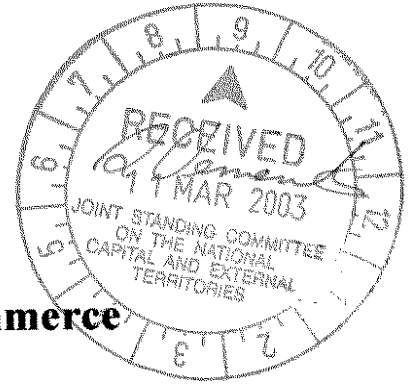


33

SUBMISSION



**Submission by
The Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce**

*To the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and
External Territories*

*Current Economic Development
on Christmas Island*

**N.P. (Don) O'Donnell
President
11th March 2003**

- Mr Chairman/Deputy Chair, Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to make a submission, which will deal mainly with current economic development as contributed by the small private sector of the Island but not Christmas Island Phosphates, which is the underlying constant to the economy.
- This Island , even more so, since the “Tampa” incident, is now very much directly involved in a “whole of Government” political process by Canberra. Specifically the fate and well being of this small community is decided by:

The Department of the Prime Minister.

The Departments of Defence, Finance, DIMIA, and the External Territories - and to a lesser extent by the Departments of Customs, Quarantine, Health and Education.

Policy decisions by the Federal Government and particularly by the Federal Cabinet, which affect the mainland population of nearly 20 million, have a range of checks and balances and alternatives to filter the social and economic impact on the community. e.g. State Governments, Industry, lobby groups, etc.

- Here on Christmas Island with it’s permanent population of only 1500 - 1700 persons, approximately one third of which are children of various ages - decisions by Cabinet related to this Island have a VERY DIRECT AND VERY IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON OUR SMALL FRAGILE ECONOMY - and there are no checks and balances that the Chamber of Commerce is aware of, to mitigate any adverse effects of such decisions, other than by direct communication by telephone, fax or email to the Minister for External Territories, or by occasional face to face meetings.
- The Minister’s visits are appreciated and are valuable but are mainly AFTER THE EVENT - and when the Chamber of Commerce is given minimal hearing of 15 minutes, in a crowded, multi-organisational meeting - to present the collective views of our current 56 members on a range of topics. One can ask,....“Is it enough time to have effective dialogue with the Minister?”The answer must be -“Obviously NOT”.
- Up until 1990 the Island economy was wholly driven by the Mine and it’s exports. There was no private enterprise sector and the Mine and Mine Union ran the Island.

- The Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce was started in 1991 and has had a slow but steady growth over the intervening years, but is now well placed with it's membership, and a positive bank balance, to reflect the views of the various Private Enterprises that now exist and are struggling to survive. By way of passing we are affiliated with the WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and we concentrate on Macro issues to improve the whole economy and bring benefit to the whole Community.
- On Wednesday, 5th March 2003, the Chamber convened a special meeting of ALL Business Interests on the Island to discuss the Government's decision to cancel the Walter Construction contract with DIMIA, which involved the construction of the multi-million dollar proposed Immigration Reception Processing Centre at North West Point.
- The formal announcement to create/construct the IRPC was made on 12 March 2002 - 12 months ago by the Minister for External Territories. It should be formally noted for the record that the Chamber had made it's position clear, over some two preceding years to the Government, that we strongly supported and endorsed the creation of decent accommodation and facilities for S.U.N.C.S, who were at that time arriving in ever increasing numbers in S.I.E.V.S.
- Our response to that announcement on 12th March 2002 was sober, measured and supportive, and we produced a document which I should like to present to this Joint Parliamentary Committee for the record, and which illustrates the collective views of Chamber members and the wider community's view point. (Appendix ONE.)
- At the meeting on 12th March 2002 the Community and particularly Business Interests, were advised by the Minister, that it would bring great economic benefit to the Island and that private enterprise and community members should seize the many opportunities that would flow from the project and to gear up the private investment business sector accordingly.

Well WE DID GEAR UP - IN OUR VARIED WAYS AND IN VARIOUS FINANCIAL AMOUNTS - and the Island economy looked solid up until mid December 2002.

- The shock announcement came on 19th February 2003, after weeks of rumours. The cancellation of the Walters Contract and “Deferment of the Project” for at least 9 months, has bewildered, dismayed and angered the business community. As I speak we are collecting statistics to support the fact that the private sector, small though it is, is vital to the well-being of this Island and it’s future but has absolutely been derailed by this decision. It has had an immediate negative effect on business confidence in particular and the Community in general.
- Minister Tuckey stated that the decision was made because the IRPC project had developed a momentum all of it’s own, between DIMIA and Walters Construction, and it was heading for a 100% blowout in cost, which was, of course, unacceptable use of taxpayers funds.
- The Chamber can accept this - if TRUE, and we also recognise that the Cabinet decision cannot and will not be reversed. We were also proudly informed that the decision to cancel was an easy one to make *as it only took 3 minutes!!*
- The Chamber’s response to this statement is that there could NOT have been a “SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS” made as to it’s adverse effect on the Island Community, which was and is geared up to the IRPC Project.
- I should now like to formally present a second document to this Committee which lists a Summary of Construction and Infrastructure projects as at 21st February, some two days after the press release by Senator Minchin. (**Appendix TWO**)
- I should also like to formally present Chamber of Commerce correspondence dated 21st February 2003 to -
 - The Hon Philip Ruddock - DIMIA
 - The Hon Wilson Tuckey - Regional Services, Territories & Local Government, and
 - Senator the Hon Nick Minchin - Finance & Administration**(Appendix THREE)**
- An explanation or interpretation of the “Summary of Construction Projects” is quite simple. On or about the end of April 2003, the Island economy, already in decline from the 19th February announcement, will enter into a recession, not seen or experienced since the sudden closure of the Casino Resort in 1998.

- The correspondence to the three Ministers is self evident, in that we ask various questions and have made some pro-active suggestions to keep the Island economy going. As yet we have had no responses.
- By way of further comment, the current assessment by many thoughtful members of the Chamber and residents of some standing, is that the deferment; or cancellation of the Walter Contract is the FIRST STEP to a full cancellation of the IRPC Project. Consider -
 - A) The Developed Construction Village with a capacity of 350 workers - to be mothballed.
 - B) The Development of Permanent Staff Quarters for approximately 170 persons - currently mothballed.
 - C) The current rebuilt Detention Centre - soon to be mothballed.
 - D) The construction of pumping station, pipelines and water tank storage for IRPC - now idle.

Can one wonder at the loss of confidence?

