

## Issues and Conclusions

### Defence Housing Requirements

- 3.1 DHA cites an expected increase in the number of Defence personnel in the ACT region as the primary need for the development. The Committee was, therefore, interested to learn how such forecasts were researched and produced, and why the projected need could not be met by the existing rental market.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.2 DHA responded that its projected housing requirements are estimated on advice from Defence, who in turn derive the figures from planning exercises relating to the location of Defence units.
- 3.3 DHA explained further that, depending upon the amount of DHA housing stock in a region, any shortfall is met through the provision of rental assistance provided to personnel renting through the general market. As this method of provisioning is more expensive for Defence, DHA seeks to minimise the proportion of rental assistance housing to around 10 per cent nationwide.
- 3.4 Currently, some 18 per cent of Defence housing requirement in the Canberra – Queanbeyan region is met through rental assistance. DHA is seeking to reduce this figure to ensure more cost-effective provisioning.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 2

2 ib id

## Proposed Child Care Facility

- 3.5 At the public hearing, Committee members questioned DHA about its intention to sell the existing golf club house and associated car park for use as a child care centre, observing that it was not usual practice for DHA to concern itself with the provision of such a facility.
- 3.6 DHA responded that, with any new development, it seeks to ensure that appropriate community facilities, such as schools and shops, are available in the vicinity.
- 3.7 In the present case, the decision to excise land for use as a child care centre had arisen from consultation with local residents.<sup>3</sup> The DHA submission records that:
- “There has been considerable unsolicited interest from private individuals in purchasing the site, which reflects the shortage of child care facilities in the area”.<sup>4</sup>

## Access

- 3.8 The Committee wished to know if the proposed child care centre would be open to all local residents or whether access would be restricted to the children of Defence personnel.
- 3.9 DHA replied that, while it would seek to maximise access for Defence families, it could not make a definitive statement on access arrangements. DHA explained that planning for the facility was still very much at a preliminary stage and that issues such as the number of places and access to those places were yet to be determined.<sup>5</sup>

## Suitability of Premises

- 3.10 Committee members were also interested to know whether the club house building would be suitable for use as a child care facility.
- 3.11 DHA could not comment on the suitability of the building, but stated that should its use as a child care centre prove unfeasible, DHA would consider building additional dwellings on the site.<sup>6</sup>

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3 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 7

4 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 9.6

5 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 5

6 ib id, p. 7

## Community Consultation

- 3.12 In its main submission, DHA states that it convened a public meeting in June 2003 to consult with local residents about the proposed development, and that traffic management issues raised at this meeting were subsequently addressed in the project design.<sup>7</sup>
- 3.13 DHA has also liaised with the site's northern neighbour, the Queanbeyan Race Club, and has reached an agreement regarding the use of stormwater from the site to augment the race course's irrigation supply.<sup>8</sup>
- 3.14 At the public hearing, DHA described its further efforts to ensure local participation through public meetings, newspaper articles, door-to-door visits and letter-box drops, and was commended for its efforts by Committee members.<sup>9</sup>

## Traffic Management

- 3.15 Having viewed preliminary plans for the development at a public forum, local residents expressed concern that
- “...motorists might use the main road through the redevelopment as a thoroughfare...”.<sup>10</sup>
- 3.16 Acknowledging this concern, DHA reconfigured the development so that there would be no through-road intersecting the site.
- 3.17 At the public hearing, DHA explained that a study had been undertaken to assess the potential impact of the development upon local traffic. The study had concluded that:
- “... the development itself will not create any significant impacts in terms of traffic congestion and queues or contribute significantly to traffic noise”.<sup>11</sup>

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7 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 19.1

8 ib id, paragraph 19.2

9 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, pp. 4 and 16

10 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 19.1

11 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 16

## Nature of Development

### Density

- 3.18 In reviewing the proposed layout of the development, Committee members noted the large size of the triangular house block in the northern-most corner and inquired whether this land might be more profitably utilised for a higher density dwelling type.<sup>12</sup>
- 3.19 DHA's architectural consultant explained that the almost triangular shape, and sloping topography, of the site had made configuration of the development somewhat difficult. For these reasons, and to maintain the character of the streetscape along McCrae Street, a single dwelling had been deemed most appropriate for the block in question.
- 3.20 Further, it is anticipated that the design of the northern corner will serve as a buffer against the additional traffic and activity occurring at that end of the site on those days that the Queanbeyan race track is operating.

