



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

# Official Committee Hansard

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

**Reference: Facilities for Headquarters Joint Operations Command, New South  
Wales**

FRIDAY, 18 JUNE 2004

QUEANBEYAN

BY AUTHORITY OF THE PARLIAMENT



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**JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS**

**Friday, 18 June 2004**

**Members:** Mrs Moylan (*Chair*), Mr O'Connor (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Colbeck, Ferguson and Forshaw and Mr Jenkins, Mr Lindsay, Mr Lloyd and Mr Ripoll

**Senators and members in attendance:** Mr Jenkins, Mrs Moylan, Mr Ripoll

**Terms of reference for the inquiry:**

To inquire into and report on:

Provision of facilities for Headquarters Joint Operations Command, New South Wales.

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**Committee met at 11.08 a.m.**

**CHAIR**—I declare open this public hearing into the provision of facilities for headquarters Joint Operations Command near Bungendore in New South Wales. This project was referred to the Joint Statutory Committee on Public Works on 31 March 2004 for consideration and report to the parliament. In accordance with subsection 17(3) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969:

- (3) In considering and reporting on a public work, the Committee shall have regard to –
  - (a) the stated purpose of the work and its suitability for that purpose;
  - (b) the necessity for, or the advisability of, carrying out the work;
  - (c) the most effective use that can be made, in the carrying out of the work, of the moneys to be expended on the work;
  - (d) where the work purports to be of a revenue-producing character, the amount of revenue that it may reasonably be expected to produce; and
  - (e) the present and prospective public value of the work.

The committee received an in camera briefing this morning from the Department of Defence and we have also been out and inspected the site where it is proposed that these buildings be built. I would like to thank Defence for facilitating that examination of the site today and also for the private briefing in camera. I would also like to acknowledge the member for Eden-Monaro, Mr Gary Nairn, who has also been helpful to the committee. The committee will now hear evidence from the Department of Defence, the Sustainability Programs Division of the Department of Environment and Conservation, the Carwoola Community Association, the Queanbeyan City Council, the University of Sydney Molonglo Radio Observatory, ACT Forests, Mr Robert Hyles and the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority.

[11.10 a.m.]

**DAVEY, Colonel James David, Director Command, Intelligence and Support Systems, Electronic Systems Division, Command and Support Systems Branch, Defence Materiel Organisation, Department of Defence**

**MARMANIDIS, Ms Kitty, Project Manager, Headquarters Joint Operations Command Project, Department of Defence**

**PLENTY, Air Commodore Brian, Director General, Headquarters Joint Operations Command Project, Department of Defence**

**CHAIR**—Welcome. The committee has received a submission and 11 supplementary submissions from Defence. These submissions will be available in a volume of submissions for the inquiry. They are also available on the inquiry's web site. Does Defence wish to propose any amendments to any of the submissions it has made to the committee?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Yes, we do. I will read them out for the record. I will also pass over a copy as we have a slightly changed map than what appears in the submission.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. The committee is happy to receive that extra printed material.

**Air Cdre Plenty**—I will run through the textual amendments. In paragraph 25 of the submission, the text should read that the site was selected as it is not beneath the approach flight path of any commercial airlines. In paragraph 29, the words 'in April 2004' should be replaced with 'by the end of June 2004'. At the third dot point in paragraph 32 the name 'Commonwealth Environment Protection Authority' needs to be replaced with 'New South Wales Environment Protection Authority'. With regard to the 16th dot point, Resource NSW have changed their name and are now known as the New South Wales Department of Environment and Conservation. At paragraph 64, the words 'a minimum lease period of 20 years' is to be replaced with 'a 30 years lease period'.

The rest of the amendments relate to the map that is attached to the submission. What has changed is that there is a slight rearrangement of the right-hand side boundaries of the proposed site to be purchased. The original one went to the left-hand side of that dam that is located there. The new boundary goes to the right-hand side. There has been some rearrangement in plan form between the proposed car park area and the sports playing fields. Also some of those ancillary buildings have moved around the boundary. Again, that is a very indicative diagram, not exactly what will be there. Those are the changes.

**CHAIR**—Would you like to make a representation to the committee before proceeding to questions?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Thank you. The Department of Defence seeks approval for the provision of facilities for the Headquarters Joint Operations Command. It is proposed that the headquarters be



located on a greenfields site within the Woodlands property, 11 kilometres south-west of Bungendore, New South Wales.

Headquarters Joint Operations Command is crucial to the Australian Defence Force's ability to concurrently conduct a range of war-fighting, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, support the Australian community and synchronise military support with the efforts of other government departments and agencies to meet national objectives. The current components of Headquarters Joint Operations Command are geographically dispersed in Canberra, Sydney, the foothills of the Blue Mountains and Melbourne. This dispersion impacts on the overall situational awareness of commanders and their staffs and the efficient planning and command and control of complex military operations.

The establishment of the new headquarters and the co-location of the chief of joint operations and operational commanders and staffs in a purpose-built facility will allow for more informed and responsive advice and improve the passage of information. The synergies of co-location will enable improved situational awareness and more effective coordination of planning at the strategic and operational levels, leading to increased operational effectiveness—all of which are essential to the Australian Defence Force's ability to function effectively in complex, multidimensional operational environments. The headquarters will enable enhanced command, control, communications and information systems arrangements. It will also enable the rationalisation over time of communication and information management processes, and maximise interaction across all functional areas within the headquarters.

Defence conducted a number of site studies over the last 10 years that examined a range of possible sites for the headquarters. These studies looked at the operational requirements, the adequacy of existing defence sites to support the headquarters, operating costs and personnel and family issues. On 18 July 2001 the government announced that the proposed site would be located in the ACT-Queanbeyan region as it offered the greatest advantage in terms of proximity to government and Defence headquarters, reduced overall support and operating costs and reduced the impact of the posting cycle and associated turbulence on personnel and their families. In October 2001 the government announced that the preferred site for the headquarters was within the Woodlands property. On 30 April 2003, following preliminary engineering and survey studies of six possible sites within Woodlands, a defence site selection board approved the proposed site at the western end of the property.

The project has been assessed for suitability for delivery as a privately financed project under the Commonwealth government's policy principles for the use of private finance and Defence's private finance manual. The business case developed for the project indicates that private financing for the buildings and infrastructure component is anticipated to deliver better value for money than traditional procurement methods through the cost-effective transfer of risk to the private sector. Benefits are expected to be the timely delivery of the project, certainty of cost for a defined scope and sustained quality service delivery, and improved financial management and accountability on a whole-of-life basis. Separate from the buildings and infrastructure component, Defence will retain responsibility for the procurement and delivery of the command, control, communications and information systems by direct procurement.

On 9 March this year the government endorsed private financing as the preferred method of procurement for the buildings and infrastructure component, subject to value for money being

demonstrated. A consortium will be selected to deliver the building and infrastructure component through a competitive two-stage tender process to build, own, operate and maintain the facility for a lease period of 30 years, at which time the facility will revert to the Commonwealth. The invitation to register interest phase closed on 27 May and submissions are currently being evaluated to short-list three or four consortium for the request for tender phase.

A project cost benchmark has been developed in line with Commonwealth and Defence guidelines to provide a reference project against which private sector bids can be compared. The project cost benchmark is the estimated whole-of-life cost of delivering the capability using traditional procurement methods, where Defence would purchase capital equipment and facilities and deliver those services through a range of contracts to provide the capability. The estimated cost of the proposal is \$318.08 million, 2003-04 out turn. This cost includes buildings, infrastructure, the command, control, communications and information systems, land acquisition, workplace relocation costs, design, professional fees and construction contingency, but excludes goods and services tax.

The draft environmental impact statement for the project was prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Environment and Heritage and placed on exhibition for public review for a period of 35 days from 17 October to 20 November last year. The draft environmental impact statement identified a number of potential environmental impacts and recommended measures to manage them. The report recommended that the construction and operation of the headquarters were justified on the basis of its environmental acceptability. Twenty-three submissions were received from government, business, community groups and individuals. The matters raised in those submissions are being addressed in a supplementary report, which is under final review. The land on which the headquarters is proposed to be located is to be acquired using the compulsory process provisions of the Commonwealth Lands Acquisitions Act 1989, with the agreement of the affected landowners. This process will commence shortly and it is anticipated to be completed by December this year.

Subject to parliamentary approval, construction is planned to commence mid-2005, with completion mid- to late 2007. The headquarters staff will then commence a phased occupation of the facility with testing of procedures and systems. The headquarters is planned to be fully functional by mid-2008.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. I notice in your submission at point 23, under ‘Options considered’, you say that initial studies examined site options Williamtown in Newcastle, the Blue Mountains, Nowra and the ACT-Queanbeyan region, and recommended ACT-Queanbeyan. We do not have before us any comparison of the sites. We have all the reasons why this site was a good site, but we cannot examine a comparison between this site and the other sites that were considered.

**Air Cdre Plenty**—I will run through the sites that were considered. Williamtown-Newcastle area was looked at and Nowra was looked at because they had defence facilities already there and land where a headquarter could be built. They looked attractive initially. Examinations of issues to do with back-to-back postings and spouse employment became the main reasons why they were discounted. There was limited spouse or partner employment within those regions for the number of staff that we would be putting in the facility. Also, unless you were of a particular service skills set, you would have great difficulty in getting a back-to-back posting in those

particular areas. Holsworthy was also looked at and Nowra. For those reasons, that is why those sites were discounted. The ACT-Queanbeyan region was looked at because it offered the greatest advantage in the aspects of spouse employment and back-to-back postings.

In fact, we see from the arrangement in the area that service personnel posted to the headquarter could do a tour of two to three years in this headquarter, two or three years in the Russell Offices complex and perhaps, depending on their position and promotion, they might well do a tour at the Staff College at Weston Creek. So a member could end up with anywhere between five and seven or eight years in the one location—which was a great advantage—versus a potential two- or a 2½-year tour only at Williamtown, Newcastle or Nowra. That is why those sites were discounted and the ACT region was looked at.

**CHAIR**—The other question before we move on to my colleagues is in relation to the environmental considerations of the building itself. I notice under ‘Design Options’ at point 54, you say:

Issues that were examined in the development of the options included:

... ..

d. Environmentally sustainable design and whole of life cost impacts of the facility ...

Yet, we have had a submission from the Department of Environment and Conservation, which, in essence, says that it is disappointed that, despite considerable communication between that agency and you, particularly on waste management issues, none of the advice is reflected in your evidence to the committee. Does Defence intend to incorporate into the detailed design any of the suggestions made by the Sustainability Programs Division? If this project goes the way of a private finance option, is there any requirement for them to ensure that they consult with the Sustainability Programs Division and incorporate those ecologically sustainable elements into the design of the building?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—The matters that you have just raised were also raised by a number of other submissions. They also made the point that the issues they raised were not included in the environmental impact assessment and/or response. I can answer very briefly that most of those are included in the supplementary report, which has been delayed in coming out because of the need to conduct some additional surveys of flora and fauna, otherwise that information would have been available back in, I think, March this year. I am reviewing that final report now, and it will be out before the end of this month. The issues raised by that organisation and others are covered in that report. To go back to the ones directly related—

**CHAIR**—When you say they ‘are covered’, is Defence going to take account of those issues raised and try to ensure that the design of the building and other matters, such as waste disposal and waste management, are best practice in terms of the ecology?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—We are aiming for this facility to be a five-star green building. We will look at a number of those matters that you have raised. We will certainly be putting requirements on the private consortia that those issues be taken into account in the development of their

options when they come back to us in the request for tender. When we have those three to four tenders in, we will select the ones that cover those issues to the best degree.

**CHAIR**—Thank you.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Air Commodore, I wonder if you could give us some idea of the security assessment for the site and any particular security issues, given that it is a headquarters housing the three different parts of Defence. What level of security will be needed in the future on that site?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—The EIS has comments and a section on security. A security risk assessment has been done. The site, being in a relatively low-population, semirural area has security itself because of the land and the buffer zones that are being acquired for it. The facility will be surrounded at 500 metres from the main headquarters with a person-proof fence and access control. Coming in closer, at 100 metres from the facility, is a vehicle- and person-proof fence—again, with access control through to the headquarters. Security on site is based on those physical aspects plus the remote location in a rural area. Those are the security aspects for the site itself.

At the moment, the facilities as they exist in Sydney and Melbourne are at a slightly higher degree of threat because of their location within urban areas. Moving those people out of there and putting them on this site with the physical and electronic security devices that will be there will lower the threat to them. It also removes the risk of others being injured if someone wished to damage those facilities in the urban areas. That risk is removed.

Risk assessment for the future has taken into account the 30-year life of the facility. Defence clearly looks at risk and threat assessments on an ongoing basis. If the risk and threat increase from what they are at the moment, from a physical security perspective, the access control to the headquarters can be moved further away from the headquarters on the primary access road out towards the Kings Highway. There is space available there. We would not hold up traffic on the Kings Highway, but appropriate security procedures could be gone through—vehicles and personnel allowed through or in fact turned away.