- The adverse flow-on effects are many, and will affect the entire community and all investments by private enterprise, e.g.
 - Import cargo volumes by sea - reduced and loss of profitability to the shipper and stevedoring operations.
 - Idle capacity in container transport - loss of earnings, profit and cash flow - after making heavy investments.
 - Idle capacity in National Jet Systems - leading to an inevitable increase in Government subsidy and a re-scheduling and reduction of frequency of service, and the Jakarta Air Service placed in financial jeopardy.
 - Lower turnover of high stock inventories, already made by retail outlets - resulting in unprofitable trading.

- Low and decreasing levels of occupancy in recently provided NON Government accommodation with serious loss on investment outlay.
- Building and construction lay-offs of men and machines brought to the Island to cater for the project demand resulting in rapid growth of unemployment.
- Downturn in the service sectors of communications, entertainment, food outlets, hire cars, petrol and diesel volume sales, tourism and real estate values - a complete disaster for small business.
- Decrease in revenue to Power and Water Utilities caused by a decline in demand.

In short, a cash flow crisis for Island business is occurring with activity and turnover down 40% to 90% dependent on the sector, and despite a record private sector investment of \$22.75 million across a wide range of enterprises as detailed in **Appendix Four.**

- In conclusion, Members of this Committee, the Chamber of Commerce are actively promoting an acceleration of infrastructure projects, as detailed in our correspondence to the three Ministers covering Territories, DIMIA, and Finance to prevent a severe recession commencing in April, and already gathering momentum, and in addition would like to draw your attention to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works - published in March 2002 - concerning the upgrade of the Christmas Island Airport at a cost stated to be \$51.3 million. Page 18 - para 3125, "Conclusions and Recommendations" - very clearly states:-

"The Committee is of the view, that irrespective of APSC proceeding, an upgraded Airport for Christmas Island would help decrease the isolation of the Christmas Island Community by improving it's Air Services" etc, and goes on to state in Recommendation 5 *"....the proposed common use infrastructure project proceed pending approval of the draft Environmental Impact Statement, and the fulfillment of the recommendation made in this Report."*

Page 7 para 2.8 - NEEDS AND PUBLIC VALUE - the Administrator of Christmas Island, Mr William Taylor, in response to a question about the need for the upgraded Airport if the APSC does not proceed - responded that ... *"Irrespective of the APSC there is a requirement for the upgrade on safety grounds."*

In short, the Island desperately needs this project to start as quickly as possible. The plans are made, the finance is allocated, but this vital Public Works Project is held up by DOTARS, and Finance - conditional on the APSC proceeding.

We are NOT an Island society of mendicants dependent or depending on Government handouts, but rather we are genuinely trying to build a vibrant investment climate in partnership with Government - BUT IT IS NOT WORKING and there really is NO marriage of private investment interests, or sensitivity between Canberra and the Island, when a fundamental decision can be made by the Government, in three minutes, which slams the private sector and the whole community into immediate recession.

Until conditions improve, any Government Policy plans to privatise Health, Power, the Port, and the Airport should be deferred in line with the costly accommodation infrastructure also deferred.

Thank you for your interest and patience.



Don O'Donnell
President
Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce

11th March 2003

Appendix 4.

Christmas Island

Chamber of Commerce

*Summary of Private Sector Investment by
Christmas Island Residents and Business Enterprises
over the last 18-24 months.*

Excluding Christmas Island Phosphates investment in plant and equipment over the last 18 - 24 months, and that of Wagners and Walter Construction, the Chamber has made private inquiries and close estimates of the amount of private investment that has been made by Island residents and enterprises, investing in the future of the Island to supplement and compliment Government investment in capital works projects. The figures provided are, of necessity, conservative and have, after inquiry and for the sake of simplicity, been broadbanded under categories.

Business Type	\$ Million
Food Retailing/Supermarket & Misc. Small Businesses	1.67
Construction Plant & Machinery	6.00
Stevedoring - Plant, Equipment & Training	0.75
Private Accommodation & Subdivision Development	7.80
Aviation Services to Jakarta	0.25
Carhire - Private Vehicles Imported for Proposed Private Sector plus Other Commercial Units	2.00
Refrigeration/Airconditioning/Electrical	0.60
Plumbing Services	0.50
Laundry Services	0.25
Shipping & Transport Freight Cost Outlaid by Private Sector	2.22
Miscellaneous - Real Estate/Communications/Cleaning/ Fishing/Diving/Tours/Golf & Cricket Club	0.71
TOTAL	22.75 Million

**Christmas Island
Chamber of Commerce (Inc.)**

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Indian Ocean

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SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT

BY

CHRISTMAS ISLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ON

**PROPOSED PERMANENT DETENTION
AND
PROCESSING CENTRE**

TO BE CONSTRUCTED AT NORTH WEST POINT.

“THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS”

N.P. (Don) O'DONNELL
PRESIDENT
30 March 2002

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – EXTRACT FROM MINUTES.

Regular monthly meeting held 19 March 2002.

At this meeting of the Chamber, the subject of the MINISTERIAL announcement was an AGENDA ITEM for general discussion.

It was resolved by that meeting that:-

- a) The C.I. Chamber of Commerce fully endorsed the decision to build the Centre on this Island.
 - b) That a letter be sent to MINISTERS TUCKEY and RUDDOCK stating the full support of the Chamber, and
 - c) That a working group of Chamber members be set up to suggest ideas that could influence the design, concept, and social functions of the centre – such ideas to be formulated, and sent to Canberra as soon as possible.
-

Meeting of the working group were held on 20th and 27th March 2002.

At meeting held on the 27th March – the President of the Chamber raised the status of the group to that of a SUB-COMMITTEE to:-

- a) Examine thoughts, suggestions and opinions against a first working draft: and
 - b) To test those thoughts, suggestions etc. against RESEARCH material presented to the sub-committee.
-

COMMENT

- It must be stated that it is NOT the intention of this sub-committee to “re-invent the wheel”, as we know little of the problems of Detention Centre organization, administration and range of complex problems.
- Input to the report has been received by members, and other concerned thinking citizens – NOT members of the Chamber, but gladly accepted as worthy of inclusion in this presentation.

RESEARCH MATERIAL

- I. THE GLOBALIZATION CHALLENGE: REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS
website:<http://www.w.caa.org.au/campaigns/elections/globalisation/refugees.html>
- II. REFUGEE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA – POSITION PAPER 15 Nov 1999
STATEMENT ON “ILLEGAL BOAT” ARRIVALS
website:http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/position_151119999.htm.
- III. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA – ASYLUM SEEKERS
ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION – REFUGEE FACTSHEET – July 2001
- IV. HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION – MARCH
2000 IMMIGRATION DETENTION GUIDELINES
- V. U.N.H.C.R. GUIDELINES ON DETENTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

COMMENT

- The operation of the Centre “MUST AT LEAST” abide by IV “Immigration detention Guidelines”, and suggestions made alphabetically are tested against this DOCUMENT.
 - The Reference Material listed above, and used by the Sub-committee is the broad basis of acceptance of the Centre by the Christmas Island community in general, and the C.I. Chamber of Commerce in particular.
 - Clarification is required as to whether the Detention Centre is for stage ONE, or stage TWO refugees, as there will be different needs for these two groups.
 - Clarification is also required as to the intent of the Australian Government in locating or NOT LOCATING, these stage two refugees on C.I.
- A response to these two questions would be instructive and could well be the subject of additional thoughts by the Sub-committee.

