SUBMISSION 5

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Ms Vivienne Courto
Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Courto

**1st AVIATION REGIMENT COLOCATION AND RELOCATION PROJECT
RESPONSE TO PWC SUBMISSION FROM NORTHERN TERRITORY
AIRSPACE USERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the submission dated 19 June 2003 from the Northern Territory Regional Airspace Users Advisory Committee (NT RAPAC). We note the support expressed by the Committee for this project.

In order to secure the Robertson Barracks site for Army helicopter operations and have minimal impact on the safe and orderly flow of domestic traffic, Army has sponsored development of a new airspace structure and procedure. This initiative, together with Army's stated intention to defer to civilian traffic at times of conflicting priority, will ensure that civilian and Defence air traffic can cooperate at Darwin safely and efficiently.

Airservices Australia (AsA) is the statutory authority responsible for approval of airspace design. Army, in consultation with RAAF, the Defence authority for air traffic matters, has engaged AsA to produce a solution to airspace congestion problems anticipated by NT RAPAC. The AsA solution introduces a change to the structure of the Darwin terminal airspace in order to permit safe and efficient helicopter operations at Robertson Barracks with minimal disruption to other aircraft operations. Army, RAAF and AsA have consulted frequently with NT RAPAC during the design and risk analysis stages of the process and there has been harmonious consensus.

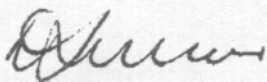
2.

The final stage of the process is production by AsA of a design safety case. AsA has now stated that this document will be completed by Friday 27 June. The responsible officer of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority has agreed to peruse the safety case in the following week and to advise Army immediately if a need for further work is indicated. This timeframe will fit into the PWC preparation for both Army and NT RAPAC. There is no reason to think that the safety case will not be supported and this effectively addresses the residual RAPAC areas of concern.

In due course, AsA will issue charts and procedures relating to the new structure. These will become the enduring mode of operation to accommodate Army helicopter operations to and from Robertson Barracks.

The airspace affected by the new design is much smaller than that originally envisioned and discussed with Darwin International Airport executives, with a correspondingly reduced underlying land area. Army has consulted with relevant departments of the NT Government to resolve any other concerns relating to flying operations from Robertson Barracks. The Government gave assurances that there are no current matters of concern and that there are no infrastructure or development plans that might interfere with continuation of the planned operations.

Yours sincerely



for
P HUTCHINSON
Brigadier
Director General Infrastructure Asset Development

25 June 2003