**Mr RIPOLL**—What is the current level of security? What is the level for the actual provision of security for the site—low, medium or high?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—That will change as the threat changes. At the moment it is seen as a low to medium threat. It depends on what you define as low to medium, I guess. At the moment we have a 'safe base' system, which describes how we provide security for the bases we have all around Australia. At the moment that safe base requirement is for increased surveillance and access control. On a lower level you might just show a pass but, depending on the facility you are at and the level of security required, there might be processes other than just showing a pass. It is in the level of access control that we deal with the threat at the moment.

**Mr RIPOLL**—On the issue of local traffic, there is obviously only the one road coming in and it is estimated that there will be around 850 extra vehicles a day travelling to and from the site. What provision are you making for that, particularly for cars turning into the facility, and who will be responsible for any required changes or road upgrades?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—The primary access off the Kings Highway—the development of the intersection and the road through to the site—is a Defence responsibility. We have been looking at planning with the appropriate road authorities and, given the traffic flows that are predicted from 2007 through to 2022—the first 15 years of operation—the design that has been looked at is a large T-intersection with appropriate acceleration and deceleration and passing lanes, and the intersection will be lit at night. That is what we are doing on the project side. We are aware of the impact of the up to 800 vehicles on the road running from Canberra to Queanbeyan and through to the site, and we have been providing advice on our assessments of those impacts — through our consultant’s assessments—to the appropriate planning authorities that look after the roads in those areas.

**Mr JENKINS**—Is the five-star rating an energy rating or a sustainability rating?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—I can get some more technical advice but I understand that it is an energy rating. The energy will be paid for by the consortia. Because they are paying the bill, aside from what we put in our contractual arrangements on ESD principles, there will be benefits to them in trying to reduce the energy consumption on site over time.

**Mr JENKINS**—What about some of the comments that were made about the high embodied energy material that was going to be used, especially the concept of end-of-life deconstruction, which would not be worn by the private partner? Has Defence any comments about the points raised on those matters?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—I will take that on notice and get some advice back to you during or at the end of this hearing.

**Mr JENKINS**—The other thing about sustainability is this: on first blush, one thing that gets your focus is the car park for 1,000 cars. Obviously, access for personnel working at this facility is absolutely by private car and, in sustainability terms, people would query that. On balance, looking at the reasons that Defence gives for choosing the site, which are to do with security and a remote location, I think I can understand that. But, in factoring in that it would be totally dependent on private cars, what were the other alternatives that Defence looked at?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—We are still looking at the provision of a bus service. We have done some initial surveys of staff on the use of a bus service, asking whether staff would use a bus service if it were available. In early 2005 and 2007 we will be doing more surveys of staff who would be coming to the headquarters. We have just started initial discussions with private bus providers within the region on their desired requirements and the cost of providing a bus service. At this stage, Defence would not be providing any subsidy for a bus service and, in essence, it would be user-pays. We will need to find out from the consortia what those charges would be when we re-survey our people on their desire to use a bus service. Our initial intention would be that, if it were appropriate, it would run from the bus interchanges in the ACT and appropriate areas within Queanbeyan through to the site and return. We have also had some very initial discussions with ACTION, but we are only in the very initial stages of building up advice on a bus service.

As part of the environmental impact statement, we had some consultants look at the viability of a rail service. It would certainly be of benefit to those who live in Queanbeyan and/or very

close to the Canberra railway station, who could have a short commute. Given that most of the people would be driving some distance just to get to the Canberra railway station, our understanding is that they would not park there but drive through to the headquarters. So it appears that a rail service using the current infrastructure is not viable for us.

**Mr JENKINS**—Can I turn to the issues with the Molonglo observatory. You have entered into a memorandum of understanding with the university—is that the case?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Not yet. We have a draft MOU between us that we are working up.

**Mr JENKINS**—This will lead to discussions between the scientists about what is actually happening, so there is an element of exploration about what really is the case. Who will bear the risk if it turns out that there are elements that have to be put in place in order to do the appropriate buffer over and above what you expect at the moment?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Clearly we need further advice from scientists, both from the telescope and from our Defence Science and Technology people, who are working in concert on this matter on the extent to which we might impact on the MOST. We do not know what that is yet. We do have some advice that the planting of trees—eucalypts with broad leaves—along the boundary and the ridge line between the headquarters location and the MOST, taken to certain depths, will assist in reducing any impact that we might have. Certainly we can put some procedures in place in the MOU—and later procedures when the headquarters are functioning—to ensure that any impact from motor vehicles or mobile phones, if they are an impact, are reduced.

At the moment we understand that the biggest problem from a building perspective is electrical motors of any sort in the building emitting RF energy. That leaks out mainly through windows. If we can put some shielding on the windows—it might be a metal flyscreen type of shielding—and they are bonded to the building, that will reduce significantly the amount of leakage from the building. But we do not know the extent of that. We have provided some very rough, preliminary figures of what we think might be the number of motors, computers and so forth to the MOST people and they are working through that to get some advice back on what that energy leakage might be so that we can then sit down and do some talking. So I cannot provide a definite answer to your question at the moment.

**Mr JENKINS**—In analysing the site, there has been some investigation of the effects on the region. One of the effects when you are relocating staff is on housing. Can you give us some details about what you expect to happen in that regard?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—We do not intend to construct a suburb or a married quarter, if you like, for the staff. The numbers will change slightly, but from the surveys we have done—taken across the Australian Defence Force census, so we are not looking at a skewed population based on headquarters at the moment—we think there will be a requirement for between 400 and 450 homes for married staff. The Defence Housing Authority looks after housing for the Defence Force for its married members or members with dependants. They are aware of our initial planning and that we require about 400 to 450 homes, and they are starting to do their work around the broader region on where they might be able to buy houses, where there might be land they can buy and then build houses or where they might do a leasing arrangement, which they do in other locations. So they have factored that in and they are starting to do some work on that

now. The single people, the members without dependants, are given a rental allowance. They will go into the rental market and find a unit or a house, or a couple of them will live in a house together. Again, our early surveys indicate that the vast majority of those people wish to reside in the Canberra centre through to the Manuka-Kingston area, in those high-rise areas there, and they will access the private rental market in those areas.

**Mr JENKINS**—What about the pressures on other aspects of social infrastructure—do you think there are going to be any problems arising there?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—It is difficult to say exactly at this stage because it really depends where people want to go and live. We did not see a large impact on any particular area. It might ebb and flow with other things that are happening, in any case. With regard to the impacts on schooling, we see that as being spread around, as opposed to a large number of schoolchildren wanting to get into a particular school, because of where the housing locations will be. With regard to impacts on medical services, all Defence members are looked after by the Defence medical services, so there is not an impact there. It would be a question of their families—and, again, it would depend on where they lived and the current availability of general practitioners and so forth as to whether or not there is an impact there. When we have our survey data from early 2005 on the people and where they think they might want to live, we will be sitting down with those agencies and discussing those sorts of numbers with them to see if there is an impact from our arrival.

**Mr RIPOLL**—I have a follow-on question from that. With any project of this size and scope, there are always a lot of interested parties, stakeholders and people who have a view. What consultation process has the department taken on to field those views and concerns and to address them?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—In the environmental impact statement process, starting from about March of last year, there has been a range of community and focus group meetings—and with planning authorities as well. Just recently we recommenced community consultation after the completion of the environmental impact statement. I wanted to do it even before the supplementary report was out so that we could get some advice back into the communities. We have done Hoskinstown and Bungendore recently; we have Carwoola planned for next week; and then, later on in July—no date planned as yet—we will do one in Queanbeyan for the planning authorities and also a separate one for the community.

The issues that have been raised to date have been reflected in the submissions you have received as well. The main issues raised deal with traffic. They deal with traffic on the Kings Highway and the impact that the amount of traffic that we will generate from late 2007 onwards will have on the roads in the Queanbeyan area through to Bungendore. I think the road issue has been a long-standing issue, irrespective of this headquarters arriving. We understand the roundabout at the intersection of Bungendore Road, Kings Highway and Yass Road will require some form of traffic management additional to what it has at the moment from about 2007 onwards. The Kings Highway-Captains Flat Road T-intersection is still rated as a suitable intersection by the Roads and Traffic Authority for the through traffic on the Kings Highway. They have assessed that the traffic that comes off the Captains Flat Road trying to turn across the traffic to the right—or, in fact, on the Kings Highway wanting to turn right into that road—will be impacted and that there might need to be traffic management arrangements put in at that

intersection to extend the waiting line before turning right, the acceleration line or a separate lane. But that advice, and our advice from our consultant, is with the traffic authority for that.

**CHAIR**—I have one more question. I notice that most of the submissions seem to be favourably disposed towards the establishment of the headquarters here. However, the issues that arise are to do with pressures on infrastructure such as roads. I notice that two submissions, one from Mr Dakin and the other from the Department of Environment and Conservation (New South Wales), express some concern about the pressure on waste disposal systems. I think the Department of Environment and Conservation said that it likens the proposed development to:

... establishing a township overnight this size of Braidwood in a region undergoing extreme difficulties with the handling of waste and recycling programs.

Were these waste management issues raised during the course of consultation with the Yarrowlumla council? What arrangements, if any, have been reached? What is Defence proposing to do in order to deal with what is certainly perceived, and probably is, quite a serious problem?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Defence will recycle the entire water waste. It will be reused on site as part of the water management plan for the site. So it is self-contained on site for water and sewage disposal. We are looking at requiring the private consortia in their tender bids to come back to us with detailed proposals on waste management. Certainly, we know that the ACT has a policy of no waste by 2010. Through the environmental impact statement, we have also had discussions with ACT NOWaste on the use of their landfill, but that is the extent of it. Our intention is to have no waste whatsoever coming off the site, but we need to wait and see what comes back from the tenders to see how they intend to do that. We are also looking at things like waste solids being turned into fertilisers, but we need the private consortia to come back to us with details of how that would be done.

**CHAIR**—Is that why there is very little reference in your submission to how you propose to minimise waste?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Indeed it is. More reference is made to those matters in the supplementary report to the draft environmental impact statement.

**CHAIR**—I understand that the Sustainability Programs Division have made some recommendations and that there have been some discussions. Are you proposing to take up some of those recommendations? Are they workable and practical?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—I cannot recall them off the top of my head at the moment. But those sorts of issues will be taken up through the requirement for the private consortia to come back to us on what they see as their ability to manage waste, water and other issues on the site.

**CHAIR**—So you will continue to liaise with the Sustainability Programs Division of the DEC and work through those issues?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Yes.



**Mr JENKINS**—Perhaps we need an explanation on the public record about the difference between project delivery under a private-public partnership for one aspect of the project and conventional procurement for the command and control communications and information systems, and of the reason that this is the case.

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Yes, certainly. In the studies done for the project, we have looked at procuring the entire facility with direct procurement—using Commonwealth funds for the entire facility. We have also looked at the benefits that might accrue to the Commonwealth by using private financing arrangements for the facilities, the buildings and the roads—that aspect of the project. But we were not going to do the same for the command and control systems—the computers and software and all those things that go into the heart of the facility and make it work. This facility is one end of a node of the Defence Force’s command and control and information nodes. In a communications sense, we did not want that node privately owned or part owned because there are management and control issues in that. In addition, some of the equipment is not ours and it has to be owned by the Commonwealth—it cannot be owned by private consortia. So there would be divisions within the communications systems within the facility on who owned and controlled what and who managed and maintained what. It was far easier to manage all that as one holistic command and control system, as we do for all the other nodes in that command and control space.

**Mr JENKINS**—How interdependent will the two elements be? I take it that, with the benchmarks and performance that have to be achieved under the private arrangements, that will be important for when some of your direct procurement works can be carried out.

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Indeed. The consortia will be responsible for putting in what we term ‘passive systems’—that is, the cabling within the buildings and provision of appropriate lighting, airconditioning and water in physical parts of the buildings such as server rooms or data rooms. They will need to be provided to meet a certain standard. If their system or parts of it are not working—that is, the cabling within the walls or if the airconditioning does not keep the right temperature—we have backup systems to make sure that that does not impact directly on the servers. But, if there is a ‘fail event’, the abatement procedures come in. In this sense, abatement is after the fact. Clearly we do not want the event to happen in the first place. That is where we will have an intimate linkage with the service provider to make sure that those services are in service and available 100 per cent of the time.

**Mr JENKINS**—How analogous will it be to a normal rental situation where a base supply of certain infrastructure such as airconditioning, electrical systems and so on—I am not a technical person—would be made available? Is there a similar arrangement or is there an expectation on the private provider to give you the airconditioning and so on to facilitate your systems?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—The private provider will be responsible for those things you have mentioned: the provision of uninterrupted power and the provision of airconditioning to keep rooms at an appropriate temperature—keeping all those services fully functional. We are talking about a command and control system interface. It could be analogous to going into a building, but there is a closer relationship between us in that building, those services and the provider of those services. They will have people on site to make sure that those services remain functional, and there will be aspects within the contract arrangements to make sure that they remain functional and that they have the appropriate on-call ability to keep them functional. In some of

the more critical areas there will be a fail-safe system which can switch over to another system. For example, there will be a fail-safe airconditioning system to keep rooms at the appropriate temperature while whatever caused the problem in the first place is repaired, and there will be a fail-safe power supply system as well.

