

ASSPED 219 /2003

The Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Courto

RANDWICK BARRACKS SITE REMEDIATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

You referred Submission No 9 from Ms Felicia Harris dated 25 March 2003 to Defence for comment.

Ms Felicia Harris has had a long association with the project, principally as the Secretary of the Moverly Precinct Committee (Committee) and member of the Community Reference Group (1996/97). Ms Harris raises the following concerns:

1. The 'decimation' of the Site's vegetation;
2. The site remediation methods used on the Site raise dust that risks the health and safety of workers and residents;
3. Lack of notification about Site activities;
4. Lack of consultation about Master Planning issues; and
5. That Council and relevant state government authorities do not have authority over the Site.

DEFENCE RESPONSE

Comment 1

- There has been no destruction of the Site's threatened ecological community, Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS). Some vegetation clearance has been necessary for soil decontamination, Site remediation and the construction of services however all vegetation clearance on the development site has been reviewed and cleared either by Environment Australia, Randwick City Council (Council) or NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS).
- Vegetation clearing within the Randwick Environmental Park (REP) has generally been limited to the clearing of lantana, a noxious weed. In all instances, relevant permission and/or approvals have been obtained from Council, NPWS and/or Environment Australia.
- A Plan of Management has been drafted to assist in the long term management and revegetation of the REP. This will assist in the protection of all native vegetation, whether classified as a threatened species or not. Part of the plan has been implemented with the removal of lantana, which will assist in the natural regeneration of the ESBS.

Comment 2

- Both the assessment of contamination and the management of remediation have been, or are being undertaken by appropriately qualified environmental consultants and occupational hygienists. All testing and reporting is reviewed by an Environment Protection Authority (EPA) accredited Site Auditor prior to the issue of a Site Audit Statement under the *Contaminated Land Management Act* certifying an area is suitable for its intended use.
- Additionally, the NSW Labor Council, WorkCover and ComCare has reviewed project documentation, remediation processes and works in progress and have raised no issues that have prevented works from proceeding on-site.
- Contamination, if and when found, is managed in accordance with a site specific remedial action and management plan, and signed-off by the Site Auditor;
- All work on the Site is undertaken in accordance with all relevant Commonwealth and State Acts, Regulations, and Codes of Practice,
- Defence has prepared a template Environmental Management Plan to assist contractors to complete and implement their own environmental management procedures including the minimisation of dust. During high wind periods, work that creates excessive dust is stopped. Sprinklers used to moisten soil stockpiles on the Site further assist with dust control.
- All work is reviewed by an independent environmental consultant appointed by the NSW Labor Council. An Environmental/Community Liaison Officer also reports to Council;
- A Site specific Asbestos Management Policy has been developed to manage all asbestos-related issues on Site. This Policy adopts all relevant codes of practice and identifies strict management procedures for the site works including boundary air monitoring.
- A minimum of five air monitors are used during any remediation works and are located close to the work area and on the boundary fences. During the demolition of the asbestos cement clad Naval Stores, air monitoring was undertaken 24 hours a day. The results of the air monitoring are analysed in AirSafe's laboratory – formally accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA). In addition to this, personal air samplers were worn by demolition personnel during roof sheet removal works. The results from these personal samplers were analysed in Noel Arnold & Associates' laboratory which is also NATA accredited. All results have been less than the detection limit; indicating no measurable concentrations of asbestos fibres were obtained.

Comment 3

- Defence has made all documentation available to the Unions and the community. A catalogue of all project documentation in regard to contamination assessments was provided to the NSW Labor Council. Copies of the Stage 1A validation report and Site Audit Statement have also been provided to Mr Peter Tighe, a Committee representative. The NSW Labor Council, WorkCover and ComCare have attended meetings to discuss the remediation processes. The CFMEU also undertakes ad-hoc inspections of the Site and the works and has had no reason to stop any portion of the works to date.
- The Department regularly issues a Neighbourhood Newsletter to the surrounding residents prior to the commencement of significant site works. The newsletter provides a detailed outline of the works proposed and the safety and environmental safeguards established to protect both the workers and the surrounding residents. Eight newsletters have been issued since work commenced in November 2001;

- A number of attempts have been made, both directly and through Council, to brief the Committee on the project, however they have not accepted. On the last occasion when Defence representatives attended a Committee meeting (3 March 2003), they were refused the opportunity to speak. This was despite advice to the Committee from Council that Defence and their representatives, have a right, as a local land owner, to attend Committee meetings.
- Defence has held successful briefing sessions with the Randwick Community Centre, SOS Preschool, Moverly Childcare Centre, Dr Paul Adam and the NSW Labor Council.

Comment 4

- The Master Plan considered Council and the broader community's responses to Defence proposals for the Site submitted during the previous five years. Extensive consultation was also undertaken with Council who in turn consulted with representatives of key community groups in the preparation of the final Master Plan, adopted in November 2001. A further public information session was held on 13 October 2001 during the Master Plan advertising and assessment period, providing yet another opportunity for the community to make submissions to Council.
- Early in the master planning process (September 1996), land was added to the Site principally as a result of the possible traffic impacts on local roads. No changes to the Master Plan have occurred since then.

Comment 5

- Development applications for works on the Site are determined by Council. Where necessary, Council refers these to other government bodies such as Environment Australia, Dept of Land and Water Conservation, Dept of Fisheries and NPWS. These bodies are provided with open access to the Site to enable them to conduct their investigations.
- The NSW Labor Council, WorkCover and ComCare have reviewed project documentation, remediation processes and works in progress raising no issues which have prevented works from proceeding on-site.
- All work on the site is being undertaken in accordance with all relevant Commonwealth and State Acts, Regulations, and Codes of Practice.
- All work is reviewed by an independent environmental consultant appointed by the NSW Labor Council. An Environmental/Community Liaison Officer also reports to Council.
- Council has open access to the Site.

Yours sincerely



MICHAEL PEZZULLO
 Assistant Secretary
 Strategic Planning and Estate Development

4 April 2003