### Housing Types

- 3.21 DHA's main submission states that the mix of housing types proposed for the Queanbeyan development reflect the housing preferences of Defence personnel.<sup>13</sup> At the public hearing, Committee members sought confirmation that the current proposal would meet Defence's requirements.
- 3.22 DHA assured the committee that it worked closely with Defence to satisfy housing needs in terms of both cost and amenity to residents.<sup>14</sup>
- 3.23 DHA's architect stated that the proposed dwellings would comply with DHA specifications, but added that a number of floor plans, elevations and streetscape elevations would be used throughout the development for visual variety.<sup>15</sup>

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12 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 5

13 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 4.2

14 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 3

15 ib id, p. 9

- 3.24 Further, representatives of both DHA and Defence Families Australia attested to the importance placed upon tenant feedback in the design and fit-out of DHA homes.<sup>16</sup>

## Integration into Wider Community

- 3.25 The Committee noted that, as the proposed development would house only Defence personnel and their families, it had the potential to be something of a Defence ‘enclave’ within the surrounding area, and wondered if this posed any cause for concern.<sup>17</sup>
- 3.26 DHA explained that the decision to establish a ‘Defence-only’ development had been driven by the heavy demand for Defence housing in the region, and the shortage of suitable building lots. DHA added that with only 40 proposed dwellings, the development did not constitute a large concentration of Defence personnel.<sup>18</sup> A similar ‘enclave’ of 50 dwellings at Stirling in the ACT was reported to have been very successful.<sup>19</sup>
- 3.27 The National Convenor of Defence Families Australia, appearing with DHA, was of the opinion that the small size of the development and its location within an existing residential suburb would ensure its comfortable integration into the wider community. The witness observed that:

“... because there is already such a large Defence presence in the area, we are very much part of the Queanbeyan community anyway.”<sup>20</sup>

## Amenity

- 3.28 Committee members were also keen to ensure that the proposed development would offer a suitable level of amenity to residents, particularly in terms of public transport, visitor parking and access to recreational areas.
- 3.29 DHA stated that the area was serviced by local bus routes to both the Queanbeyan business district and the ACT.

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16 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 10

17 ib id, p. 5

18 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p.5

19 ib id, p. 11

20 ib id

- 3.30 DHA’s architect explained that access to public space was considered during the master planning process, but that no such space had been included in the development as there are sizeable playing fields across McCrae Street. Additionally, it is proposed that there will be an open area at the entrance to the development which may also serve as a recreation space.<sup>21</sup>
- 3.31 In terms of parking arrangements, DHA intends that each dwelling – including the town houses - will be provided with a double garage and that off-street parking will be available for visitors.<sup>22</sup>

## **Storm Water**

- 3.32 The Committee was interested to learn of the initiatives DHA intends to undertake in relation to the use of storm water run-off from the site.
- 3.33 DHA explained that an arrangement had existed between the site’s former owners and the Queanbeyan Racing Club, to the effect that the excess water from the golf course dam was used to supplement irrigation at the race course. Having purchased the site, DHA entered into formal discussions with the Queanbeyan Racing Club and has entered into an agreement by which the race course will receive storm water from the site free of charge.<sup>23</sup>

## **Project Timing**

### **Capacity of Local Construction Industry**

- 3.34 DHA intends that construction of the development should be carried out by suitably qualified developers
- “...from the domestic sector of the local construction industry”.<sup>24</sup>

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21 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 12

22 ib id, p. 15

23 ib id, p. 13

24 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 23.2

- 3.35 In view of the increased demands placed on the local domestic building sector by the bush fires of January 2003, the Committee sought assurance that local industry would have the capacity to complete this project within the required timeframe.
- 3.36 DHA attested that its construction time line took appropriate cognisance of the burden placed upon the local domestic construction sector by the bush fires. DHA added that, while the capacity of local industry to deliver the project had been a concern, the situation was now easing and was being monitored by DHA.<sup>25</sup>

## Development Application

- 3.37 The DHA's submission states that:
- “The primary risk to the project concerns the obtaining of the required Development Approval from the Queanbeyan City Council”.<sup>26</sup>
- 3.38 The project plan included in the submission shows that, in order for the project to be completed by the expected date, development approval must be granted in November 2003.<sup>27</sup>
- 3.39 In view of these constraints, the Committee wished to know what progress had been made with the development application.
- 3.40 DHA stated that the application had been lodged with the QCC, that the public notification period had concluded and that the Council was expected to consider the matter on 17 November 2003.<sup>28</sup>

### Recommendation 1

**The Committee recommends that the proposed development of off-base housing for Defence at Queanbeyan, NSW, proceed at the estimated cost of \$12 million.**

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25 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 3

26 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 23.3

27 *ib id*, paragraph 22.1

28 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 12

Hon Judi Moylan MP  
Chair  
2 December 2003