**Mr JENKINS**—This morning you indicated an amendment to the submission at paragraph 64, changing the minimum lease period of 20 years to 30 years. Should I read anything into that?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—No. The 20-year period was the assessment done in the initial business case. It was thought at the time that that was the period that the market could take private financing out to. But between the time of those developments and now the market has been moving beyond the 20-year mark to a longer term, depending on the ratio of debt to equity that the financiers will provide.

**Mr JENKINS**—So that is the fixed period that you are looking at?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—That is correct.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Just to make a point very clear—the full responsibility for the maintenance, upkeep and provision of services on the site under the private finance arrangement will be with the private provider.

**Air Cdre Plenty**—That is correct, other than the maintenance that is done on the command and control systems, which will be retained by Defence and through Defence's other contracts for those sorts of matters.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much.

[11.52 a.m.]

**GILLESPIE, Mr Gerard Bradbury, Manager, Sustainability Programs Division, South East, Department of Environment and Conservation**

**CHAIR**—On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works, I welcome you to this hearing. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

**Mr Gillespie**—There are some difficulties in relation to the naming issue with state government organisations at the moment. We all seem to be going through fairly substantial restructures. I noticed that the Air Commodore here before me had the federal office of the environment changed to the New South Wales EPA in your records. The New South Wales EPA is in fact now part of our department as well. It is difficult to follow that process; I have difficulty with it myself from time to time.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for clarifying that. The committee has received a submission from you. Do you wish to propose amendments to the submission made to the committee?

**Mr Gillespie**—Not a great deal. This is the first time that I have ever heard anybody in a position of responsibility such as that of the Air Commodore say that they are going to have a site with no waste going off it, or to aim at that target. I am involved in various organisations in different parts of the world. As well as my position as manager of the south-east office of the department, I am also the President of the Canberra and South East Region Environment Centre, I am on the steering committee of a group called the Asia Network of Organics Recycling and I am on the board of a group called the Zero Waste International Alliance. The focus of the majority of those organisations is on the idea of having organisational structures within buildings that have no waste at all leaving. I would propose that, given that we are still in the Year of the Built Environment, this is a wonderful opportunity for the federal government to display their ability to fit perfectly within that notion of the Year of the Built Environment by starting off a project that will actually deliver a site with no waste at all going off.

In relation to the points that I have made—and I hope that nobody sees me as the initial whinger in this process—all the things I have suggested in my submission are doable. If they have not been done in this country, they certainly have been done in other parts of the world. The request for tender process that the air commodore referred to will enable this project to go ahead with probably almost a zero-waste-to-landfill effect. All the material going to the sewage treatment works—I point principally to paper and suggest that the Defence headquarters will need to shred paper to a very small size in much the way that the federal parliament does—can be mixed down with organic material from biosolids from the site or with food waste from the restaurants and turned into a fertiliser product. This is an Australian technology that can quite comfortably be applied to the site, and the excess products can be used directly in agriculture on adjoining sites.

Again, on the issue of energy, it seems difficult to understand why an organisation that is using relatively low levels of electricity cannot supply most of its needs internally. I suggest that geothermal energy would supply most of the heating requirements, if the building design were

correct; wind power could supply a fair amount of the electricity; that could be backed up by solar power; and a diesel generator, run by locally produced canola oil, would make an excellent backup mechanism.

I feel that other aspects of the design of the construction can be quite adequately met by people and within organisations in this immediate area. We have at the Australian National University Dr Janice Birkeland, who is probably one of the most highly recommended solar design architects in the world, and we constantly use Dr Sara Beavis, a research fellow at the ANU, who could obviously put an awful lot into the hydrological and geological aspects of the project. When this project kicked off, I was saying that, before a sod was turned or an idea was developed, we needed to consider the sustainability aspects of this project. We need to be an integral part of that as it goes further down the track. I did make an initial offer to the consultants in the process that we would try to commit \$10,000 or \$12,000 a year in the first couple of years of operation to sustaining our part in the project, and, provided we can still find the money somewhere in the state government coffers, I imagine that offer still holds.

There is really little else I can say except that we are very enthusiastic to help the Department of Defence turn this into a key project, not only for this region but for Australia as a whole.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. It is obvious that you are enthusiastic to ensure that this is a model development in that respect. But, having read Defence's evidence and heard its responses, are you satisfied that the environmentally sustainable development principles, which Defence clearly aspires to as well, are adequate and reflect best practice?

**Mr Gillespie**—I suggest that, if we were permitted to be involved in an advisory capacity in the drawing up of the tender documents, we could ensure that that would be an outcome.

**CHAIR**—Were you satisfied with Defence's response to my question in that respect?

**Mr Gillespie**—I think so. Unfortunately, we all go out under these circumstances, trying to do things about waste, and we come up against a lot of engineers who feel that their training finished on the day they left university. There is a remark that the Mayor of Gunning used quite often which goes: 'If you always do what you've always done, you always get what you always got.' We need to make that leap into the future and 're-brain' some of our engineers. As I quite often say, if we keep giving engineers D9 bulldozers and holes in the ground, there is a fairly good chance that we are going to continue to get filled-in holes. However, they do have the skills to get us to the moon; they do have the skills to do wondrous things for the community. This is a small challenge for the engineering community to change these processes so that we come up with something that is, as I said, a model for Australia.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Are your department and the Department of Defence talking about these issues?

**Mr Gillespie**—Not currently. I wrote to the consultants on two occasions but I have not yet had a direct response from Defence. I have had a response from the consultants—they said that they were incorporating my information into various documentation—but I have not yet had any direct dealings with the Department of Defence.

**Mr JENKINS**—I would not have described your original submission as a whinging submission, but as a submission from an unhappy camper. To the extent that you are happier, I am encouraged. But it does seem that there is an opportunity to attempt to do the things you have outlined, and I think I have been encouraged by Defence's responses on a number of those matters. Given the nature of the site, a number of the things will have to be done on site. There is no other alternative that is an easy fit. It has been interesting the way in which those matters have been discussed. I think we can look at those outcomes.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for appearing before us today, Mr Gillespie.

[12.01 p.m.]

**RAKE, Mr Gary Michael, President, Carwoola Community Association**

**CHAIR**—Welcome to this hearing. The committee has received a submission from you. Do you want to make any amendments to that original submission?

**Mr Rake**—There are no amendments to the original submission, but there are some points that I would like to expand upon.

**CHAIR**—I invite you to make a brief opening statement.

**Mr Rake**—Carwoola Community Association have taken the view that we are not looking to disrupt or delay this project but we do have a number of unresolved concerns. We have outlined five areas that we have concerns about, and we have proposed solutions to these. In the scheme of the \$318 million budget that the air commodore mentioned, I imagine that ours would be fairly easy to resolve. The one that concerns us most is the traffic issue. Our community is affected by the intersection of Kings Highway and Captains Flat Road. I note that the air commodore said they are passing on information about the increased traffic flows to the relevant authorities. Clearly, they are looking at the fact that that is a road that falls within the state government jurisdiction.

The point I would like to make is that, if this were a private development, the local government, as part of the planning approval process, would be entitled to levy section 94 levies to rectify any infrastructure problems that resulted from the development, and that would include upgrading roads. I do not believe that the Commonwealth is liable to pay those levies but it might be appropriate for it to consider making a contribution akin to a section 94 levy to the appropriate local government or state road authority to assist with remediation of that section.

The other concerns that we have outlined relate to communication interruption for residents. Principally we are looking at mobile telephone coverage and television and radio reception. We are also looking at light and visual pollution and noise pollution.

**Mr JENKINS**—What level of discussions have you had with relevant authorities about the proposal?

**Mr Rake**—We have had a number of community consultation sessions where the project team came out to our community and met at an evening time which was convenient for residents. They are coming out again next week. I guess I should add as a preface that we have not heard their final response to these concerns and that, if the project team has solutions, we would be more than happy to see them implemented.

**Mr JENKINS**—So you have raised these matters, as you have raised them today, but you have not had the responses to—

**Mr Rake**—We have not had a formal and final response to those concerns.

**Mr JENKINS**—There was mention made about visual impact.

**Mr Rake**—Principally we are looking at light pollution during the evenings. The simple solution we are proposing is low reflux lighting and minimisation of reflective surfaces below the lights so that the glare that comes out at night is minimised. It is a rural area, and the dark at night time is very dark. There are approximately 120 residences that will have a direct view of the facility in its proposed siting. A large night-time illumination would affect the glare in those areas. We are proposing a very simple solution to it.

**Mr JENKINS**—What is the nature of the Carwoola community? Is it a township that has developed and people work elsewhere?

**Mr Rake**—Yes. It is primarily a dormitory rural residential area. The allotment sizes range from five acres through to several hundred acres. There is a working rural property, Banjo, that adjoins the Defence facility. The owners of Banjo have not made a submission to your committee, but their primary concern is that the new installation should not affect their ability to continue ongoing agricultural practices, like crop-dusting and things like that. So, yes, it is primarily a dormitory suburb of Canberra.

**Mr JENKINS**—What stage is it in its development? Is it fully developed or will there be ongoing development?

**Mr Rake**—Largely, it is fully developed. The potential for future development there would be constrained by environmental factors, such as the impact on water. There are 1,000 residents in the immediate area, all of whom have to access their homes from the intersection of Captains Flat Road.

**Mr JENKINS**—So the community's impact on that intersection has reached its maximum?

**Mr Rake**—Yes.

**Mr RIPOLL**—I have a quick question on the communications issues you have raised. You say that there is a fear from the community that such things as satellite and VHS-UHF transmitters could affect mobile phone use or television reception. Is this based on any information or evidence, or is it just a concern from the community?

**Mr Rake**—The basis for the concern about mobile telephones is that one of the earlier consultations for the EIS indicated that mobile phones would be considered a security risk on the headquarters premises. If they were to implement a technological solution—a jammer, basically—we are simply looking for an assurance that that will be constrained to their site and that it will not affect residents. In terms of television and radio, we hear stories that in Sydney, for example, residents in Potts Point have interruption with their television and radio reception from time to time from nearby Defence installations. Again, all we are after is a simple assurance that those impacts will not be felt by residents of our community.

**CHAIR**—What is the general feeling of the community towards the project overall?

**Mr Rake**—Generally, I think the community is happy that the project is coming out. There are certainly going to be economic benefits for Bungendore. We have a reasonable number of Defence personnel who live in our area, and some of them envisage that they will be employed at the facility. As I stated at the beginning, we are not here to try and disrupt or delay the project. We have a small number of concerns and, if they can be resolved, we would withdraw all objections from the project.

**CHAIR**—Are you confident that the light and visual pollution problems can be worked through? They particularly affect around 120 residents, and we got a glimpse of that today when we were out on the site. Are you confident that the consultation process with Defence will allow you to resolve some of those issues?

**Mr Rake**—Certainly, I think there is potential to resolve them. I guess we are looking for Defence to come in with a view to being a good neighbour. As long as we can enter negotiations on that footing, I think we will do well. One of the residents out there has a good saying; he notes, ‘You pay for the view but you don’t own it.’ So certainly they are not looking to barrier the headquarters from all sight.

**CHAIR**—I notice that your group suggested that, for purposes of the EIS, visual and light pollution should be upgraded from its current low priority. How would that normally be done?

**Mr Rake**—The concern that we have there is that the low priority has been assigned on the basis that there is a medium impact but on a very low number of residents; so, in the weighting for the whole scheme of the project, that is low. I guess I have to say that the impact on the residents who are affected is not going to be low.

**CHAIR**—How can that priority be changed? Do you know what the process is?

**Mr Rake**—I think it is in the technical modelling of the environmental impact statement. I would have to speak to the experts there.

**CHAIR**—You did mention crop-dusting. I know this has become a problem in many rural communities where hotel-like facilities and other facilities have been constructed. Has the local government applied a prior right to farm legislation for the area so that these issues are understood before developments take place?

**Mr Rake**—I am not up to date on that information.

**CHAIR**—That is something we might ask.

**Mr Rake**—Certainly, the zoning of that area is rural, rather than rural residential for the property Banjo. But in terms of the legislation, I do not know.

**CHAIR**—In many areas around Australia now, the prior right to farm protects farmers from such claims from people who decide to develop other facilities.

**Mr Rake**—That would seem to adequately address the concerns of the residents at Banjo.



**CHAIR**—Often in agriculture, there is also the use of insecticides and so on which can cause difficulties. I notice there are around 1,000 residents in Carwoola. For the record, can you tell us how many people belong to the Carwoola Community Association?

**Mr Rake**—The membership of the Carwoola Community Association is determined as being residents of the area, so we would consider all 1,000 to be members.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for appearing today.

[12.12 p.m.]

