
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

**Construction of mixed
residential dwellings at
Block 87, Section 24,
Stirling, ACT**

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

9 November 2000
Canberra

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Contents

Membership of the Committee.....	v
Extract from the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives	vii
List of abbreviations.....	ix
List of recommendations.....	xi
Executive summary	xiii

REPORT

1 Introduction.....	1
Inquiry process.....	1
Scope of the proposal.....	2
The cost.....	3
Timing.....	3
The Defence Housing Authority.....	4
Weston Creek, ACT	4
Announcement of proposed development	5
2 The need for the work	7
DHA rationale.....	7
Alternatives	7
Consideration by the Committee	8
Alternative sites.....	8
Direct purchase from private property market.....	9
Defence force housing requirement.....	9
Survey of customer requirements	11

Australian Defence College (ADC).....	11
3 Engineering and environmental issues.....	15
Engineering.....	15
Cost of remediation.....	16
Environmental issues	16
4 Consultation.....	19
Introduction.....	19
Community consultation	20
5 Traffic issues.....	23
General	23
New proposal.....	23
Community support	24
6 Community views	25

APPENDICES

Appendix A—Witnesses.....	27
Appendix B—List of Submissions	29
Appendix C—Associated Drawings	31
Appendix D—Traffic Control Devices Concept Plan Roundabouts Option	45



Membership of the Committee

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Extract from the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives

No. 126, dated Thursday, 29 June 2000

38. PUBLIC WORKS—PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE— REFERENCE OF WORK—CONSTRUCTION OF MIXED DWELLINGS AT BLOCK 87, SECTION 24, STIRLING, ACT

Mr Slipper (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration), by leave, moved—That, in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report: Construction of mixed residential dwellings at Block 87, Section 24, Stirling, ACT.

Question-put and passed.



List of abbreviations

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ADC	Australian Defence College
ADF	Australian Defence Force
DHA	Defence Housing Authority



List of recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that agencies notify the Committee, at the earliest opportunity, of purchases, or commitments for purchases, of land intended for a development which may be referred to the Committee prior to referral of the development to the Committee by the Parliament.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that in respect to future DHA projects referred to the Committee, submissions contain detailed defence housing requirement data and a detailed methodological explanation for the data.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that DHA and/or the Department of Defence conduct ongoing surveys of Defence personnel to ascertain accommodation preferences and needs.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends in respect to future DHA projects referred to the Committee, submissions contain details of accommodation preference surveys and the methodology relating to the particular survey.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Department of Defence make DHA a party, at the earliest opportunity, to all discussions which may impact on ADF personnel housing requirements.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that DHA take all reasonable steps to ensure that as many existing trees as is practical are preserved.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that DHA hold community meetings prior to the projects completion to facilitate project implementation and minimise community disturbance.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the proposed construction of mixed residential dwellings at Block 87, Section 24, Stirling, ACT, proceed at an estimated cost of \$11.5 million.



Executive summary

- 1.1 On 29 June 2000, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works was referred the Construction of Mixed Residential Dwellings, Block 87, Section 24, Stirling, ACT for consideration and report to Parliament. The Committee has recommended that the proposed development proceed.
- 1.2 The proposed development, the estimated cost of which is \$11.5 million, will comprise 50 detached and semi-detached dwellings. The sponsoring agency, the Defence Housing Authority (DHA), proposes that, subject to parliamentary approval, the proposed dwellings will be available for occupation by the end of June 2001.
- 1.3 While the Committee supports the proposed development, the inquiry raised a number of process related issues that the Committee is of the view need to be addressed. The Committee's statutory task of determining the need for the proposed development was made difficult by inconsistencies in evidence provided to the Committee by DHA in its submission, at the public hearing and on notice. To enable the Committee to carry out its statutory obligations in a efficient, objective and transparent manner, the Committee recommended that future DHA submissions to the Committee contain detailed defence housing requirement data and a methodology for the data.
- 1.4 The Committee was concerned that DHA had not surveyed its customers in relation to the proposed dwellings. The Committee strongly endorses the use of surveys as a means of establishing client preferences. The Committee recommends that DHA and or the Department of Defence conduct ongoing surveys of ADF personnel to ascertain accommodation needs.

- 1.5 The inquiry process also highlighted a number of deficiencies in the liaison process between the Department of Defence and DHA, particularly in relation to the Australian Defence College. The Committee recommends that the Department of Defence make DHA a party, at the earliest opportunity, to all discussion which may impact on ADF personnel housing requirements.
- 1.6 The soil on the proposed site for the development is unstable and will require remediation. The cost of the remediation will be met by the ACT Government. The Committee was concerned that the proposed development would result in the removal of many mature and semi-mature native trees. The Committee recommends that DHA take all reasonable steps to ensure that as many existing trees as is practical are preserved.
- 1.7 The Committee received evidence challenging the sincerity and adequacy of the consultation process engaged in by DHA. The Committee is strongly of the view that it is an essential element of DHA's role in developments such as that proposed at Stirling, to involve and include in the development process the wider community. Such involvement gives greater legitimacy to the agencies actions. The Committee considers that it would have been preferable had DHA's community consultation process been more transparent and recommended that DHA hold further community meetings.