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ALPHABETICAL SUMMARY OF SUB-COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS

A – ACCESS

Available to a Detention Advisory Committee Section 20 – in full

Available to low security categories – access to television programmes, radio, video and computers Section 4 – 4.5

MURRAY Road is the main access road to the centre, and it is imperative that CRAB MIGRATION be given top priority. This road is already a difficult road for crabs, and the road is often closed during migration. A state-of-the art environmental road servicing the centre is required to cater for the increased traffic. NEW INITIATIVE
PRIORITY

BOARDWALK/BIKE TRACK to N.W. POINT from established residential areas, via “BUCK HOUSE” – along the coast giving easy bike access and provide something back to the community, and open up West White Beach to the public. NEW INITIATIVE
COMMUNITY

Access to educational services, resources and personnel for low security categories. Section 6 – in full

Access to a centre swimming pool within the centre.

B – BUILDINGS

Permanent Construction. Roofs to be well insulated against the sun.

Bedrooms only to be air-conditioned to save power.

Units elevated on concrete stumps.

Open shaded verandahs – to give outdoor living areas, plus shelter from SUN/RAIN. – yet accessible to prevailing and predominant south easterly trade winds. Monsoon winds are variable, but predominantly from the N.W. quadrant. VENTILATION

Open sided, but covered, concrete walkways between buildings for protection from tropical sun, and monsoon torrential rain.

Provision for rain, water run off to prevent erosion and avoid muddy areas developing. (MOSQUITOES). DESIGN
INITIATIVE

Open areas to be grassed. Palm trees for shade – NO BARE GROUND

Buildings to be as close as possible in appearance to a suburb, or housing estate – painted in line with the predominant colour used on C.I. housing or a mix of calming colours Section 9 – in full

C – CLIMATE

Tropical – Temperature variable range 32 deg. C/ 26 deg. C.
Humidity high. Seasonal monsoon rains – shower activity can be experienced at any time. During monsoon, or swell season, tropical low pressure areas do develop in the latitudinal zone of C.I. – either east or west of the island. Development often achieves Category 1 with winds 30/45 knots.

Small T.R.S. only develop to category 2 – 3 – 4 or 5 when they move south and intensify. Swells are generated which affect shipping timetables and food deliveries.

No severe storms as experienced by the North West of Australia. Infrequent thunder and lightning.

Section 9 – in full

Dress – light cotton – open sandals

CONFLICT

Discipline and Punishment

Refer to "I" – Information – Medical Unit:

Section 17 in full

D – DIET

Suitable for tropical climate

Drinking water to be available at all times from dispensers, spring handle activated as found in schools etc.

No plastic water bottles. Island water is excellent.

Fresh fruit and vegetables will be in short supply

Logistics problem and lack of predictable shipping

Air bridge connection ex. Jakarta via MERPATI AIRLINE is partial solution. Quarantine and Customs must cooperate.

Refer H – Hydroponics

Refer G – Gardens/vegetables/activities

Section 8

E – EDUCATION

School for children

Language school for adults/families – cleared for VISA system, or permanent entry.

Island experience of interaction with SOME ACM fly in/fly out personnel, is that they are lacking in education; positive non racial attitudes; have tendency to be overweight and are sedentary.

Staffing at Centre should be more carefully screened to produce the highest standard of officer possible, on longer term stay on the Island

Refer to K – Key personnel

Local recruitment and training is highly desirable because of Island population diversity.

MUSLIM – MALAY/INDONESIAN language ability

BUDDHIST – Chinese/Mandarin/Cantonese language ability

CHRISTIAN - European – possible variety of languages

Section 6 – in full

EXERCISE

Develop grassed areas for football etc.

Running track, concrete area indoors/outdoors for basketball/netball.

Play areas – shaded for children

Section 7 – in full

F – FAMILY GROUPS

To be given accommodation to keep family units together, and prevent child abuse, reinforce parental control/human dignity

Section 3.6

Section 10.3

Section 15.8/15.9

G – GRASS/GREENERY/GREEN CORP.

Grassed areas and use of shade palm trees to soften impact of buildings and security fences ect and to improve the visual impact/presentation of the complex. Make use of tropical climate/growth to promote colour, shade, gardens etc. – Jobs for Island Green Corps. Allow use of tropical flowering plants, as appropriate to brighten areas around buildings etc.

NEW INITIATIVE

H – HEALTH

Medical/health screening facilities at centre, with ISOLATION WARDS for persons with contagious diseases etc. Center should NOT place additional burden on EXISTANT HOSPITAL which is provided for Islanders.

Section 13 – in full

HYDROPONICS

Develop a hydroponics centre within the complex, and to be run by the detainees, to augment vegetable supply. Link work to training and activity status. Involve Green Corp on island.

NEW INITIATIVE

Section 7.2 / 7.3 / 7.5

I – INFORMATION

The flow of Centre internal information to wider Christmas Island, Australia and world community should be handled by a DIMIA professional media unit – based upon the Island.

NEW INITIATIVE

Available to Detention Advisory Committee

Section 20

Information – as specified/outlined

Section 2 – in full

INSPECTION

Available access to Detention Advisory Committee

Section 20

J – JUSTICE

Internal to centre – with Codes of Conduct.

Select natural or RELIGIOUS LEADERS, and allow a degree of self-governance to handle group/family, or religious conflict.

Section 1.6/2.4

Link to grades of security and merits for good behaviour.

Section 2.7/4.4

K – KEY PERSONEL

To be carefully screened for strong interpersonal skills and aptitude. Refer to E – Education comment

L – LANGUAGE

Laboratory – for low security detainees who are in processes of VISA acceptance into Australia.

NEW INITIATIVE

Develop a “pool” of Island residents who have various linguistic skills, to act as translators, when required and language teaching.

LIBRARY

Multi language range of books available including magazines (NON OFFENSIVE). To include donated books, especially for children – given by Island Residents.

NEW INITIATIVE

OF CRABS – during the migration period, requires a careful consideration of traffic needs on the access roads, plus special crab 'ROAD CROSSING AREAS'. PARKS AUSTRALIA to prepare a detailed plan to minimise crab mortality on access roads and funding provided to implement the plan.

