

Issues and Conclusions

Need for the Work

- 3.1 At the hearing, the Committee heard that the redevelopment of the facilities at Majura, ACT was needed to provide canine training for the expanded role of the AFP in aviation security at major airports across Australia.¹

Following training, the canines will be located at airports across Australia, these are Cairns, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Perth, Alice Springs and Darwin.² This expanded role has been agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG):

COAG has agreed to a unified policing model at 11 designated airports – counterterrorism first-response airports – which provides for an airport police commander, a dedicated joint intelligence group, a counterterrorism first-response capability and a permanent community policing presence. Initiatives agreed also include strengthening of air cargo security arrangements.³

1 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 2

2 *ibid*, page 3

3 *ibid*, page 2

- 3.2 The Committee enquired which airports currently had operational canine teams, and was informed that currently 22 dogs operate in Brisbane, Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Further, the AFP stated that upon completion of training, it anticipated that dogs would be maintained at all airports.⁴ The Committee heard that the AFP expected to
- ...have that full capability by July next year.⁵

Scope of the Work

Day Runs

- 3.3 In the AFP's submission, the plans⁶ show a large arched area called "day runs". The Committee asked the AFP about the function of these day runs. The AFP responded that the day runs are a large grassed exercise area for the canines.

When they [dogs] are not working, they are in the kennels. During the day, when the handlers are there, they let them run free and get exercise. So they [day runs] are providing an exercise environment for the canines.⁷

Car Parking

- 3.4 The AFP submitted that the site plan for the facility includes 16 covered car parking spaces in addition to visitor parking.⁸ The Committee asked the AFP why the car parking needed to be covered and heard that covered car parking was required if a handler had to temporarily leave a canine in a vehicle while the handler is occupied with another canine, or other similar circumstances. Further, the AFP stated that vehicles were sometimes stored at the site, and the covered car parking offered protection from the elements.⁹
- 3.5 In response to questions from the Committee the AFP stated that the covered car parking was an open structure with a roof.¹⁰

4 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 3

5 *ibid*, page 4

6 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, page 25

7 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 10

8 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, page 25

9 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 6

10 *ibid*, page 6

Fencing

- 3.6 In its submission, the AFP states that a secure perimeter fence would enclose the facility.¹¹ The Committee sought clarification on the purpose of the fence and heard that the fence would function to keep vermin out of the site, and would be two metres high to prevent the dogs from scaling it, serving the dual purpose of keeping the dogs in and the vermin out.¹²

Female Bathroom Facilities on Site

- 3.7 The Committee queried the AFP as to reasons why the male bathroom facilities in the plans for the site were double the size of the female bathroom facilities. The AFP responded that:

It is based on the ratio of women in the organisation. With the number of staff at a location like that [Majura site], the likelihood of there being one woman to three men working at the facility is high. The current statistics are that women make up about a third of the organisation.¹³

Canine Training and Transport

Transport

- 3.8 The Committee was interested to hear about the ways that the canines are transported. The AFP stated that the canines are transported by air, and the transportation of the dogs to remote areas has been beneficial training for the canines, particularly as the AFP has regional rapid deployment teams.¹⁴

Training

- 3.9 During the public hearing, the Committee questioned the AFP as to the number of times dogs would need to be brought back to Majura for retraining purposes. The AFP responded that 12 months after initial training, the dogs are brought back for a four week revalidation program, and subsequent to that the dogs return for one week a year to be revalidated. In addition, there are other times that the dogs are brought

11 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 79

12 Appendix D, Official transcript of Evidence, pages 5-6

13 *ibid*, page 12

14 *ibid*, page 5

back for training, such as when they are introduced to new odours, they come back for a full 13 week course.¹⁵

The reason we require so much kennel space is that we need to have a constant, ongoing replacement program. We need to have canines ready at any point in time to replace a canine if it gets sick or has to be retired. There are also puppies and dogs being brought into the program and housed at the canine facility. So if a handler loses their canine, we have a quick program so that we can reteam them and send them back out to their area to do their job.¹⁶

Kennel Maintenance

- 3.10 The Committee questioned the AFP about the cleaning and maintenance of the kennels. The AFP responded that the kennels are currently monitored and cleaned by the staff, and that kennel management staff would be utilised in the new development.¹⁷
- 3.11 Concerns were raised by the Committee that the waste products from the kennels would run-off into the stormwater drains. The AFP stated that under the new facilities the waste products from the kennels would be collected, macerated and put into the sewerage system.¹⁸ The Committee heard that the AFP was looking into possibilities to recycling this water for irrigation purposes.¹⁹

Proximity to Airport

Sound Concerns

- 3.12 The Committee enquired as to methods that the AFP would utilise to mitigate aircraft noise at the site. The AFP responded that, in fact, aircraft noise for the canines was beneficial as they are being trained to work in noisy environments. However, in the administration and office buildings

15 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 5

16 *ibid*, page 8

17 *ibid*, page 7

18 *ibid*, page 7

19 *ibid*, page 8

the AFP would utilise building and roofing materials, landscaping and layout to minimise noise impacts.²⁰

Lighting Issues

- 3.13 During the confidential cost briefing the Committee saw a line item for “Site Lighting”. At the public hearing the Committee questioned the AFP as to the type of lighting that it had planned for the site. The AFP responded that the site lighting would cover the areas between buildings, and be designed with the overflying aviation from the airport in mind.²¹

Landscaping

- 3.14 The AFP’s plans include large landscaping buffers around the site. The Committee requested information as to the type of plants that will be used in these buffers. The AFP responded that the buffers were being designed by a landscape architect who had had input into the AFP’s master plan for the site. The plants would be selected for low bush fire risk, and for visual and acoustic screening. The buffer would function to screen the noise from Majura Road.²²

Bushfire Risk and Evacuation Plans

- 3.15 Due to its location, the Committee questioned the AFP about the bushfire risks at the site. The AFP responded that it had undertaken measures to manage the bushfire risk. The AFP has consulted with the relevant authorities, plans to utilise bushfire resistant materials, use fire sprinklers in the critical buildings and it also plans to leave an 80 metre buffer from the stand of trees on the site.²³
- 3.16 The Committee enquired about the emergency evacuation plans for the site, and heard that there are currently evacuation plans in place for the existing buildings. Further, the AFP stated that it will develop a whole site evacuation plan once more staff are located at the Majura site. The

20 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, pages 4-5

21 *ibid*, page 9

22 *ibid*, page 9

23 *ibid*, page 10

Committee requested that the AFP update the Committee as these plans are formulated.²⁴

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Australian Federal Police provide it with emergency evacuation plans for the Majura site once those plans have been finalised.

Ecologically Sustainable Design

Water Harvesting

- 3.17 In response to questions from the Committee regarding stormwater catchment, the AFP stated that it would capture the maximum amount of water from the site, particularly the water from the roof area of the training shed, and utilise the water to wash the dogs.²⁵

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the development of canine kennelling and training facilities for the Australian Federal Police at Majura, ACT proceeds at the estimated cost of \$10.2 million.

Hon Judi Moylan MP

Chair

18 October 2006

24 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, pages 10-11

25 *ibid*, page 9