**BELL, Mr Harvey Alfred, Facilities Engineer, Greater Queanbeyan City Council**

**LYNCH, Mr Matthew Justin, Strategic Town Planner, Greater Queanbeyan City Council**

**MOORE, Mr Iain, Senior Strategic Planner, Greater Queanbeyan City Council**

**THORPE, Mr John Leslie, Projects Engineer, Greater Queanbeyan City Council**

**CHAIR**—On behalf of the Public Works Committee, I welcome you to this hearing. The committee has received a submission from the council. Are there any amendments that you wish to propose to your initial submission?

**Mr Bell**—Since submitting our submission, we have done some more work. So what we have is not so much an amendment as an extension of the concerns that we addressed in that submission.

**CHAIR**—I will invite you to make a brief statement, and you can outline those additional issues in your statement.

**Mr Bell**—Thank you for the time to allow us to address our concerns. As outlined in our written submission, our major concern is with the impact of the increased traffic during the peak hours. Our original submission generally accepted the assumptions in the traffic study and asked that they be extended to cover Canberra Avenue, which would look after the traffic travelling through Queanbeyan to Canberra, and not just on the Kings Highway between Queanbeyan and Bungendore.

The traffic report is in appendix H of the draft environmental impact statement, and page 1 of appendix H states that it was ‘to determine the impact such an increase in traffic would have on the Kings Highway between Queanbeyan and Bungendore and within the townships themselves’. We consider that this has not been adequately addressed and believe that there will be a significant impact, particularly at some key intersections within Queanbeyan. Our original submission referred to the two major ones: the one addressed in the report, being the Bungendore-Yass-Ellerton roundabout; and, on the western side of Canberra, the intersection of Lanyon Drive and Canberra Avenue, which is another intersection where two major key arterial roads come together.

The report also stated that the task to be undertaken included an infrastructure inventory. We consider that that needs to be extended to include Canberra Avenue through Queanbeyan and also address the impact on several rural intersections which were not referred to in that study.

**CHAIR**—Would you mind outlining those rural intersections? Are there a lot of them?

**Mr Bell**—No. The four rural intersections are Weetalabah, Captains Flat, which has been addressed by earlier witnesses, the Ridgeway and Regents Drive. They all occur within about four kilometres of Queanbeyan—between Queanbeyan and Bungendore.

The further analysis we have undertaken since our submission has increased council's concern in a couple of areas—first being that we disagree with the method of assessment of the road capacity for the Kings Highway. Council generally applies Austroad standards, which have been adopted by the major road authorities in Australia for assessment of any road and traffic issues. We have applied methods in Austroad's *Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice, Part 2—Road capacity*. Chapter 3 sets out a methodology for two-lane, two-way roads. We consider this the appropriate method.

The traffic study appears to have used a method more appropriate to a signalised intersection. I hope we are not splitting hairs, but the concern that arises from this is that the study indicated that the road capacity for the Kings Highway was 3,000 vehicles per hour. By applying the method which we consider appropriate, council considers that the maximum capacity is in the order of 1,800 vehicles per hour. That would occur with a fairly low level of service, at which there would be significant traffic delays and a lowering of traffic speed. The traffic volumes in the peak hour from the study are in the order of 2,200, which exceeds that 1,800 vehicles an hour—thus, we have a concern with the results from the study.

The study did not address the rural intersections. It referred mainly to the through road from Queanbeyan to Bungendore. Once you get closer to Queanbeyan, the traffic will start to be influenced by the four rural intersections before it reaches Queanbeyan. They would have a further impact and exacerbate the possible delays and safety aspects.

Road safety is also a major concern to council; in fact, I am sure it is a concern to all levels of government. A lot of funding now for roads needs to address road safety issues, and this is appropriate. The horizontal and vertical alignments are poor for the Kings Highway. As well, there are narrow shoulders and limited sight distance. We believe the accident history is poor and that this will deteriorate with increasing traffic. In fact, the accident history quoted in the traffic study currently meets DOTARS black spot funding criteria for casualty crashes. With the increasing traffic, there is a fairly good correlation that that would also increase the number of accidents, so we are expecting the number of casualty crashes per kilometre to increase in a similar ratio to the traffic increase. The result would be that, following commissioning of the headquarters, the casualty crashes per kilometre may increase to twice the minimum DOTARS criteria for black spot funding.

Referring to the rural intersections, the committee may be aware of recent council amalgamations in the area resulting in Greater Queanbeyan City Council now being responsible for a further area extending out to the east along the Kings Highway and now taking in some rural residential areas. We obviously have concern for our ratepayers who come into Canberra and Queanbeyan via the Kings Highway and from Weetalabah, Captains Flat, the Ridgeway and Regents Drive. These are four rural-residential areas and there is considerable commuter traffic from them; they are dormitory suburbs for both Canberra and Queanbeyan.

We think the increasing traffic will significantly impact on peak hour commuter traffic from those areas. There will be significant delays. At the moment, peak hour traffic is one way, either

into or out of Queanbeyan, and people entering the road from these intersections need to pick a gap in the traffic going in one direction. What will happen after the headquarters is established is that there will be similar levels of traffic in both directions, so trying to find a gap will be much harder. There will be a safety aspect if people get impatient in finding a smaller gap and trying to pick it in two directions. The traffic study in the EIS did not even comment on these intersections; they were not picked up as an issue at all.

We feel that the traffic study is deficient in that the methodology used to determine road capacity is not correct. It does not address the impact on traffic on Canberra Avenue through Queanbeyan. It does not address the impact on the rural intersections on the Kings Highway and it does not give appropriate emphasis to road safety. We request that a further traffic study to address these deficiencies be undertaken, and that should also advise on appropriate work to address traffic conditions.

Some of the work that may be needed is the upgrading of the Kings Highway from Queanbeyan right through to the headquarters, the upgrading of the rural intersections, and whatever improvements are needed through Queanbeyan—in particular, the two key intersections at either end of the town. Council's longer-term means of trying to overcome the traffic problems in Queanbeyan will be the construction of a northern ring road, which has been documented in earlier studies. This would pick up traffic east of Queanbeyan and take it around the northern side of Queanbeyan and into Canberra.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. I think committee members could see on the drive out there today that there is considerable pressure on the Kings Highway, and we noted the conditions at the Captains Flat intersection as well. Hypothetically, if the headquarters were to be approved under the New South Wales Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, what magnitude of contribution would council seek to impose on Defence, and how would it be calculated?

**Mr Bell**—I might ask Matt to comment on that from a planning point of view.

**Mr Lynch**—In the assessment of development applications, section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act enables council to levy contributions for the upgrading of amenities and facilities—in this case, including road infrastructure—or they may require that, in addition to those contributions, roads be upgraded to cater for the increased traffic generation. If this were an approval under the New South Wales planning system and Queanbeyan council were the consent authority, part of the conditions of development consent would certainly be the upgrading of considerable portions of those roads—which have been discussed in our submission. The actual extent of the upgrading is unknown at this stage. Council feels that the traffic study is deficient in some areas, so it is very difficult to pinpoint precisely what works would be appropriate for upgrading.

**CHAIR**—If you were to use the figure of 2,200 vehicles per hour in peak hour—is that right?

**Mr Bell**—Yes, in peak hour.

**CHAIR**—Is that the formula you would apply?

**Mr Bell**—To be fair, the increase in traffic is what we would use. The total traffic in the afternoon peak hour is 2,200. The contribution to that from Defence traffic is 800, so their effect on the road would be assessed based on the additional traffic load and not the total.

**CHAIR**—Have you had discussions with Defence about the differential and the different methodologies used to determine the traffic flow?

**Mr Bell**—To my knowledge, Greater Queanbeyan City Council has not had discussions with Defence. The Kings Highway is a state road, so it is the responsibility of the New South Wales government through the RTA. The actual development is in another council area—our adjoining council area—so the difficulty is that the impact is on us as an adjoining council, and so would not be in the immediate Defence authority. The ACT government are involved because part of the Kings Highway is through their area. I understand the intersection to be constructed for access to the Defence headquarters is in the ACT.

**CHAIR**—So would it be a good idea, a good starting point perhaps, to engage in some discussions?

**Mr Bell**—I believe so. In fact, we welcome discussions with Defence for an appropriate means to address our concerns.

**CHAIR**—Back to my original question: given that you can resolve the increase in traffic issue, what sort of contribution would you expect Defence to make? You have given me some insight into how you might derive that figure.

**Mr Bell**—John has some indication of cost involved.

**Mr Thorpe**—I can give you an indication of the costs. Kings Highway is a two-lane, two-way road at the moment. To carry the sort of traffic that is being projected would require the road to be duplicated to four lanes—so that is an additional two lanes.

**CHAIR**—For what length?

**Mr Thorpe**—For the full length, quite possibly. We are looking in particular at the Queanbeyan area but also out further. If you were to take that right the way through for approximately 20 kilometres, at the cost of \$1 million per lane per kilometre, the cost would be about \$40 million to upgrade the road for the full length—plus some intersection treatments, which Harvey has mentioned: the rural intersections plus the intersections within the town. An intersection upgrade within Queanbeyan would cost possibly half a million dollars per intersection, excluding land acquisition costs, if any are required.

**CHAIR**—What would your normal role be as a council in the execution of roadworks in New South Wales, if any?

**Mr Bell**—For local roads, we are the road authority. We fund, maintain and construct.

**CHAIR**—So these intersections would come under your responsibility as local roads?

**Mr Bell**—They are on the highway, so they become the responsibility of the state government. Upgrade works are generally done in consultation between the council and the roads authority. There is a proportioning of costs as to what is the through traffic part, and council could be contributing for works on the side roads and other upgrade works that are proportioned to the local roads. I guess that is why we are not giving a clear answer. Basically, the local roads are council's responsibility, there is the proportioning of the through highway works and then the effect of the headquarters and the proportioning there.

**CHAIR**—It sounds quite complicated. I think the federal government has allocated about \$22 million to Roads to Recovery, which I understand goes directly to local councils. Would the Greater Queanbeyan City Council be able to use some of the proceeds of that program for some of these works? Obviously there is pressure on these roads now.

**Mr Bell**—We have our Roads to Recovery program. It has not been earmarked for these works. Should we need to reconsider, that is an option for us.

**CHAIR**—Your local member, Mr Nairn, I am sure could put you right on that. I just wondered how that might impact on your doing some of these upgrades that obviously will be needed, regardless of whether or not the Defence headquarters establishes here. Would that be reasonable to assume?

**Mr Bell**—I think our part of the local Roads to Recovery is fairly small, because our road system is fairly tight and urban. Some of that money is already being used on the Tompsitt Drive upgrade.

**Mr Thorpe**—That was New South Wales funding.

**Mr Bell**—Sorry, that was New South Wales funding, not federal funding.

**Mr Thorpe**—The Roads to Recovery funding we have had in the past has been on Lowe Street, which is a local street. We are trying to get other Roads to Recovery funding for another local road within Queanbeyan, but I am not aware of any moneys from Roads to Recovery being directed towards this project.

**CHAIR**—Would this work have to be done anyway, whether or not the Defence headquarters were to establish here?

**Mr Bell**—Queanbeyan has had considerable growth in more than the recent years, and we expect that to continue. We expect the impact on our roads from that growth to keep going. So, yes, further down the track upgrades would be needed to cater for our own growth. With something like the Defence headquarters coming on quickly, our excess capacity is suddenly lost and five or 10 years—

**Mr Thorpe**—Twenty.

**Mr Bell**—or maybe even 20 years—of our growth is lost. So we are on the back foot.

**CHAIR**—Understood.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Mr Bell, who is responsible for actually getting the process started in terms of getting these roads upgraded, intersection work done or extra lanes put in? Is it the responsibility of the council or the state government to make that decision to get the process going?

**Mr Bell**—Formally, it is the responsibility of the state government. But in a lot of cases like this the initial response comes from the local council because it is impacting on their ratepayers, and the council works with the state authorities to try to meet the needs.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Given that, are you now moving that process forward? Obviously the problem is identified. You have outlined it in your submission, so I assume you are now taking it to the next level, which would be to have discussions with the state government or with the feds.

**Mr Bell**—We have already started some initial discussions, but we have not formalised that as yet.

**Mr JENKINS**—Has the municipality done a study of the economic benefit to the municipality, not to the whole region, of the project?

**Mr Bell**—No, we have not.

**Mr JENKINS**—Is there an upside as well as a downside?

**Mr Bell**—Yes.

**Mr JENKINS**—How close do they come to matching each other?

**Mr Bell**—I think that would be quite difficult. We have had a close relationship with Canberra and the growth of Canberra. The Defence Housing Authority is a major ratepayer in our area, and many Defence staff have made a home in Queanbeyan. We appreciate that, and we appreciate the benefit that they bring to our local economy. I do not know that the income to council from that into our local businesses covers the cost of some of the major infrastructure. What we are addressing in our submission is not so much the traffic that is coming to Queanbeyan. Of the Defence headquarters staff, 28 per cent have been assessed as living in the Queanbeyan area, another seven per cent will live in Bungendore and another 65 per cent will go through Queanbeyan to Canberra. They may stop and buy something there but it is through traffic and the economic benefits probably do not address that fully.

