

Manus Island PWC Hearing 1 May 2013

Question on Notice Response

Question on Notice: Have *The Standards for the Design and Fitout of Immigration Detention Facilities* been applied to the Manus Island Regional Processing Centre? And where does the design for the Centre differ from the Guidelines?

Background

The Standards for the Design and Fitout of Immigration Detention Facilities were developed in response to a recommendation from the PWC and after consultation with the PWC, Australian Human Rights Commission and Australian National Audit Office were published in August 2008. They were reviewed again by the PWC in 2009. At that time the PWC requested the department examine options for the Standards Association to endorse the Guidelines. To this end the department approached the Standards Association and was advised that it was not interested in owning the intellectual property of government policy. The department advised the PWC of this and the Guidelines have remained a design tool.

They have been applied to the site conceptualisation for the Manus Island Regional Processing Centre in terms of guiding the relationships between accommodation and amenities, in the application of town planning principles of zoning and neighbourhoods and in the engagement of transferees with the physical spaces within the Centre. The Guidelines also reinforce the importance of the link between the quality and amenity of building environments and occupant behaviour and the department continues to recognise the value of well-appointed facilities.

Applying the Guidelines

The Guidelines were written to provide a functional explanation for each of the key spaces within detention facilities. They then include a statement of objective about what the space should do. Finally performance criteria, rather than a prescriptive standard, are provided as well as acceptable solutions.

The design for the Manus Island Regional Processing Centre has been guided by the performance criteria of the Guidelines but will apply its own acceptable design solution that addresses the unique site conditions, local climate and that can provide flexibility in accommodating different client cohorts and family groupings. The Centre therefore does not differ from the Guidelines but uses the design principles embodied in them to inform the masterplan.

Other standards of immigration detention

In February of this year the Australian Human Rights Commission published their own standards on immigration detention. The department was aware of the development of the

Standards and welcomed the principles adopted in these standards. The AHRC's creation of their standards was also a catalyst for the department to review its policy development since the Key Immigration Detention Values.

The department recently conducted a workshop that drew together a large cross section of business areas to develop standards that addressed not only infrastructure but standards of care across the immigration detention network.

The department is currently compiling the first draft of the standards for greater consultation within the department as well as with external stakeholders including service providers. As these standards are developed the department would be happy to provide the PWC with a copy of these as well.

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Flood and Stormwater Management.

The existing site for the proposed Manus Island Processing Centre is undeveloped and densely vegetated jungle terrain. The site is several hundred meters inland from the coastal high tide mark. The elevation at the front of the site is approximately 15 metres above sea level and rises to 40 metres at the rear of the site. The site is elevated, well clear of tidal influence, coastal inundation, and the impact of remote tsunami events. The site is not subject to flooding from coastal events.

The available survey data shows that the natural topography and terrain is hilly with numerous small watercourses and creeks. The largest creek running through the traverses east west and is the main topographical feature which is highlighted blue in the plan below. Flow records are not available for this creek. Based on visual assessment the high water mark rarely exceeds 0.5 m above creek bed. This indicates that the creek catchment is relatively small and is consistent with rainfall intensity figures which show that Manus Island does not experience many high intensity rainfall events.



In storm events runoff either infiltrates into the soil or is directed via sheet flow into the natural water courses that ultimately feed the main creek line that discharges to sea. Figure 1 below illustrates the average monthly rainfall for Manus Island.

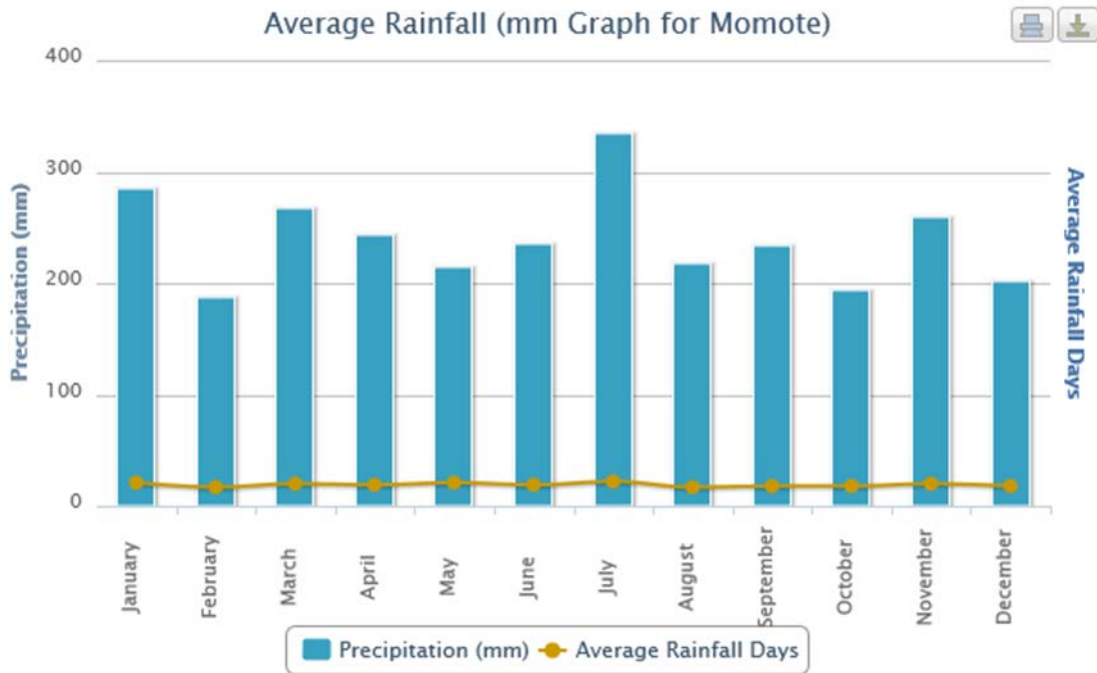


Figure 1 | Average monthly rainfall for Manus Island (source: www.worldweatheronline.com)

The data above indicates that the average annual rainfall for Manus Island is 2,900 mm with an average of 230 rain days per year.

