
- 2.34 Furthermore, the existing pollution control systems are less than fully compliant with environmental standards, and the current facilities produce a significant noise and visual impact on the new living-in accommodation precinct adjacent to the Regiment.
- 2.35 According to Defence, the refurbishment option would not overcome the deficiencies in functional layout, and because of the age of the facilities, refurbishment would be a less than optimal expenditure.
- 2.36 The provision of new facilities however would provide a 'purpose built' solution for 3<sup>rd</sup> Combat Engineer Regiment that would fully meet the Regiment's operational and logistical requirements. New construction would allow 3<sup>rd</sup> Combat Engineer Regiment to be relocated further to the east and to utilise a separate access via a road extension to Andrew Ball Drive.
- 2.37 The overall effect would be to significantly reduce the impact of noise and vehicle emissions on the western accommodation precinct. The provision of new construction would allow the incorporation of appropriate standards of lighting, communications, security and occupational health and safety to offices, workshops and storage facilities.
- 2.38 Defence maintains that new construction would provide a cost effective solution which would address the needs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Combat Engineer Regiment and concurrently improve the amenity of the western accommodation precinct and establish an environmentally fully compliant work area.<sup>5</sup>

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5 Defence, Submission, pp.20-21.

## **B Squadron 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment**

- 2.39 B Squadron 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment provides reconnaissance capability for the Brigade. It operates Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) in a number of configurations.
- 2.40 The Squadron is accommodated in facilities at the eastern end of the Barracks area. They consist of a mixture of permanent and demountable structures including offices, stores, training and maintenance facilities constructed in the early 1970s, and located both within and outside the unit's existing compound enclosure.
- 2.41 The physical security provided by the facilities is inadequate, with only workshop facilities located under shelter.
- 2.42 The layout of offices is not conducive to information flow. The physical relationship between sub-units and command is sub-optimal and inherently inefficient. Vehicle shelters are too small for the crews to work efficiently with the fleet of armoured personnel carriers. The orientation of workshops and shelters is inappropriate for the climate while workshops and storage facilities do not fully comply with current occupational health and safety regulations. Defence submits that the existing environmental controls on discharge to the adjacent open drain are now in need of refurbishment and the industrial processes carried out within the compound require treatment to facilitate environmental compliance.

### **Refurbish or replace?**

- 2.43 Defence argues that redeveloping the existing facilities to fully meet the Squadron's requirements would not produce an appropriate outcome because of the constraints of the site and the orientation of the existing buildings. A creek and secondary entrance road to the Barracks limit site expansion in the Squadron's precinct.
- 2.44 According to Defence, the existing workshops and vehicle shelters cannot be modified without substantial demolition and reconstruction. There would be little net benefit in retaining any of the other existing buildings as, even with substantial refurbishment, optimal functionality would not be achieved.
- 2.45 Building new facilities would provide purpose built working accommodation with the services and functionality required to fully meet the Squadron's requirements. New facilities would also facilitate best overall use of the space available within the B Squadron precinct, and permit APC crews to attend to their respective vehicles under cover.

- 2.46 New facilities would provide a purpose designed solution to the operational and logistic requirements of the Squadron and address the environmental control needs of the precinct.<sup>6</sup>

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Administrative Support Battalion**

- 2.47 The 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Administrative Support Battalion provides administrative and logistic support to 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. The unit is housed in relatively new facilities at the eastern end of the barracks. The Stage 3 proposal relates to the Dental unit that provides dental support to 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade.
- 2.48 The existing Dental Centre is accommodated in a building that is too small and unsuitable for re-use. Laboratory storage is inadequate, the facility is technically deficient and there is no centralised sterilisation facility.
- 2.49 With the future move of 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade and its Administrative Support Battalion into Lavarack Barracks a new dental facility should facilitate shared use by the Dental units of both 3<sup>rd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade Administrative Support Battalions to achieve improved asset efficiency.

### **Refurbish or replace?**

- 2.50 Defence contends that to fully redevelop the existing dental facilities to meet the requirements is not a feasible solution due to the condition of the current facilities in their existing location. Only limited space is available in the current location to extend or effectively reconfigure existing facilities.
- 2.51 Building a new Dental Centre would provide purpose built facilities with the range of services required to fully meet requirements arising from units usually resident in Lavarack Barracks. The new facility would be provided adjacent to the existing Medical Centre, thus providing improved synergy, improved use efficiency and a focal point within Lavarack Barracks for comprehensive medical and dental support.
- 2.52 The construction of new facilities adjacent to the Medical Centre area would group like health support functions in purpose built facilities in a central location. Defence added that a reuse of recently acquired dental chairs is proposed.<sup>7</sup>

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6 Defence, Submission, pp.22-23.

7 Defence, Submission, p.24.

## Training Precinct

- 2.53 The Regional Training Centre – North Queensland provides training for Defence personnel in North Queensland. The unit has administration and training facilities on Robert Towns Boulevard at the western end of the Barracks next to Headquarters 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, collocated with other Army Training Command units including the Royal Military College – North Queensland Detachment. The Army Promotions Training Centre and the North Queensland Area Library are located elsewhere in the Barracks, remote from the training precinct.
- 2.54 The Promotions Training Centre is currently located in the planned area for 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment facilities. It requires relocation and should be consolidated with other training activities. The North Queensland Area Library is situated in 4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment area. This is functionally inefficient, and it is proposed that it be relocated into the Training Precinct. These facilities when combined with other training initiatives, will constitute a collocated, synergistic and flexible training precinct for the base.

## Refurbish or replace?

- 2.55 Defence advised that some existing facilities in the Training Precinct are well sited and of suitable construction for retention. There are, however, insufficient buildings available to meet redevelopment needs for the relocation of the Army Promotions Training Centre facilities and the North Queensland Area Library from their present areas. Refurbishment of the existing Training Centre and Library facilities will not overcome the present functional and siting deficiencies, nor would the facilities be generally suitable for reuse in the present areas.
- 2.56 According to Defence, new purpose built facilities constructed in the existing Training Precinct site would provide the range of services required to fully meet the wider training requirements, and permit the relocation of the Library and Training Centre from their present locations.
- 2.57 The needs of the Training Precinct could be met by a combination of refurbishment and replacement. Redevelopment of existing facilities and new construction in the precinct would provide for the full range of amenities that will meet ongoing training requirements, and provide for relocation of the Army Promotions Training Centre and Area Library into the Training Precinct.<sup>8</sup>

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8 Defence, Submission, p.25-26.