**Mr JENKINS**—First of all, I apologise that my first bowl of the over was a beamer. Now I will give you a gentler one. I think that we probably need to look at this issue: because this is a Commonwealth project that gets outside of the section 94 contribution of the state act, there is a difficulty in this case because the property is in another municipality, but that is not a unique situation. As a Victorian who does not really understand the intricacies of section 94, I ask: what would actually happen in a case like this where you had a private development in a municipality which had an impact on an adjacent municipality? Is there any opportunity for you to in some way share the contributions?

**Mr Lynch**—There are no cross-jurisdictional section 94 plans that can be levied under the planning act. They relate specifically to the council area. All councils in New South Wales would

probably acknowledge that this is a fault of the planning act and that we cannot have regard for regional impacts on major developments for the demands generated on the infrastructure. In that case, there would be no opportunity for an adjoining council to levy contributions or for the council for which that development was located to levy contributions—or the adjoining council, either.

**Mr JENKINS**—With regard to the Captains Flat Road intersection, there have been some works done there to create a cutting and a site line, but that seems to have been some time ago. Was it envisaged that at some stage there was going to be a straightening of the intersection?

**Mr Bell**—Not to my knowledge. There have been no capital works on the Captains Flat intersection for some considerable time. The layout of the intersection would have been to provide for the expected traffic coming out of Captains Flat Road from some time back.

**Mr JENKINS**—When the community of Carwoola started, would the subdividers have had to offer section 94 contributions?

**Mr Lynch**—Yes, they did.

**Mr JENKINS**—Does that then go into a general pool or does it go towards works specific to the development?

**Mr Lynch**—It goes to works specific to the development. The creation of a section 94 plan is premised on the understanding that a development of a particular scale will increase an additional demand on services and facilities in a known area. You have to have that nexus between the development and the services which will be impacted upon. So the section 94 plans have to say that a subdivision of 100 lots, for example, would require a road network of so much to cater for that population living there, and the contributions would be collected on that basis for that specific development.

**Mr JENKINS**—Was there any collection on the basis of the effect on the existing roads for the Carwoola community?

**Mr Lynch**—Yes, there was.

**Mr JENKINS**—But that was not at the Kings Highway end?

**Mr Lynch**—I am not too sure whether the entire length of the Captains Flat road, from the Kings Highway through to the Carwoola development, was included in the development contributions plan. The Carwoola subdivision was early- to mid-eighties, so it is probably 20 years old now, and the upgrade of the Kings Highway intersection may well have been a separate work to the contributions provided.

**Mr Bell**—The Greater Queanbeyan City Council has only been responsible for the Captains Flat road since February, so we do not have a good knowledge of the past financing of it.

**Mr JENKINS**—I am trying to get my head around the nature of section 94. In Victoria, a developer would have obligations but sometimes those would not come to fruition until all the



bits came together. There would be effort from the council, plus the developer's contribution, and then the project would go forward. That is the explanation that was given earlier: that any proposal only has to make a contribution on the proportion of the problem, rather than on the whole problem. I got a bit worried that we were saying, 'This is the dimension of the whole problem, and therefore it is this particular project's responsibility.' I hope that that is not what you were conveying.

**Mr Lynch**—No. The contributions payable and the amount of upgrading works that may be required to road intersections or whatever are apportioned as the development comes on stage. If it is a development in three stages, the monetary contributions to council would be paid as those stages come online, and any upgrading works to intersections would be required as the increased traffic triggers the need for that intersection to be upgraded.

**Mr JENKINS**—I have a final question which now becomes hypothetical because you do not have the jurisdictional responsibility. Defence will be involved in the upgrading and creation of the intersection where the road comes into the site from the Kings Highway. In a case that you would deal with, how far would the section 94 requirements go, beyond creating that intersection? Because it is a new entrance road, Defence are creating the problem and they have to deal with it. But are you suggesting that, in an analogous situation, there could be section 94 contributions that go beyond that requirement?

**Mr Lynch**—Yes. The developer would certainly have to upgrade the intersection to serve the development—no problems there. In terms of the upgrading of the road, section 94 contribution plans for roads are usually determined on a catchment basis; they look at through road traffic, other intersections and subdivisions that may impact on that catchment. For a development on the scale of the Defence headquarters, in an analogous situation it could very well be the case that, in addition to the upgrading of the intersection and certain portions of the road, monetary contributions for the maintenance of the road could be required to be paid in addition to that. In this case, assuming there are no jurisdictional problems with the different council areas, the state and the ACT, it could probably be extended through to Queanbeyan, because there is quite a significant impact on that road network.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much for your attendance here today.

**Proceedings suspended from 12.44 p.m. to 1.13 p.m.**

**CAMPBELL-WILSON, Mr Duncan, Officer in Charge, Molonglo Radio Observatory, University of Sydney**

**GREEN, Associate Professor Anne Josephine, Director, Molonglo Radio Observatory; and Associate Professor, School of Physics, University of Sydney**

**CHAIR**—I now welcome representatives of the Molonglo Radio Observatory, University of Sydney. The committee has received a submission from the university. Do you wish to propose any amendments to your original submission?

**Prof. Green**—We have no direct amendments but we have some comments.

**CHAIR**—I now invite you to make your comments.

**Prof. Green**—The Molonglo observatory is an important astronomical site and has been used for astronomy research for more than 40 years. It is conducting world-class research and has done so in radio astronomy for all that time. This proposed Defence headquarters site is five kilometres from our telescope. I guess that is the basic point. Not only is the telescope—which is called the Molonglo Observatory Synthesis Telescope, MOST—undertaking current research; it is also part of a funded program by the federal government to develop technologies for the next generation of radio telescopes, which is the Square Kilometre Array.

Let me give you a little background on the telescope. It is the largest telescope in the Southern Hemisphere. It operates day and night; we are a radio telescope. It receives radio waves; we are not a transmitter. It is very sensitive. As I outlined in our submission, we have the capacity to detect a thousandth of one mobile phone transmitting from the moon. That means we are very, very sensitive. We are located in a radio-quiet location. That was the original siting of the telescope, and we expected slow development as populations grew. We certainly did not expect a proposal to have a thousand people located five kilometres away. So that has been, I have to say, unwelcome, but I will elaborate on how we have progressed with that.

As well as doing research, we undertake student training. The data that we receive from the telescope is freely available worldwide. The MOST and our technology development is funded by the federal government through DEST. It is also funded by the Australian Research Council and the University of Sydney. The stakeholders, apart from those bodies, also include CSIRO. So we have a broad scope and we have collaborators and users worldwide.

Radio frequency interference is certainly the main threat from this proposed headquarters. Currently, we have footnote protection with the ACA, the Australian Communications Authority, until 2008, but this is for a very narrow band. Our proposed developments will take us outside that band, and of course we do not expect to have protection there. That is why radio frequency interference mitigation—RFI mitigation—is a very important part of our research. However, our present operations and our present observations are more vulnerable because we did not expect there to be such a heavy development so close and so soon.

Let me turn to the Headquarters Joint Operations Command. There will be impact on our telescope during the construction phase and also during the operation phase. We have had extremely good cooperation, and a very good relationship has developed with Defence, with the Defence personnel in charge of this project and with DSTO. So I would like to emphasise that we have had very cooperative work to try to manage the impact of this headquarters on our telescope operations. As I said, radio frequency interference is the principal impact. We have a draft memorandum of understanding currently under review to manage these effects and to mitigate where possible and, if it is not possible, then to negotiate some kind of compensation. This is in the last stages of being agreed to.

So the expected impact—and this is where we have done some more modelling and some more estimations since our submission—is that we believe there will be something like 5,000 equivalent computers on the site and perhaps another 1,000 mobile phones. Having told you how sensitive we are, that fills us with some dread. Nevertheless, we can do something to mitigate those effects.

We started this project for the environmental impact statement, and the Department of Defence funded a limited study whereby we had a transmitter sited at the proposed site and we measured at our telescope what impact that would have on our observations. Clearly, one single transmitter is not going to represent an installation of a thousand people coming backwards and forwards with all of the attendant computer controlled machines, mobile phones and all the rest of it. Nevertheless, it would certainly give us some idea. So we recorded the impact of this transmitter.

We have also done some modelling on how signals would be transmitted and how signals would be dissipated, because that will happen, from the site to our telescope. Our images will be destroyed if there is a transmitter of five milliwatts operating over an hour. That is not very much. Weather and atmospheric changes can vary this signal strength and, as I said, we have estimated what the effect would be of 5,000 computers. So the results are that it will be a catastrophic impact of 5,000 computer equivalents in an unshielded building, but you have heard from Defence that there is a proposal to shield the building, including meshing the windows. If the shielding has a leakage of only about one per cent, then I believe we can operate satisfactorily.

The modelling that we have done also shows that there is a huge benefit to planting vegetation on the intervening ridge, and that is also part of the plan. Mobile phones, especially in cars coming to and from, will be a problem, but we recognise that as we move outside our protected band we need to be clever with mitigating the effects of interference. Part of the work with Defence and hopefully future work will be to do some joint research into RFI mitigation.

In summary, MOST is an important research and educational instrument. We have substantial funding now and it continues at least until 2007 but, since the funding cycles are about three years, we expect to have ongoing funding. We have obligations from this funding to deliver science outcomes. The measured impact from the modelling and this single transmitter has given us some idea, but I have to emphasise that it is a very poor representation of the impact a full facility will have on our telescope.

The impact from the Headquarters Joint Operations Command will be during both construction and operation. Through construction, we believe it is mostly from mobile phones and computer controlled machines. We are hoping that there will be agreed guidelines to perhaps use low-power phones, daytime-only operations and various other things which can be done. The plan to plant vegetation on the intervening ridges is most welcome. We also welcome the proposal to have the building shielded, including the core building and perhaps the peripheral buildings. Shielding—in other words, building a Faraday cage—also requires the windows to be meshed. It has to be not with holes. For some of the peripheral buildings, clearly it is not necessary to have everything fully shielded. We are not trying to increase the budget by an unreasonable amount. Ongoing RFI mitigation research is clearly important to us, not only for our telescope but also for the Square Kilometre Array, which is the next generation telescope, because clearly it has to operate in the real world, and to try and find a truly radio-quiet zone is now no longer possible.

So we recognise the strategic importance of this Headquarters Joint Operations Command, but science and education are also a very high priority. I guess the bottom line is that we are cautiously optimistic that with the guidelines that have been set down, with building shielding and with planting vegetation we will actually be able to survive and our research will still be feasible. It is not going to be any good if we just have some high level, not very sensitive images. We do deep imaging—so very sensitive observations—and that is the research we have to continue.

**CHAIR**—You mentioned building shielding, plus the meshing of windows. When you are talking about building shielding, are you talking about just the Faraday cage? Is it your expectation that Defence was going to shield the building with the Faraday cage plus the mesh windows?

**Prof. Green**—The meshing of the windows is part of the Faraday cage. As I understand it, it just requires a metal skin on the building. It is actually fairly simple to do. It will add a cost, of course, but it is metal cladding and connected to the metal meshing on the windows, and that is the cage. It is not in addition.

**CHAIR**—I will ask Defence when they come back, but I thought this morning they were talking about two separate items—one was the Faraday cage, which was a very expensive exercise, and the other was just meshing the windows, which was far less expensive.

**Prof. Green**—Correct. I think the building walls have to have metal on them as well. I do not know whether the Faraday cage to which they were referring was for internal security. That is different—

**CHAIR**—No, they were talking about measures to mitigate the effects to the observatory. So, in your discussions with Defence to date, what has been your understanding as to what they will do?

**Prof. Green**—That they will put a metal skin on the building and that they will mesh the windows—but I am not sure whether that is just the core building or whether it includes all of the peripheral buildings. Clearly not all the peripheral buildings will require it. There may be

limited shielding of a single computer, for example, if there is a post office there or something that would not require complete shielding of all buildings.

**CHAIR**—I suppose the other option is to move, but that is a very costly one, I take it. Is there any idea of the cost of doing that?

**Prof. Green**—Our telescope is valued for insurance purposes in the order of \$15 million—that is the replacement cost. On the scale of things, the cost of research in astronomy is actually quite modest, although the next telescope that we hope to be part of is \$2 billion, and that is not insignificant. There is a problem: if we do get paid to move somewhere else then we need time to move. The telescope is not something you can just pick up, put in a suitcase and move. It is one mile long, and something equivalent needs to have the same kind of collecting area, which is 18,000 square metres, to be as sensitive. So we are hoping that we can get around that and we will not have to move.

**Mr RIPOLL**—You mentioned that a five-milliwatt power source over a duration of one hour would be enough to destroy your images. Can you give us some idea of what type of equipment equals five milliwatts?

**Mr Campbell-Wilson**—Five thousand computer equivalents unshielded at the HQJOC site will produce about a tenth of that power, as I understand.

**CHAIR**—That is half of one milliwatt.

**Mr Campbell-Wilson**—Yes. The figure of five milliwatts is from an experiment that we did. It was set, and it was devastating.

