

SUBMISSION 2



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

**CP3-2-160
Department of Defence
CANBERRA ACT 2600
02 6266 2768**

**SUBMISSION FROM DEFENCE FAMILIES of AUSTRALIA
on the DHA proposal for housing at MCDOWALL, QLD**

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Defence Families of Australia (DFA), I would like to present a submission towards the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works consideration regarding the proposal by the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) for a housing development at McDowall, QLD.

I have been appointed by the Minister assisting the Minister for Defence to represent the needs and interests of Australian Defence Force(ADF) families in all areas of personnel policy and conditions of service. I have consulted with the DFA State and local representatives in ascertaining the feedback of Defence families to the current DHA proposal and am pleased to make the following comments on their behalf.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Current housing issues in Brisbane

As stated in the DHA Submission, there is shortage of DHA housing in the Brisbane over the next few years due to forthcoming lease expiries and a currently there are 24% of families in receipt of RA. This is a relatively large percentage of ADF families in the Brisbane region relying on Rental Assistance (RA) to meet their housing needs. Whilst some members choose RA for a variety of reasons, it is an extremely unpopular housing solution for the majority of ADF members and families. RA requires the family to find accommodation through local real estate agents and pay market rent with a Defence housing subsidy. Subsequently, the family does not enjoy the tenure stability, freedom of pet ownership or the increased maintenance, security and relocation services offered through DHA.

Feedback from ADF families in Brisbane supports the need for more DHA houses to be available for ADF members and families with a close proximity to the Enoggera Barracks. DHA has to maintain a suitable number of houses for ADF requirements but there is an increasing feeling amongst Defence families that RA is no longer a suitable alternative to DHA housing.

2. Future needs of Defence families in Brisbane

As you are no doubt aware the operational tempo for the ADF has increased dramatically over the last few years. This has placed extra burden on members and their families with members being required to deploy for lengthy periods of time. This development provides families with a home that has close proximity to the Barracks, which helps to alleviate some of this stress by decreasing travel time to and from work and also by giving spouses the opportunity to access the Barracks, and it's facilities. This, and living with other ADF families, provides the opportunity for the families to establish effective support networks to help them during the deployments.

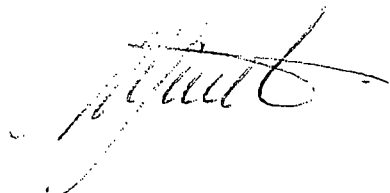
For the ADF and DHA, this means providing Defence families with housing options that include a variety of styles in a well developed and positioned location. Subsequently, we feel that the Brisbane development will provide detached and townhouse options for ADF families who prefer a location close to established schools, employment and hospitals, with the added benefit of a location that is close to the member's place of work. We have noted DHA's comments in the submission in regard to preference for detached dwellings and DFA would concur with this. This proposal will benefit all types of family compositions and meet the aforementioned needs with a community structure already in place.

3. Spouse/ADF family representation on the DHA Board

As National Convenor for DFA, I am a Director on the DHA Board and represent the views and interests of ADF spouses and families. I feel very comfortable with the level of consultation with local ADF families in developing the Brisbane proposal. As DFA National Convenor and DHA Board Spouse Representative, I concur with the plans set forward in the DHA proposal.

SUMMARY

For the reasons set out above, the DFA is pleased to support the DHA proposal to develop off-base housing at McDowall, Qld. On behalf of the DFA, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on DHA's proposal. We would be more than happy to elaborate on any part of this submission for the Standing Committee if required.



Maureen Greet
National Convenor
Defence Families of Australia
4 February 2005