NEW INITIATIVE

OF PERSONS – on and off the Island – VISA requirements
- already subject of separate correspondence from the Chamber of Commerce.

NEW INITIATIVE

MANPOWER

Reduce fly in/fly out personnel as much as possible, and replace with trained local, suitable persons.
Services of Indian Ocean Group- Training to be utilized.

MINIMIZE – use of razor wire where possible.

N – NON DETENTION MODELS

Special consideration to be given to results and experience of other International projects which handle refugees in NON DETENTION MODELS

NEW INITIATIVE

O – OPEN

Refer to Buildings – Open verandah shade areas
Spaces for sport activities
Open detention for low security groups.

7.4 refers

P – POWER

Make use of SOLAR power for the centre and wind generations on high ground above centre. S.E. trade winds blow constantly for 9/10 months of the year. Periods of calm are confined to a limited number of days per year. Updraughts at Murray Hill exist even in periods of calm weather

NEW INITIATIVE

PROPERTY OF DETAINEES

Section 11 – in full

Q – QUIET PLACE

A special place with in the complex, to afford peace and the enjoyment of quiet contemplation.

NEW INITIATIVE

QUARANTINE

Fresh fruit and vegetables – in quantity will be required to come onto the Island by sea, or preferably by AIR. Merpati flight frequency could be increased to 3-5 per week, bringing in three tonnes per flight: Quarantine to cooperate.

NEW INITIATIVE

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY

Refer to L - Logistics

NEW INITIATIVE

LEISURE - Too much boredom – trouble!!

Centre to have structural activities programme, graded to account for security groupings.

Encourage voluntary work, with Island Green Corp, to develop COMMUNITY projects ie. forest board walks; elimination of introduced weeds; clean up projects etc. Beautify Centre with grassed areas and colourful native plants.

Section 7 – in full

LOGISTICS

By sea – Provided that at least two container feeder vessels are on a regular schedule, there is now on Island, cool and refrigeration capacity of approx. 220 m3. This should be sufficient in the short/medium term.

By air – Merpati 737 flights can be increased to daily flights, ex JAKARTA, and can carry three tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables plus dairy products and one tonne of general cargo on each flight.

To increase to daily flights, support with passenger traffic will be needed from DIMIA in particular and government in general.

Note – Cost of the flight from Melbourne, or Sydney to Jakarta, thence Christmas Island is up to 160% less using Qantas and Merpati, than across Australia to Perth, thence onto Christmas Island via Cocos. Huge savings in airfares can be made.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

M – MILITARY

Naval presence to be maintained for the short term, until the centre is established and routines are in place. It is suggested that without a naval presence, illegal boat persons (SUNC's) will again flood the Island.

NEW INITIATIVE

Naval personal on long term patrol duties must be given greater and more frequent periods of time ashore on the Island. Good moral on naval vessels must be maintained.

Establish small army presence as security for any possible potential disturbance.

MOVEMENTS

OF SUN – daily/seasonally – taken into account when planning alignment of buildings and to maximise natural trade winds for ventilation/coolness. Afternoon sun from say 1400/1500 each day, can produce intense heat through westerly facing windows.

NEW INITIATIVE

R – RADIO STATION	
C.I. Community Radio to be given upgrade to allow signal to be heard over all the Island	NEW INITIATIVE 4/5 refer
RELIGION	
Beliefs to be respected. Places of worship built at Centre.	Section 5
RACIAL	
Groupings to be kept together, where possible, and consistent with security.	
S - SECURITY	
It is recognized that an area of high security must be part of the Centre.	INITIATIVE
Where possible individuals and or families who are classified for acceptance into Australia, should be moved into lower, or more open security areas, and given increased access to television, news programmes, entertainment; language courses and normalization processes, so that they may better equip them for acceptance into Mainland Australia way of life.	Section 4.5
SPECIAL UNIT	
It is suggested that a special facility accommodation unit be provided within the Centre Complex, with a low security for family re-unions, where a relative can, with DIMIA permission, and at own cost; fly to Christmas Island and make contact with family members, who are screened for release.	4.3 Section 4 in full
SOCIAL	
Social visits by detainees, with low security rating to special Community Events ie. HARI RAYA.	
T – TRAINING	
A.C.M. "fly in" personnel should be better screened to achieve high standards of individuals, aptitude, and given a special induction course on Island cultural; physical and environmental life.	
Refer to Indian Ocean Group Training – modules of instruction for locals.	Section 16
U – UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION ON REFUGEES	
The publication on "GUIDELINES" is instructive and has relevance to the type of centre which must be created to achieve "STATE OF THE ART" and International recognition for Australia in dealing with asylum seekers and refugees in a humane manner.	
V – VIOLENCE	
Use of force	Section 17/18

W – WORLD WIDE PERCEPTION

Do it right – Do it in simplistic style where possible – with a minimum use of razor wire.

WOMEN

Section 15/16/17
refer

SUMMARY

- The ideas expressed are from a variety of Island residents, some of whom are NON members of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore the submission has fairly wide community thoughts and feelings on the Detention Centre.
- The document is not exhaustive, nor is it meant to be – rather it is a reflection of the compassion of the Island Community towards these, in the main, unfortunate people.
- This submission is offered in the most constructive manner to assist DIMIA in a proactive way to assist in the avoidance of some of the current problems in the MAINLAND DETENTION CENTRES.



N.P. (Don) O'DONNELL
PRESIDENT
CHRISTMAS ISLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**CHRISTMAS ISLAND CONSTRUCTION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS SUMMARY.**

AS AT FRIDAY 21ST FEBRUARY 2003.

- * IRPC Project Services contract.....completed.
- * IRPC Project Accomodation contract.....completed.
- * IRPC Construction Camp (15 occupants)completed.
- * Rebuild Temporary IRPC Camp(after fire).....completed.
- * CIDHS construction of Extensions contract....completed.
- * Wharf Demolition contract.....2-3 weeks to completion.
- * Chor Nui Nui Port Facility.....3-4 weeks to completion.
- * East Coast Boat Ramp project..5-6 weeks to completion.
- * ADF Airport Hangar contract....4-5 weeks to completion.
- * New Crane for Main Port Tender.....current.
- * APSC Project.....Unknown!
- * Linkwater Road contract.....Unknown!
- * Airport Extensions contract.....Unknown!
- * New Sports Complex Project.....Unknown!
- * IRPC N/W Point Project(initial earthworks contract).....
6-7 weeks to completion.
- * IRPC N/W Point Main Construction Project....Unknown.

**SUMMARY: WITHIN 2 MONTHS VIRTUALLY ALL
CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS AND PROJECTS WILL
CEASE ON CHRISTMAS ISLAND!**

This report has been compiled by the Contractors Sub-Committee of the Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce.