**Mr RIPOLL**—You are not expecting anything that high, though, with the facility in operation?

**Mr Campbell-Wilson**—My calculations—be they very rubbery—indicate that an unshielded facility in operation will get to within about a tenth of that value.

**Mr RIPOLL**—That is an unshielded building with—

**Mr Campbell-Wilson**—An unshielded building. If you put the shielding on and it is good then you can expect an attenuation factor of 100 of the signal.

**Prof. Green**—Clearly we want to operate in the regime without our images being destroyed. We are looking at one-hundredth of five milliwatts.

**Mr RIPOLL**—That is your expectation of the range necessary for you to be able to deliver your research.

**Prof. Green**—We are cautiously optimistic that we can be a good neighbour. It is a sensitive listening device, but we believe that we can coexist quite well.

**Mr RIPOLL**—How much impact does vegetation have on minimising any radio frequencies to your telescope?

**Mr Campbell-Wilson**—General indications are that every 100 metres of vegetation, like the dry sclerophyll forest in this district, would attenuate the signal by a factor of 10. So one kilometre of vegetation is a huge amount.

**CHAIR**—Presumably that vegetation will take some time to grow big enough to form some kind of barrier. So you are not going to have that benefit until those trees grow.

**Mr Campbell-Wilson**—That is correct.

**Prof. Green**—It will take two or three years.

**CHAIR**—What height would they have to be?

**Mr Campbell-Wilson**—I anticipate that we need a height of at least one metre before we will see significant attenuation.

**Prof. Green**—That is not very high if you put in tube stock. If something is planted now—the HQJOC project is not going to even start for another year—it is feasible.

**Mr JENKINS**—How close is your nearest neighbour now?

**Prof. Green**—Half a mile or about one kilometre.

**Mr JENKINS**—Do you have any sorts of protocols with those people?

**Prof. Green**—We have a narrow band operation and we are right in the middle of the mobile phone band, but we have footnote protection and an agreement with Telstra that they will not transmit within our band. There are a handful of mobile phones, but that is all. There is a big difference between a handful of mobile phones and 1,000.

**Mr JENKINS**—So nothing that is happening in the surrounds at the moment is of concern?

**Mr Campbell-Wilson**—We have identified no emission in the local area as being damaging to the telescope imaging.

**Prof. Green**—We can detect Canberra. Unfortunately, with the way the telescope operates we are most vulnerable when we point towards the north, and that is where the headquarters is.

**Mr JENKINS**—Is there any greater effect in a sitting week?

**Mr Campbell-Wilson**—I do not know—maybe.

**Mr JENKINS**—There is a bit of research for you.

**Mr Campbell-Wilson**—In one election in the 1990s we encountered our first evidence of the influence of an election on the telescope, and that was that we saw mobile phones start to appear in our band. But that has been mitigated since.

**CHAIR**—From what you said, I take it that you are very satisfied with the level of consultation you are having with Defence?

**Prof. Green**—Yes, there has been excellent cooperation with the project team and various other personnel in Defence. As I said, they funded the first EIS, the limited experiment; we are hopeful there may well be future research; and they have shown great willingness for this memorandum of understanding, although there are a few details to be sorted.

**CHAIR**—But that is well progressed?

**Prof. Green**—Yes, I have the draft.

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much for your attendance here today.

[1.31 p.m.]

**SHEPPARD, Mr Duncan, Executive Officer, ACT Forests**

**TAYLOR, Mr Hilton, Manager, Strategic Planning and Forest Management, ACT Forests**

**CHAIR**—Welcome. The committee has received a submission from ACT Forests. Are there any amendments to your original submission?

**Mr Taylor**—There are no amendments to the original submission.

**CHAIR**—If you would like to make a brief opening statement, we can then proceed to questions.

**Mr Taylor**—In my opening statement I would like to reaffirm four key points that were outlined in our original submission and then have a brief discussion about a further point that has come to our attention since the time of our original submission. The four key points have a central theme that relates to the maintenance of our current activities within the Kowen Forest plantation, which adjoins the site to the north-west. Really, we do not expect anything from our neighbours, apart from enabling us to continue with our current operations.

The four key areas that relate to this are our commercial operations, which include the use of heavy machinery for harvesting, site preparation, ploughing, planting—things like that; the aerial application of herbicides and fertilizers on the site; from time to time, high impact recreation events which incorporate noise, overnight events and large numbers of the public in the forest areas both day and night; and, further to that, operations which include fire management issues that incorporate both hazard reduction burning and, from time to time, suppression of wildfire, which mean we need constant and unfettered access to the area. The specific reference to fire that we made in our submission was to ensure that any additional buffering that was required by the site was actually incorporated within their site so that it did not impact upon our operations as they stand at this time.

The new issue that I would like to discuss briefly is the issue of an emergency access track from the north-west side of the site adjacent to the rail corridor and linking onto the Kings Highway. This area is one that we have no real concerns with as long as it does not impede our access around the southern side of our plantation estate. Currently there is an area of about 50 metres wide between our plantation boundary and our fenced boundary. Within that area, we have a road that is constructed and suitable for forest access and maintenance purposes adjacent to our plantation, right along the edge of the pine. I understand that there are two options that could be considered for using this: one is to use the existing road as the emergency access or egress and/or to build a new access track within that unused piece of land.

The issue from the point of view of ACT Forests is that, if the existing track is used, we would like to maintain our own access to that at all times in an unfettered way. Alternatively, if a new track is to be constructed in parallel to the existing track, we will need provided the access that is required. Then I suspect there may be some significant earthworks and perhaps some



environmental issues that would need to be addressed through the appropriate land management authorities in the ACT.

**CHAIR**—Obviously you have been getting on with discussions with Defence. Is it my understanding that you are drafting with them a memorandum of understanding?

**Mr Taylor**—That is certainly our intention. To my knowledge, to date we have not had any formal response to the particular issues that we have raised. I understand that one of my colleagues has been approached by Jack Plenty with regard to the access issue. We are happy to cooperate with that and we would like to progress a memorandum of understanding.

**Mr RIPOLL**—With regard to the land access that you are talking about, that would not be within the tighter zone they are talking about in terms of the perimeter fence inside? It does not come close to that or anywhere near that? It is more in the greater area of the property?

**Mr Taylor**—The access road that I am referring to is actually in the ACT. It is on the northern side of the railway line and runs parallel to the southern boundary of our plantation estate. So it is actually outside—

**Mr RIPOLL**—So it does not have any impact directly within the site facility itself?

**Mr Taylor**—I guess there will be an additional road link and gate and security point to provide access onto the emergency exit.

**Mr JENKINS**—What is the arrangement between ACT Forests and those who have responsibility for the upkeep of the railway?

**Mr Taylor**—At this stage, I do not think there is any strict arrangement. The railway easement is outside and adjacent to our land. We cooperate as neighbours but with very minimal interaction, really.

**Mr JENKINS**—Are you concerned that the development of this secondary road will be outside of the easement?

**Mr Taylor**—My concern is that between our constructed road and the fenced barrier, which is adjacent to the railway line, there are approximately 50 metres of land. The development could take place in that area, and I assume that there would need to be an agreement with the ACT government land and planning or the EPA to get approvals for the further development of roads within that area, because there is natural forest and bush in that area. There may also need to be agreement or engineering solutions with the Rail Infrastructure Corporation to ensure that drainage et cetera from the new road construction does not impact upon the rail easement.

**CHAIR**—It may be useful if Mr Taylor could come up here and indicate on the map what he is talking about. Would that be helpful? Do you mind, Mr Taylor?

**Mr Taylor**—Certainly, Madam Chair. On this map it is referred to as 'secondary access'. You can see that there is an unplanted easement between the railway line and the red boundary fence and the edge of our pine plantation. Within that unplanted easement, there is potential to

construct a new easement. Alternatively, the existing track adjacent to the plantation could be used. However, my understanding is that use of the existing track would mean that Defence would like to put gates on some of our roads that join the track, and that would inhibit our unfettered access, which we may need for firefighting and general operations.

**Mr JENKINS**—Mr Taylor, you are flagging the concerns of ACT Forests but I am not sure you are reacting to any definite proposals. You just wish to make sure that we are aware of your concerns.

**Mr Taylor**—That is correct. We have no opposition to it. I am just outlining potential issues that will need to be addressed and worked through as we carry it forward.

**CHAIR**—Thank you for appearing before us today.

[1.41 p.m.]

**HYLES, Mr Robert Roy, Shareholder and Director, Woodlands Pty Ltd; and Partner, W.R. Hyles and Co.**

**CHAIR**—Welcome to the hearing, Mr Hyles. Would you like to comment on the capacity in which you appear before the committee today?

**Mr Hyles**—I am appearing as a landowner and a business partner of Woodlands Bungendore.

**CHAIR**—The committee has received a submission from you. Do you want to make any amendment to it?

**Mr Hyles**—No.

**CHAIR**—I now invite you to make a brief opening statement.

**Mr Hyles**—We have cooperated with Defence and their contractors. We do not want to jeopardise our position and relationship with Defence. The overriding factor is the expectation of fair and reasonable compensation and acquisition proceeds: if we are treated fairly, we will be happy. In my submission, I went through some financial costs. In a letter dated 18 September 2003, we were advised that the costs associated with the acquisition are not compensated until the acquisition actually takes place. We were very pleased that Air Commodore Jack Plenty stated in his response to my PWC submission that we have entitlements to a compensation claim associated with the land acquisition process, irrespective of the outcomes of the acquisition. There is a little conflict there which I hope is sorted out. I hope Jack's letter is correct, but I fear that the land acquisition might overrule us or run us around the pole again.

On the issue of entry onto Woodlands land, my submission points out that we still own the land and that there have been problems in the past. However, Defence has developed a protocol for access, which is working. I am pleased to read that Defence is committed to maintaining a strong relationship with us. The issue of Aboriginal heritage and artefacts found outside site 5—HQJOC—remains a concern. We feel that Defence has an obligation to complete the registration process, and we will be seeking information on how these finds will affect us in the future.

Regarding secondary access, we accept that Defence will decide on their secondary access road location. I mentioned it in our submission to link the Aboriginal heritage issues and the advantage of our farm forestry operation. I am also currently looking into wind farming, so there is a power connection from the wind farm and from the powerlines on Hoskinstown Road. The original concept of dealing with one owner will be maintained as well. The proviso with all of the above is that we will need legal access on this road if option 3 in the environmental impact statement is ever built. As I understand it, they are proceeding with option 1—along the railway and back to the Kings Highway—but I mentioned it just in case.

There were some delays in answering the questions we asked. Our PWC submission asks questions, which are currently being answered by Mr Paul Gallagher, a consultant of APP. As

Defence plans are developed, our questions are being answered. In conclusion, we are happy with the present management team headed by Air Commodore Jack Plenty. If all goes well, we will be very happy.

**CHAIR**—Good. Basically, that was the question I was going to ask you: are you satisfied that Defence has answered the questions that arose from your submission and that you are making good progress?

**Mr Hyles**—Yes, we are making good progress. The question about Aboriginal artefacts found outside site 5 has not really been answered, but it will be in time—there is no rush for that.

**CHAIR**—What are your main concerns if that is not completed?

**Mr Hyles**—The unknown of having Aboriginal artefacts identified. Once they are identified they cannot be disturbed until they are registered. It might hold up farm plans; it might prevent us from doing anything in the future. I am the fifth generation on the property and who knows how many more generations there will be. Once the artefacts are found—it might be hundreds of generations. The future is unknown.

**Mr JENKINS**—I have a comment rather than a question. The observation that you make that the communication channels are better than they were earlier on is important. All the other things are perhaps of a legal nature that you have to see through, but I think we are heartened by the response that you got from your original submission.

**Mr RIPOLL**—I have no questions. I am satisfied that you are going through the correct process and I am happy with that.

**CHAIR**—Back on the secondary access route, can you outline a little more clearly for us what the difficulties are there? In your submission, you say that a subsequent survey has determined that there is insufficient space for the secondary access road within some parts of the southern side of the corridor due to the position of the rail line. Has that been resolved now?

**Mr Hyles**—I am told by Jack and the rest of the team that they are still working on it and that it will be part of the supplementary EIS report. They think they can get around the problems by acquiring further land to build their road—you would probably have to ask them more about that, though. At this stage, I am told they can get around the problems.

**Mr JENKINS**—Is the problem that there are some cuttings rather than level—

**Mr Hyles**—The problem stems from the environmental impact statement, where they stated that the existing track could be used as the escape route. There are a few things wrong with that. The existing track is on the north side of the railway line. New South Wales Rail have a closed line approach. They are not allowing any more crossings, as such, so it would be difficult to get to the north side of the track. There is a requirement that the track remains 15 metres from the line at all times. Where this northern track cuts in, it kisses the sleepers in some places. So the north side was ruled out. They looked at the south side, and the dirt embankments and things make the line go right to the rail boundary. So they have to now acquire more private land.