Storm water runoff from building roofs and hardstand areas will be directed to natural water courses via open swales and waterways throughout the site. These natural watercourses then combine into the main creek line and ultimately discharge to sea. The steep terrain and numerous natural waterways lend itself to this approach as distances to natural watercourses will generally be short which means water can be drained away from development.

Planning and construction will be limited to be 5m above creek bed level. The main administration area will be above RL13 which is approximately 7m above creek level. The design includes a 25m no-development buffer either side of the creek as shown as the environmental buffer in green below.

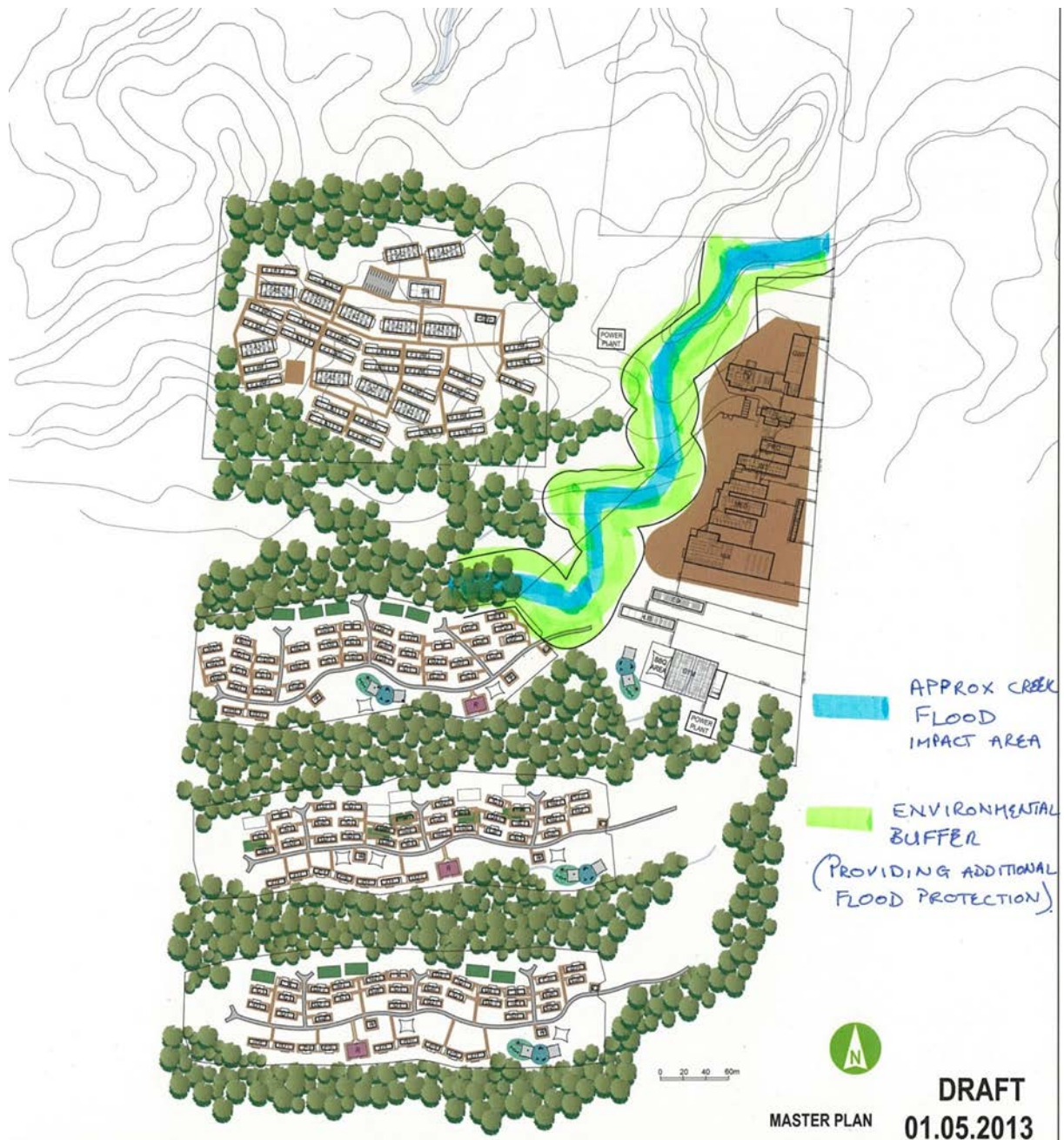


Figure 2 | Proposed flood management approach

Question on Notice: Can you confirm that a health risk assessment has been undertaken?

The Department has had the following assessments completed by medical specialists.

- IHMS Health Plan for Clients and Support Staff at Offshore Processing Centre Manus Island from October 2012 (by Mark Parrish, Regional Medical Director IHMS and Matthew Sorensen, National Operations Manager IHMS, dated 12 Oct 2012); and
- International SOS – Site Health Review – Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, Prepared for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship of Australia (DIAC) November 2012 (by Dr Anthony Renshaw, Medical Director, Medical Services; and Peter Curtis, Regional Consulting Manager, Medical Consulting)