**Christmas Island
Chamber of Commerce (Inc.)**

APPENDIX THREE

PO Box 510, Christmas Island 6798
Indian Ocean

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Email: info@cicommerce.org.cx

The Hon. Wilson Tuckey MP
Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

21st February 2003

Dear Minister,

Immigration Reception and Processing Centre (IRPC) - Christmas Island

The announcement by your Ministerial colleagues, Senator Minchin and Minister Ruddock on the 19th February 2003 in regards to cancellation of the existing contract with Walter Construction Group has been received by members of the Chamber of Commerce firstly with dismay, followed by anger and disbelief.

Although not confirmed in writing, it has been verbally conveyed to owner operators and employees at the North West site, that all works will cease within 6 weeks. Many of these large and small operators **have** taken up the challenge as voiced a number of times by yourself and your Ministerial colleagues during visits to the Island and become part of this "great opportunity". Concern deepens to despair as there is no other alternative works in progress on Christmas Island. Unlike on the mainland, there is no opportunity to diversify or move to other announced projects as they also have not moved beyond the planning stage.

The whole business community across the Island is known to have made substantial economic and personal commitments to be part of this "great opportunity" and other projects announced by the Government over the last 18 months. The effect of a major delay in the construction phase of a project of this size on our small community is going to have a severe impact on the Island economy. Many people, employers and employees are heading for financial disaster whilst these delays continue.

Members of the Chamber have requested that the following be placed before you and are seeking your replies while you are on Christmas Island. We are aware that your schedule is tight however we feel that the needs of the people must be given some priority under the circumstances and that answers to these questions are critical to the Islanders and their futures.

We are entitled to receive definitive answers to the questions below in order for the business community to satisfy the demands that will be made by financial institutions, banks, etc and creditors. They must be given the ability to manage what for many of us will be acute financial circumstances that you and other Ministers have created.

Q1 Will the scaled down 800 person purpose built IRPC as detailed in the Government News Release dated 19 February 2003 be a new permanent construction at North West Point, Christmas Island or a de-mountable facility?

Q2 What is the latest start and completion dates of the construction project?

Q3 With major delays now disclosed and with the ongoing financial hardship that will result to the whole Christmas Island Community will you immediately instigate with Minister Philip Ruddock the re-location of offshore displaced persons currently located on the Australian Mainland, Manus and Nauru Islands to the temporary facility at Phosphate Hill, Christmas Island?

Q4 With delays and changes to the IRPC project resulting in financial difficulties to a wide range of the business community persons, will the Government be establishing a compensation package and a process for the lodgment of claims against Government Departments?

Q5 Will the Minister on behalf of DOTaRS release by 31 March 2003 the infrastructure plans with financial commitments for Christmas Island for the next 3 - 5 years?

Q6 To boost tourism and create economic flow-on to businesses on the Island, will the Government provide special assistance to maintain the Northern route to Asia?

If you recall, members of the Chamber during your initial visit in 2001 to discuss this project, strongly and unanimously supported the Government in the establishment of the IRPC on Christmas Island both in writing and by verbal communication. Bearing in mind the subsequent benefits that would eventually flow to the Island Community, we continued to support the Government in the establishment of diverse commercial, industrial and professional infrastructure on Christmas Island.

We cannot understate the serious impact this announcement will have on all the residents of Christmas Island. We now seek your support to provide immediate information as to the long term opportunities for our vibrant business community.

N. P. (Don) O'Donnell



President

Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce

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Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce (Inc.)

PO Box 510, Christmas Island 6798
Indian Ocean

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The Hon. Wilson Tuckey MP
Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

21st February 2003

DOTARS NEWS RELEASE MPS009/2003 – IMMIGRATION RECEPTION AND PROCESSING CENTRE

Dear Minister,

The announcement by your Ministerial colleagues, Senator Minchin and Minister Ruddock has been received with deep concern by members of our Chamber.

This announcement has serious financial implications to our membership because it is apparent that this centre will now be extensively delayed. It is the opinion of the Chamber that the construction of these buildings will not now commence until late 2003. When you made the announcement on Christmas Island on 12th March 2002, you indicated that there were enormous opportunities available to those individuals and companies prepared to take up the challenges presented by this project. Many Island businesses responded to your challenge, and that action has now placed them in a severe financial position.

In order for our members to manage the current circumstances, not of their doing, we urgently require the following information;

- Who is now responsible for the planning and design
- Has the planning and design for the reduced complex been completed – If not when will it be finalised.
- What is the time frame for the tendering process. When will it be advertised and when will tenders close.
- What will be the scope of the project, and what is the budgeted total cost of the revised project.
- What is the construction time-frame for commencement and completion of the centre

This specific information is vital to the business community of Christmas Island, to enable them to pro-actively participate in the project. If this project is delayed, it will have severe ramifications on the entire Island because the business community has already made long term financial commitments based on Ministerial announcements made early in 2002.

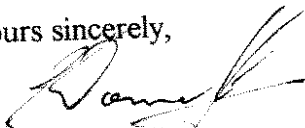
In the event that this project is deferred beyond 2003, the Island Community will go into deep decline, and we seek your support to bring forward other projects including;

- Linkwater Road Bypass – Can this project be fast-tracked to commence before May 2003?
- Airport Extensions –The major cost component is the runway lengthening and widening. We ask for your consideration to commence earthworks with respect to the apron, in order to utilize heavy construction equipment already located on the Island, which will otherwise remain idle. This will also assist the Navy, who have commenced construction of a hangar and maintenance facility adjacent to the apron at the Airport.
- Sports Complex – Can this project be fast-tracked to commence on an urgent basis?

The questions asked above are extremely important to the Island business community, as the announcement leaves so many questions un-answered relating to the future prosperity of Christmas Island.

We look forward to meeting with you and your support staff, although we are again concerned with the time allocated to cover this and the important issues which concern the future of Christmas Island. Because of that limited time-frame, another report is attached concerning other issues for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Don O'Donnell
President
Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce

Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce (Inc.)

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Indian Ocean*

*Phone: (08) 9164 7203
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Email: info@cicommerce.org.cx*

Hon Philip Ruddock MP
Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
Canberra ACT 2600

21st February 2003

Dear Minister,

The Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce is in receipt of your joint press release with Senator Minchin of 19th February, 2003. Your announcement has been noted with anger and disappointment by the business and general community of Christmas Island. Numerous businesses have made substantial financial commitments based on the announcement by Minister Tuckey on 12th March, 2002, and your announcements to the community during your visit to Christmas Island.