**CHAIR**—Does it affect you?

**Mr Hyles**—No. I can see some farm advantages for a road through our farm. I have quite a large farm forest happening for which I will need logging trucks and all sorts of things. The wind farm that we are negotiating at the moment will need an access road. The power could be supplied from the wind farm. In the original environment impact statement they were talking about having two independent power supplies coming into the headquarters. I was thinking one of them could have been from the Hoskintown Road, but I understand that has all changed now and only one supply is needed.

**CHAIR**—Thank you, Mr Hyles.

[1.51 p.m.]

**SMART, Mr Wallace John, Land Use Planner, Southern Region, Roads and Traffic Authority New South Wales**

**CHAIR**—Welcome. We have received a submission from you. Are there any amendments to the original submission?

**Mr Smart**—I have an additional one that was put to the initial submission that was made some time ago. If I could read to that—

**CHAIR**—Yes. Do you have a copy?

**Mr Smart**—Yes. I can leave this copy with you.

**CHAIR**—Thank you.

**Mr Smart**—First of all, we welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposal. Basically, the RTA are concerned about possible road safety and traffic management issues that would result from the proposed facility during both the construction phase of the facility and the ongoing operation of the site. These areas of concern have been broken down into specific issues, as I will outline now.

In the initial construction phase, the impacts of construction traffic have not adequately been addressed, we feel, in the draft EIS. There is only minimal reference given to the construction related traffic, and that has been limited to the use of the proposed Queanbeyan heavy vehicle bypass. It is expected that there will be significant numbers of heavy vehicles associated with the construction process, with a corresponding reduction in the level of service on the Kings Highway east of Queanbeyan, especially up a steep incline north of Thurrallilly Street. The steep grade is presently only one lane in each direction for the first 300 to 400 metres before an overtaking lane is provided. It is recommended that an investigation be undertaken to determine the feasibility of providing a climbing lane over this length to offset these deficiencies. There are other lengths of lesser grades without overtaking lanes that would also reduce transport efficiency with the introduction of slow-moving heavy vehicles associated with the construction of the proposed facility. All construction traffic that would normally pass through Queanbeyan should be restricted to the heavy vehicle bypass which is presently under construction. That was the section on construction traffic.

I would like to address at-grade intersections along the length of the road on the state network. I should have prefaced my remarks by saying that our remarks are directed to the state road system, which is the Kings Highway and Yass Road. There are a number of at-grade intersections between the proposed facility and Queanbeyan which have not been adequately addressed in the draft EIS. The main intersections are at Weetalabah Road, the Ridgeway, Captains Flat Road—which is main road 270—and Regent Drive. These intersections are already experiencing tolerable delays during peak periods with traffic trying to access the Kings Highway. However, with the potential increase of up to 20 per cent in traffic volumes on some

sections of the Kings Highway, delays to the side roads are expected to increase. With the expected increase in delays, there is the potential for accident rates to increase at these intersections.

The third point is on the Kings Highway level of service. The Kings Highway between Bungendore and Queanbeyan is presently operating at level of service C. With potential increases in traffic volumes of up to 20 per cent on some sections, the level of service for this length of road is expected to drop to level of service D. While this may be tolerable over this length, it highlights the need for possible intervention works as part of the proposal, which may include strategically located overtaking lanes.

The fourth point is about the intersection of Bungendore Road, which is the main road or state road 51, Yass Road or state road 52, and Ellerton Drive roundabout. The intersection of Yass Road, Bungendore and Ellerton Drive will be affected in terms of delays as highlighted in the draft EIS. It is considered that additional consideration should be given to the potential impacts of the future residential release areas along Ellerton Drive. It is also considered that the Yass Road approach will be significantly affected more than was highlighted in the draft EIS. Serious consideration should be given to further studies of this major intersection to determine the suitability of the present roundabout configuration with the potential to increase capacity or the conversion of the present roundabout to a fully signalised intersection.

The next point is 'Other transport options', and the first of these points is bus services. While some consideration was given to providing a special bus service, there was insufficient detail on how this proposal might be implemented. The RTA considered that the concept has merit and would encourage the use of regular bus services to the facility to reduce the number of vehicles on the state network. However, more in-depth analysis of the proposal would need to be undertaken to assess its viability.

The second point under 'Other traffic options' is carpooling. It is unclear how the figure of 1.25 persons per vehicle was derived and whether this figure is actually sustainable through the life of the facility. Much of the argument for the 860 vehicle movements—one way, that is—to the proposed facility, as opposed to a figure of in excess of 1,000 vehicle movements, is based on this scenario. If this figure could not be substantiated or maintained, many of the calculations or assumptions made in the draft EIS regarding level of service on the Kings Highway and at major intersections become very questionable. That was the last point in our submission.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. We had quite an interesting discussion with Queanbeyan council over some of the road issues. How do you see the resolution? What do you see as the responsibility of Defence in terms of any contribution to resolving some of the pressures on roads?

**Mr Smart**—A bit more study needs to be done on the effects—if there is a drop in, for instance, the level of service along that length of road and to what extent this particular development may contribute to the drop in level of service. Obviously there is already some concern at the moment with the existing traffic. The facility is obviously going to add to it, so to a certain extent there would be some proportional element involved from this facility to assist in identifying the locations where we may be able to address the level of services, especially on the steeper grades, as I highlighted earlier.

**CHAIR**—We did not seem to get very far pursuing that line with the Queanbeyan City Council earlier in terms of proportion. There seemed to be disagreement, for a start, on the volume of traffic increase. Do you have some comment to make on that? I think the Queanbeyan City Council was using the Austroads measure and Defence was using something different.

**Mr Smart**—As far as the level of service calculation is concerned?

**CHAIR**—As far as the calculation of increased traffic volume is concerned.

**Mr Smart**—We have tried to stick to the existing data on that section of road between the proposed facility and Yass Road. The latest figures we have for that are from the year 2000. We basically took the figures that were quoted in the draft EIS. We did not doubt those figures, except for the fact that they may not get down to the 860 vehicles that were suggested; they may be slightly higher if the car pooling is not sustainable.

**CHAIR**—So you are basically happy with the proposition that Defence put in the traffic volume study?

**Mr Smart**—That is correct

**CHAIR**—You do not have any argument with the methodology?

**Mr Smart**—No. We basically restricted our comments to that particular intersection. There may be some justification for further analysis as to where the traffic is going to go once it hits the outskirts of Queanbeyan. I do not think we as an RTA are in a position to suggest that those figures are going to be any different from what was suggested in the EIS.

**CHAIR**—Since your meeting in April, has Defence provided you with any further information on traffic management and road capacity?

**Mr Smart**—Not at this stage, no.

**CHAIR**—What process is currently being entered into between you and the Greater Queanbeyan City Council? I understood from the council this morning that they have not had discussions with anyone over this yet. I think my understanding was correct.

**Mr Smart**—That could be the case. We have only had some initial discussions with council as to what they thought were the problems. In those discussions I stated that we would be confining our comments to the state road network, generally only up to that intersection of Yass Road and Bungendore Road, and that we felt that council were probably in a better position to comment on the traffic implications further west of that location.

**CHAIR**—I note that the committee has not received any submission from the Yarrowlumla Shire Council, in whose area this facility is being developed.

**Mr Smart**—That may have been because of the recent amalgamation of the two councils. They have now amalgamated into the Greater Queanbeyan Council. That is that is my understanding.



**CHAIR**—The Greater Queanbeyan City Council did mention that. Maybe that has complicated it a bit further. Are you anticipating that a fuller consultation process will take place?

**Mr Smart**—Yes, we would like to see a consultation process between us and the other stakeholders to determine more properly the impacts and then, if we can see that there is some room for improvement, what proportion may be affected by the Defence Force facility going out to that location.

**Mr RIPOLL**—In the second dot point in your submission you talked about the possible need to bring forward the proposed development of the Queanbeyan northern ring road.

**Mr Smart**—That was in the original submission.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Are there any implications in bringing that forward?

**Mr Smart**—Other than, obviously, cost?

**Mr RIPOLL**—Other than, obviously, the cost. It is quite a large cost—you put your submission that it is \$100 million.

**Mr Smart**—Yes. I think that is more of a long-term issue. I do not think this facility is going to warrant the need to bring that forward in a very short time. There are a lot of other issues involved with that link-up that need to be taken into consideration besides the Defence Force going out there. I do not think Defence going out there is the driving force that should push it forward above any of the other considerations.

**Mr RIPOLL**—What influence does your organisation have in terms of the need to upgrade any of the roads in relation to this facility?

**Mr Smart**—As I think was highlighted in the original submission, the maintenance issues that we would have—if you are just talking about immediate concerns—would be with construction traffic, heavy vehicles, and the wear and tear on the state road system, especially east of Queanbeyan to the site. I did note in the draft EIS that there could be some need following the construction phase to look at the road system to see if any rehabilitation was required.

**Mr RIPOLL**—You also mentioned in your submission that your organisation was not invited to comment on the draft EIS. Since that time have you made some form of submission to the EIS process or through this process?

**Mr Smart**—Yes, through this process. This letter addresses the issues that were raised in part of the draft EIS that related to the traffic implications for the site.

**Mr JENKINS**—Concerns have been raised with us in particular about the Captains Flat Road-Kings Highway intersection. Do you wish to make any comments about that intersection?

**Mr Smart**—Other than I did mention it there. At this stage I think there are concerns for the delays there. If delays are going to increase, obviously the best way to overcome those delays is

for some form of alternative road junction treatment there. At the moment, there is a right turn bay for northbound vehicles, which is basically a safety movement, and they are allowed to then pick gaps in the oncoming traffic. To come left out of Captains Flat Road, there is a minimal acceleration lane. Once the peak periods hit, it can often also lock up and queues can develop.

There was mention in the EIS that obviously the traffic that will be travelling to the site will be going in the opposite direction. To a certain extent, that is true, but I think it is just a general increase in traffic on that road that will cause some delays, especially to those side roads which are roads on the opposite side of the road, rather than the Captains Flat side, which only really has to deal with the existing incoming traffic during the peak periods. We have not looked at that particular intersection ourselves or in conjunction with council to see what intersection treatments could be looked at that could be driven by this particular facility going in that site, but we are quite willing to go down that track. We have only really addressed the issues and just highlighted that as a possible additional intersection which will require some further monitoring.

**Mr JENKINS**—Besides the ring road, can we say that the effect of the headquarters project is that it would lead your organisation to having to look at other aspects of upgrading the Kings Highway and bring them slightly forward?

**Mr Smart**—That is possible. We do not have anything on our books at this stage between the particular facility and Queanbeyan, but that is not to say that the increase in traffic may not need us to reassess that situation. But at this stage we do not have anything planned that we would be looking at bringing forward as a result of the facility. I think I mentioned earlier the steep incline pulling straight up out of Queanbeyan. Obviously that has been difficult for us in the past because of cost factors associated with the terrain there and the minimal area that we have to work in.

**Mr JENKINS**—So the significance of the sharing of information is to see whether certain thresholds of use of the road are reached for you to then look more closely at what might be required?

**Mr Smart**—I think so. The point that Madam Chair picked up earlier is correct—that there has not been enough consultation between us and council at least and the other stakeholders to address the new facility going in. It has generally been to a certain extent in silos looking at the draft EIS.

**CHAIR**—Will you be initiating this consultation with Queanbeyan City Council?

**Mr Smart**—We can certainly take that on board.

**CHAIR**—And then I presume with Defence?

**Mr Smart**—Yes. I am more than happy to see that go forward.

**CHAIR**—We have no further questions, so thank you very much for appearing.

[2.09 p.m.]

**DAVEY, Colonel James David, Director Command, Intelligence and Support Systems, Department of Defence; Electronic Systems Division, Command and Support Systems Branch, Defence Materiel Organisation**

**MARMANIDIS, Ms Kitty, Project Manager, Headquarters Joint Operations Command Project, Department of Defence**

**PLENTY, Air Commodore Brian, Director General, Headquarters Joint Operations Command Project, Department of Defence**

**CHAIR**—I would now like to recall the Department of Defence witnesses, and I would remind everyone that they are still under oath. I invite you to make some supplementary statements in support of your submission and to comment on the evidence that has come before the committee today.

**Air Cdre Plenty**—We will be sitting down with the New South Wales Department of Environment and Conservation to go through the issues they have raised to deal with waste management, power and sustainability. We will also approach that issue through the output specification documentation in the tendering process. That is a key vehicle for us in facilitating the project in achieving its ESD objectives. That requires a target of a five-star green building rating equivalent. We are going to use the tender process to seek competitive solutions to meet those design objectives. Defence has not had any direct contact with the New South Wales Department of Environment and Conservation. To date, contact with them has been through the environmental impact statement work, which is done independently of Defence, as an independent study, and is not considered to be a Defence document. We have contracted some consultants to put together the environmental impact statement. At their focus groups and workgroups, the consultants got input not only from the New South Wales Department of Environment and Conservation but from the other stakeholders as well. So that is where there has been input into that documentation from those people. So people are correct when they say they have not had direct consultation with Defence, but that is because that is the process to date for the EIS activity.