The Chamber has been concerned over the past four months with what appeared to be either interference by the bureaucracy or other Ministers in this project. When you made the announcement on Christmas Island, you indicated that there were enormous opportunities available to those individuals and companies prepared to take up the challenges presented by this project. Many Island businesses responded to your challenge, which now will place them in a severe financial position.

Additionally, the project schedule and its confirmation of proceeding with the project has been verbally stated on numerous occasions by senior Government officials from both your department and DOTaRS to this Chamber.

This resulted in our community;

1. Taking a long term strategic position with respect to business investment.
2. Obtaining finance on a long term basis from financial institutions on a personal and corporate level.
3. Purchasing expensive construction equipment, mostly on credit terms
4. Purchasing land from your Government at high market prices for sub-divisional development.
5. Purchasing stock and increasing stock levels to cater for the anticipated population increase.

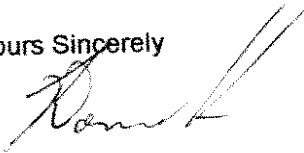
There have been a number of negative effects;

1. Price increases in basic essentials – Food and services
2. Excessive price increases in property rental prices – Over \$500 per week for one and two bedroom basic accommodation.
3. Inflated property prices.
4. Increase in Island wages to match construction wage levels.
5. Excessive borrowing based on the initial and subsequent announcements.

We ask your assistance in the following:

1. Confirmation of the time-frame for the completion of this project.
2. Utilisation of existing facilities for refugees with the transfer of refugees from other centres, mainland or off-shore to the Christmas Island temporary facility, which is now available for use.
3. Confirmation that the new Christmas Island facility will be one of the main IRPC locations and will be continuously utilised whilst Australia still continues to receive un-authorized refugees.

Yours Sincerely



Don O'Donnell
President
Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce Inc.

Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce (Inc.)

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Indian Ocean*

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SENATOR MINCHIN

DOTARS NEWS RELEASE MPS009/2003 – IMMIGRATION RECEPTION AND PROCESSING CENTRE

Dear Senator,

The Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce is in receipt of your joint press release of 19th February, 2003. Your announcement has been noted with anger and disappointment by the business and general community of Christmas Island, as a number of businesses have made substantial financial commitments based on the previous announcement by other Ministers.

We would like the following information clarified;

- Who is now responsible for the planning and design
- Has the planning and design for the reduced complex been completed – If not, when will it be finalised.
- What is the time frame for the tendering process. When will it be advertised and when will tenders close.
- What will be the scope of the project, and what is the budgeted total cost of the revised project.
- What is the construction time-frame for commencement and completion of the centre

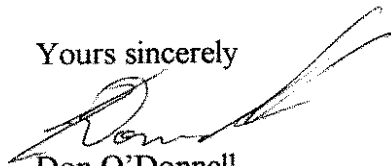
This specific information is vital to the business community of Christmas Island, to enable them to pro-actively participate in the project. If this project is delayed, it will have severe ramifications on the entire Island because the business community has already made long term financial commitments based on Ministerial announcements made early in 2002.

In the event that this project is deferred beyond 2003, the Island Community will go into deep decline, and we seek your support to bring forward other projects including;

- Linkwater Road Bypass – Can this project be fast-tracked to commence before May 2003?
- Airport Extensions –The major cost component is the runway lengthening and widening. We ask for your consideration to commence earthworks with respect to the apron, in order to utilize heavy construction equipment already located on the Island, which will otherwise remain idle. This will also assist the Navy, who have commenced construction a hangar and maintenance facility adjacent to the apron at the Airport.
- Sports Complex – Can this project be fast-tracked to commence on an urgent basis?

The questions asked above are extremely important to the Island business community, as the announcement leaves so many questions an-answered relating to the future prosperity of Christmas Island.

Yours sincerely



Don O'Donnell

President

Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce

Appendix 4.

Christmas Island

Chamber of Commerce

*Summary of Private Sector Investment by
Christmas Island Residents and Business Enterprises
over the last 18-24 months.*

Excluding Christmas Island Phosphates investment in plant and equipment over the last 18 - 24 months, and that of Wagners and Walter Construction, the Chamber has made private inquiries and close estimates of the amount of private investment that has been made by Island residents and enterprises, investing in the future of the Island to supplement and compliment Government investment in capital works projects. The figures provided are, of necessity, conservative and have, after inquiry and for the sake of simplicity, been broadbanded under categories.

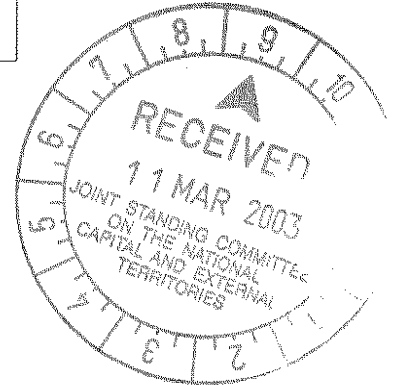
Business Type	\$ Million
Food Retailing/Supermarket & Misc. Small Businesses	1.67
Construction Plant & Machinery	6.00
Stevedoring - Plant, Equipment & Training	0.75
Private Accommodation & Subdivision Development	7.80
Aviation Services to Jakarta	0.25
Carhire - Private Vehicles Imported for Proposed Private Sector plus Other Commercial Units	2.00
Refrigeration/Airconditioning/Electrical	0.60
Plumbing Services	0.50
Laundry Services	0.25
Shipping & Transport Freight Cost Outlaid by Private Sector	2.22
Miscellaneous - Real Estate/Communications/Cleaning/ Fishing/Diving/Tours/Golf & Cricket Club	0.71
TOTAL	22.75 Million

**Christmas Island
Chamber of Commerce (Inc.)**

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Indian Ocean

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SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT

BY

CHRISTMAS ISLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ON

**PROPOSED PERMANENT DETENTION
AND
PROCESSING CENTRE**

TO BE CONSTRUCTED AT NORTH WEST POINT.

"THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS"

N.P. (Don) O'DONNELL
PRESIDENT
30 March 2002

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – EXTRACT FROM MINUTES.

Regular monthly meeting held 19 March 2002.

At this meeting of the Chamber, the subject of the MINISTERIAL announcement was an AGENDA ITEM for general discussion.

It was resolved by that meeting that:-

- a) The C.I. Chamber of Commerce fully endorsed the decision to build the Centre on this Island.
 - b) That a letter be sent to MINISTERS TUCKEY and RUDDOCK stating the full support of the Chamber, and
 - c) That a working group of Chamber members be set up to suggest ideas that could influence the design, concept, and social functions of the centre – such ideas to be formulated, and sent to Canberra as soon as possible.
-

Meeting of the working group were held on 20th and 27th March 2002.

At meeting held on the 27th March – the President of the Chamber raised the status of the group to that of a SUB-COMMITTEE to:-

- a) Examine thoughts, suggestions and opinions against a first working draft: and
 - b) To test those thoughts, suggestions etc. against RESEARCH material presented to the sub-committee.
-

COMMENT

- It must be stated that it is NOT the intention of this sub-committee to “re-invent the wheel”, as we know little of the problems of Detention Centre organization, administration and range of complex problems.
- Input to the report has been received by members, and other concerned thinking citizens – NOT members of the Chamber, but gladly accepted as worthy of inclusion in this presentation.

RESEARCH MATERIAL

- I. THE GLOBALIZATION CHALLENGE: REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS
website:<http://www.w.caa.org.au/campaigns/elections/globalisation/refugees.html>
- II. REFUGEE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA – POSITION PAPER 15 Nov 1999
STATEMENT ON “ILLEGAL BOAT” ARRIVALS
website:www.refugeecouncil.org.au/position_151119999.htm.
- III. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA – ASYLUM SEEKERS
ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION – REFUGEE FACTSHEET – July 2001
- IV. HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION – MARCH
2000 IMMIGRATION DETENTION GUIDELINES
- V. U.N.H.C.R. GUIDELINES ON DETENTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

COMMENT

- The operation of the Centre “MUST AT LEAST” abide by IV “Immigration detention Guidelines”, and suggestions made alphabetically are tested against this DOCUMENT.
 - The Reference Material listed above, and used by the Sub-committee is the broad basis of acceptance of the Centre by the Christmas Island community in general, and the C.I. Chamber of Commerce in particular.
 - Clarification is required as to whether the Detention Centre is for stage ONE, or stage TWO refugees, as there will be different needs for these two groups.
 - Clarification is also required as to the intent of the Australian Government in locating or NOT LOCATING, these stage two refugees on C.I.
- A response to these two questions would be instructive and could well be the subject of additional thoughts by the Sub-committee.

RESEARCH MATERIAL

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ALPHABETICAL SUMMARY OF SUB-COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS

A – ACCESS

Available to a Detention Advisory Committee Section 20 – in full

Available to low security categories – access to television programmes, radio, video and computers Section 4 – 4.5

MURRAY Road is the main access road to the centre, and it is imperative that CRAB MIGRATION be given top priority. This road is already a difficult road for crabs, and the road is often closed during migration. A state-of-the art environmental road servicing the centre is required to cater for the increased traffic. NEW INITIATIVE
PRIORITY

BOARDWALK/BIKE TRACK to N.W. POINT from established residential areas, via "BUCK HOUSE" – along the coast giving easy bike access and provide something back to the community, and open up West White Beach to the public. NEW INITIATIVE
COMMUNITY

Access to educational services, resources and personnel for low security categories. Section 6 – in full

Access to a centre swimming pool within the centre.

B – BUILDINGS

Permanent Construction. Roofs to be well insulated against the sun.

Bedrooms only to be air-conditioned to save power.

Units elevated on concrete stumps.

Open shaded verandahs – to give outdoor living areas, plus shelter from SUN/RAIN. – yet accessible to prevailing and predominant south easterly trade winds. Monsoon winds are variable, but predominantly from the N.W. quadrant. VENTILATION

Open sided, but covered, concrete walkways between buildings for protection from tropical sun, and monsoon torrential rain.

Provision for rain, water run off to prevent erosion and avoid muddy areas developing. (MOSQUITOES). DESIGN
INITIATIVE

Open areas to be grassed. Palm trees for shade – NO BARE GROUND

Buildings to be as close as possible in appearance to a suburb, or housing estate – painted in line with the predominant colour used on C.I. housing or a mix of calming colours Section 9 – in full

C -- CLIMATE

Tropical – Temperature variable range 32 deg. C/ 26 deg. C.
Humidity high. Seasonal monsoon rains – shower activity can be experienced at any time. During monsoon, or swell season, tropical low pressure areas do develop in the latitudinal zone of C.I. – either east or west of the island. Development often achieves Category 1 with winds 30/45 knots.

Small T.R.S. only develop to category 2 – 3 – 4 or 5 when they move south and intensify. Swells are generated which affect shipping timetables and food deliveries.

No severe storms as experienced by the North West of Australia. Infrequent thunder and lightning.

Section 9 – in full

Dress – light cotton – open sandals

CONFLICT

Discipline and Punishment

Refer to "I" – Information – Medical Unit:

Section 17 in full

D -- DIET

Suitable for tropical climate

Drinking water to be available at all times from dispensers, spring handle activated as found in schools etc.

No plastic water bottles. Island water is excellent.

Fresh fruit and vegetables will be in short supply

Logistics problem and lack of predictable shipping

Air bridge connection ex. Jakarta via MERPATI AIRLINE is partial solution. Quarantine and Customs must cooperate.

Refer H – Hydroponics

Refer G – Gardens/vegetables/activities

Section 8

E – EDUCATION

School for children

Language school for adults/families – cleared for VISA system, or permanent entry.

Island experience of interaction with SOME ACM fly in/fly out personnel, is that they are lacking in education; positive non racial attitudes; have tendency to be overweight and are sedentary.

Staffing at Centre should be more carefully screened to produce the highest standard of officer possible, on longer term stay on the Island

Refer to K – Key personnel

Local recruitment and training is highly desirable because of Island population diversity.

MUSLIM – MALAY/INDONESIAN language ability

BUDDHIST – Chinese/Mandarin/Cantonese language ability

CHRISTIAN - European – possible variety of languages

Section 6 – in full

EXERCISE

Develop grassed areas for football etc.

Running track, concrete area indoors/outdoors for basketball/netball.

Play areas – shaded for children

Section 7 – in full

F – FAMILY GROUPS

To be given accommodation to keep family units together, and prevent child abuse, reinforce parental control/human dignity

G – GRASS/GREENERY/GREEN CORP.

Section 3.6

Section 10.3

Section 15.8/15.9

Grassed areas and use of shade palm trees to soften impact of buildings and security fences ect and to improve the visual impact/presentation of the complex. Make use of tropical climate/growth to promote colour, shade, gardens etc. – Jobs for Island Green Corps. Allow use of tropical flowering plants, as appropriate to brighten areas around buildings etc.

NEW INITIATIVE

H – HEALTH

Medical/health screening facilities at centre, with ISOLATION WARDS for persons with contagious diseases etc. Center should NOT place additional burden on EXISTANT HOSPITAL which is provided for Islanders.

Section 13 – in full

HYDROPONICS

Develop a hydroponics centre within the complex, and to be run by the detainees, to augment vegetable supply. Link work to training and activity status. Involve Green Corp on island.

NEW INITIATIVE

Section 7.2 / 7.3 / 7.5

I – INFORMATION

The flow of Centre internal information to wider Christmas Island, Australia and world community should be handled by a DIMIA professional media unit – based upon the Island.