**CHAIR**—You say that the consultants will be in discussion. Will they actually be in discussion with the New South Wales department?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—No. Now that the EIS stage is finished, we will be doing that as a project.

**CHAIR**—Will you or your consultants be in discussion with the Australian Greenhouse Office?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Yes, indeed. In fact, Defence is a founding member of the Green Building Council as well.

**CHAIR**—So both Defence and your consultants will engage with the Australian Greenhouse Office?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Yes. Once the EIS process is done, it will essentially be Defence doing the liaison, as opposed to our other consultants. From time to time we may well need to bring in consultants if there are issues we need to get further advice on.

**CHAIR**—But all those things will be factored into your design tender?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Yes, in the output specifications that the tenderers have to respond to. On the matters raised by Carwoola—and I will treat traffic separately—regarding TV, radio and mobile phone interference caused by the facility, there will be no radio transmissions from the facility. All our communications with other parts of Defence will be done through landline to HMAS *Harman*. If transmission is required, it will be through *Harman* or through landline as it goes to various places. There will be no transmitters on site. There will certainly be some antennae on site but they will be reception antennae, with the exception of one antenna for satellite communications, for emergency backup. Satellite communications are very directional, very pinpointed, so there will be nothing coming out of the headquarters that will interfere with radio, television and mobile phone communications in the area.

**CHAIR**—Did you say there will be a tower?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—No, there will not be.

**CHAIR**—Just satellite communications?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Yes, and that will be a very small directional antenna mounted on the building. Mention was made of mobile phone security risks and jammers. I am not aware of why someone might have said that in the past. Where mobile phones are a security risk to Defence is where they are taken inside facilities and not turned off, because they can transmit information from inside those facilities if they are still on. Defence gets around that by requiring people to submit their mobile phones on arrival at the facility. They are turned off and placed in an appropriate locker until the person leaves the facility. That is the security side for mobile phones, so I am unsure of where the confusion might have arisen about mobile phones and jammers being required. Regarding the comment about Potts Point, I am not across that. Potts Point has transmitting capability and therefore the TVs around Potts Point might have been impacted by transmissions. I do not know. We heard that comment in our discussions, and that is about the best I can say about where it might have arisen from. I say again on the public record that this facility will not have transmitting capability, in the sense of radio transmitters.

**Mr RIPOLL**—And that would be in line too with the requirements and the MOU that you have with the Molonglo radio research station.

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Indeed, yes. Regarding the visual and noise impacts, I will cover noise first. The construction will be constrained to certain working hours. At the moment, that is between seven in the morning and six in the evening, Monday to Friday, and from seven in the morning until one o'clock in the afternoon on Saturday, and not outside of those hours. If there were a requirement to go outside of those hours, because of delays in the project or a certain bit

of construction going on, we would require the consortia to keep us advised in a planning sense and we would advise people. We see that as a most unusual situation. So those are the working hours and, hence, the noise impact from a construction sense.

Regarding the visual impact, certainly a building will have an impact because there is no building there at the moment. We intend to mitigate that visual impact by landscaping and by putting in trees. The building itself will only be a two- or three-storey building. It will not be above the visual horizon for those in the area, and it will be of an appropriate colour to attempt to blend into the background. There will be light emitted from the building through the windows in the evenings. As staff leave, the building systems will close the lights down. There will be some security lighting. Our intention is that it will be the minimum required. It will not be a broad beam; it will be focused beams required just for that security purpose. So we recognise those issues and we are attempting to ameliorate them as best we can.

A comment was made regarding the property to the south and continuing farming practices. We do not see any issue with those particular land-holders continuing farming practices as they currently do. There was a comment made about crop-dusting. We do not have a problem with crop-dusters operating from the local airstrip next door. All we will require is contact from the land-holder when crop-dusting is going to take place—and that will happen. It is a very easy process, and we do that on other bases around Australia where there are crop-dusters, gliders or that sort of aviation activity. Also, we have had initial contact with ACT Forests about the helicopter work they do. We will take up their helicopter requirements with them, and they can just advise us when it is going on. In that sense, there will not be any impact on those activities taking place. The farming activities going on at the Banjo property can continue.

**CHAIR**—So the aerial spraying and so on does not have any impact on you?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—We will certainly find out what it is. If the wind is blowing in the wrong direction, there might well be issues with that, depending on what is being sprayed.

**CHAIR**—Machinery operation noise from that is not a factor?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—No, it is not.

**CHAIR**—Burning and other activities?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—No. The only thing is the control of feral animals—and I have spoken to the land-holder directly. Clearly, we do not want the round that misses the animal coming across the Defence site. Otherwise they can continue normal farming practices. We intend, if at all possible, to have no impact on ACT Forests activity. I have mentioned helicopter work, and that can continue. The matter I heard raised—and I must admit I did not hear it clearly from down the back of the room—about a northern access route along the railway line is an option at the very early stages of consideration. If, engineering wise, we cannot put that southern access road through, then that becomes an issue. Clearly, to get across we have to go across the rail corridor with level crossings, and we are in the early stages of discussions with the Rail Infrastructure Corporation on that matter. But it is an option that we do not wish to pursue. In the first instance, we are looking at that southern route. So, if that southern route is applicable, we will not be impacting on ACT Forests at all, although we will keep having discussions with them about our

people using the forest, as normal citizens would, for running, jogging and those sorts of activities. Regarding the points raised by Mr Hyles, I do not have any advice on the heritage issues about the Aboriginal articles, but we are certainly researching what obligations might be there—for him, for us or for others.

**Mr JENKINS**—I take it the issue there is that, in the course of doing the required investigations, he is concerned that artefacts have been identified, which possibly should be registered, that will be outside the land that you will acquire?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Yes. Clearly on the land that we acquire it is our matter and we will manage that. When the initial surveys were being done, a secondary access road option was looked at that went from the proposed site through the parts of his property, and that is where the surveyors found these other items. Clearly, if we do not put that secondary access road in, that will not be on any property owned by the Commonwealth and it will be a matter for Mr Hyles. We are doing some research—and I do not have the answer now—on what the obligations might be because of those discoveries.

The matter of roads and transport is clearly an issue, and we recognise it as an issue. The environmental impact statement had a number of tables in the back end on the surveys done. I can say for the record that Austroads standards were used for both the draft and the supplementary report. The supplementary report has a lot more detail, with other studies done. I am unsure of whether the Queanbeyan council might have had some issue with the numbers there and the models used, but I am advised by our consultants that the Austroads study standards were used for that one.

The supplementary report to the draft environmental impact statement has more details both in the text and in the tables in the back end on further studies done on the impact of vehicles on those road intersections. With regard to the ones we travelled on today—through the Yass Road, Ellerton Drive and Bungendore Road intersection and the Captains Flat Road intersection—it does not have detail on those smaller rural intersections: that is, the ones between the roundabout and out to the Captains Flat turnoff. That has not been done.

On the RTA advice, we have looked at bus services in the draft EIS and further in the supplementary report. We have looked at the impact of removing 120 vehicles from the traffic moving to and from the headquarters. That has a minor impact. From the assessments available to us it will not change the need for those intersections to be upgraded in some manner. The figure used for carpooling of 860-odd vehicles is a New South Wales RTA figure for carpooling and was taken on an average across Australia from their research. Clearly it is going to depend on whether or not people do carpool, and that is something we do not know. People carpool at the moment within Canberra to get to Russell Offices and other places. I see people carpooling to get out to this location—either they have only one vehicle themselves or they happen to live close by. But exactly how many will do it is unknown at this stage.

Again, with regard to the comment from the New South Wales RTA about discussions with Defence, that is accurate because it has been done in the EIS process, and we will continue discussions with them and discussions on roads and the impacts on roads. They were invited to—and I understand they did attend—the EIS process discussions on what the impacts might be.

**CHAIR**—In relation to the EIS, could the committee have a copy of the supplementary report?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—You certainly can. At the moment, it is in draft form with my scribble on it but, when it is complete, yes.

**CHAIR**—Thank you.

**Air Cdre Plenty**—That completes all the comments I have based on other comments I have heard here during the day. I am happy to have questions if you have them.

**CHAIR**—I have one on the secondary road. If you go ahead with that, Mr Hyles seemed to think that you may have to acquire some additional land. Is that right?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—The secondary access road will be an all-weather gravel road in a corridor about 20 metres wide. It will run from the edge of the boundary along and immediately adjacent to the rail corridor boundary, all the way through to the small section of public gravel road and on to the Kings Highway. Some Commonwealth land is required and small slivers of land might be required from the land-holders off the back blocks of their properties—potentially up to 20 metres wide, if that is what we need.

**CHAIR**—Has that been factored into the costings that we covered with you this morning?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Yes, it has. We have had discussions with the land-holders, and initial heritage and land surveys of those areas have been done.

**Mr RIPOLL**—Officers from the Molonglo radio facility were talking earlier about the use of a Faraday cage. My comprehension was that their understanding is that you are going to install some sort of Faraday cage into the building, with screens for the windows as well. Is that your understanding?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Yes. I call it a quasi-Faraday cage, because my understanding is somewhat different. What we are doing will meet the requirements that MOST have raised. The building will have metal cladding on it, and the windows will have mesh shielding on them. If they were bonded altogether, that would form a Faraday cage. My understanding is that we will be installing a quasi-Faraday cage, because I have seen ones with internal meshing in the walls as well to give greater surety of shielding. That is what Defence looked at originally. When there was no requirement from a security of information perspective, that was taken out.

**Mr RIPOLL**—I am not getting into the detail of the costings, but, having seen some costings on the internal Faraday cage you were referring to, this quasi-cage you are now referring to would not incur the same sort of cost.

**Air Cdre Plenty**—No, it would not, and it is already factored into the cost. Metal cladding of the building was factored into the cost.

**Mr JENKINS**—Air Commodore Plenty, you have actually gone to the issue that I wished to raise. I was concerned that there seemed to have been chequered communication and

consultation. In part you have explained that that is because of the EIS process. There were others that presented that seemed very happy with the communications they had. Some, like the Carwoola people, are in a process where they are going to get some feedback and there is great potential. It intrigues me a little bit that the EIS, with a couple of important stakeholders, has slowed things down a bit. I do not know if you can make any observation about whether there are lessons to be learnt or whether that is just one aspect of the whole process.

**Air Cdre Plenty**—In my view, there are lessons to be learnt from this process. The EIS process in itself went well last year. It went out for public comment. The supplementary report required a number of additional surveys to be conducted that were not conducted at the time of the original environmental impact statement. That has delayed it longer than I would have hoped and anticipated. My view is that that early supplementary report should have been out in March. That would have provided all those stakeholders with the information, and I agree with that.

When I came into the project in January I asked the questions that you have just asked, Mr Jenkins, and I directed that at least we write to the people who had provided input to tell them that we had their input. I understand that is not a requirement of the act for environmental impact statements. We did that to advise them that we had received their input and it had not been lost in the mail. We are now going out to community groups, and we have done this recently. I thought it was important to keep them online first, in the sense of telling them where we are going and what we have found, and then to talk to the planning parts of the organisations at a slightly later date. There are clear lessons there.

**Mr JENKINS**—I have a question that does not arise from anything that has preceded. I cannot find which department of New South Wales I was going to refer to, but my question went to local job opportunities and the ability for the local region to have some assurance that they would get a look-in. Usually we raise this when a direct provision model is involved. Do you envisage any problems because of the delivery model for the major building part of the facility?

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Not that have been evident to date. Certainly tradesmen and others within the local area will be used if there is capacity to use them. The recent advice is that, particularly in construction and trades, this area is close to capacity right now, in building work that is going on, irrespective of the headquarters. There might well be a requirement to bring in tradespeople to do the trades work, because there is no spare capacity in the region. That is from independent assessments that are done on the construction work going on in the ACT region on an ongoing basis with the other planned activities that might take place.

I see greater employment opportunities in the ongoing services provision. We will not know the extent of that until the tender documents are in and those consortia indicate the staff numbers they might need for those services. I presume that the consortia would see what skilled staff were available in the local area and seek to employ those people rather than try to bring people in at the costs that would entail to them.

**Mr JENKINS**—I do not wish to sound critical but can we go further than just making presumptions? That is what I want to explore. In the Road Traffic Authority example, because of the silo mentality everybody stepped back and the ball was dropped. I am not pointing the finger, but we are interested in maximising the regional impact of the proposal during the construction phase and then later on during the ongoing maintenance. If that was all in your hands we could



say to you, 'Just go and do it.' But, when you are a step removed from it, I do not know whether there is an ability to do it through your output performance indicators or whatever.

**Air Cdre Plenty**—Within the documentation that is provided in the bidding process, we make known to the consortia organisations such as the Industry Capability Network and its equivalent in the ACT so that those sorts of activities can take place.

**CHAIR**—I would like to thank all the witnesses who have appeared before us today and Defence for assisting us with the inspections and the private briefing this morning.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Ripoll**):

That, pursuant to the power conferred by section 2(2) of the Parliamentary Papers Act 1908, this committee authorises publication of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

**Committee adjourned at 2.32 p.m.**