NEW INITIATIVE

Available to Detention Advisory Committee

Section 20

Information – as specified/outlined

Section 2 – in full

INSPECTION

Available access to Detention Advisory Committee

Section 20

J – JUSTICE

Internal to centre – with Codes of Conduct.

Select natural or RELIGIOUS LEADERS, and allow a degree of self-governance to handle group/family, or religious conflict.

Section 1.6/2.4
Section 2.7/4.4

Link to grades of security and merits for good behaviour.

K – KEY PERSONNEL

To be carefully screened for strong interpersonal skills and aptitude. Refer to E – Education comment

L – LANGUAGE

Laboratory – for low security detainees who are in processes of VISA acceptance into Australia.

NEW INITIATIVE

Develop a "pool" of Island residents who have various linguistic skills, to act as translators, when required and language teaching.

LIBRARY

Multi language range of books available including magazines (NON OFFENSIVE). To include donated books, especially for children – given by Island Residents.

NEW INITIATIVE

OF CRABS – during the migration period, requires a careful consideration of traffic needs on the access roads, plus special crab 'ROAD CROSSING AREAS'. PARKS AUSTRALIA to prepare a detailed plan to minimise crab mortality on access roads and funding provided to implement the plan. NEW INITIATIVE

OF PERSONS – on and off the Island – VISA requirements
- already subject of separate correspondence from the Chamber of Commerce. NEW INITIATIVE

MANPOWER

Reduce fly in/fly out personnel as much as possible, and replace with trained local, suitable persons.
Services of Indian Ocean Group- Training to be utilized.

MINIMIZE – use of razor wire where possible.

N – NON DETENTION MODELS

Special consideration to be given to results and experience of other International projects which handle refugees in NON DETENTION MODELS; NEW INITIATIVE

O – OPEN

Refer to Buildings – Open verandah shade areas
Spaces for sport activities
Open detention for low security groups. 7.4 refers

P – POWER

Make use of SOLAR power for the centre and wind generations on high ground above centre. S.E. trade winds blow constantly for 9/10 months of the year. Periods of calm are confined to a limited number of days per year. Updraughts at Murray Hill exist even in periods of calm weather. NEW INITIATIVE

PROPERTY OF DETAINEES Section 11 – in full

Q – QUIET PLACE

A special place with in the complex, to afford peace and the enjoyment of quiet contemplation. NEW INITIATIVE

QUARANTINE

Fresh fruit and vegetables – in quantity will be required to come onto the Island by sea, or preferably by AIR. Merpati flight frequency could be increased to 3-5 per week, bringing in three tonries per flight: Quarantine to cooperate. NEW INITIATIVE
SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY

Refer to L - Logistics

NEW INITIATIVE

LEISURE - Too much boredom – trouble!!

Centre to have structural activities programme, graded to account for security groupings.

Encourage voluntary work, with Island Green Corp, to develop COMMUNITY projects ie. forest board walks; elimination of introduced weeds; clean up projects etc. Beautify Centre with grassed areas and colourful native plants.

Section 7 – in full

LOGISTICS

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

By sea – Provided that at least two container feeder vessels are on a regular schedule, there is now on Island, cool and refrigeration capacity of approx. 220 m3. This should be sufficient in the short/medium term.

By air – Merpati 737 flights can be increased to daily flights, ex JAKARTA, and can carry three tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables plus dairy products and one tonne of general cargo on each flight.

To increase to daily flights, support with passenger traffic will be needed from DIMIA in particular and government in general.

Note – Cost of the flight from Melbourne, or Sydney to Jakarta, thence Christmas Island is up to 160% less using Qantas and Merpati, than across Australia to Perth, thence onto Christmas Island via Cocos. Huge savings in airfares can be made.

M -- MILITARY

Naval presence to be maintained for the short term, until the centre is established and routines are in place. It is suggested that without a naval presence, illegal boat persons (SUNC's) will again flood the Island.

NEW INITIATIVE

Naval personal on long term patrol duties must be given greater and more frequent periods of time ashore on the Island. Good moral on naval vessels must be maintained.

Establish small army presence as security for any possible potential disturbance.

MOVEMENTS

OF SUN – daily/seasonally – taken into account when planning alignment of buildings and to maximise national trade winds for ventilation/coolness. Afternoon sun from say 1400/1500 each day, can produce intense heat through westerly facing windows.

NEW INITIATIVE

R – RADIO STATION

C.I. Community Radio to be given upgrade to allow signal to be heard over all the Island

NEW INITIATIVE
4/5 refer

RELIGION

Beliefs to be respected. Places of worship built at Centre.

Section 5

RACIAL

Groupings to be kept together, where possible, and consistent with security.

S - SECURITY

It is recognized that an area of high security must be part of the Centre.

INITIATIVE

Where possible individuals and or families who are classified for acceptance into Australia, should be moved into lower, or more open security areas, and given increased access to television, news programmes, entertainment; language courses and normalization processes, so that they may better equip them for acceptance into Mainland Australia way of life.

Section 4.5

SPECIAL UNIT

It is suggested that a special facility accommodation unit be provided within the Centre Complex, with a low security for family re-unions, where a relative can, with DIMIA permission, and at own cost; fly to Christmas Island and make contact with family members, who are screened for release.

4.3

Section 4 in full

SOCIAL

Social visits by detainees, with low security rating to special Community Events ie. HARI RAYA.

T – TRAINING

A.C.M. "fly in" personnel should be better screened to achieve high standards of individuals, aptitude, and given a special induction course on Island cultural, physical and environmental life.

Refer to Indian Ocean Group Training – modules of instruction for locals.

Section 16

U – UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION ON REFUGEES

The publication on "GUIDELINES" is instructive and has relevance to the type of centre which must be created to achieve "STATE OF THE ART" and International recognition for Australia in dealing with asylum seekers and refugees in a humane manner.

V – VIOLENCE

Use of force

Section 17/18

W – WORLD WIDE PERCEPTION

Do it right – Do it in simplistic style where possible – with a minimum use of razor wire.

WOMEN

Section 15/16/17
refer

SUMMARY

- The ideas expressed are from a variety of Island residents, some of whom are NON members of the Chamber of Commerce and therefore the submission has fairly wide community thoughts and feelings on the Detention Centre.
- The document is not exhaustive, nor is it meant to be – rather it is a reflection of the compassion of the Island Community towards these, in the main, unfortunate people.
- This submission is offered in the most constructive manner to assist DIMIA in a proactive way to assist in the avoidance of some of the current problems in the MAINLAND DETENTION CENTRES.



N.P. (Don) O'DONNELL
PRESIDENT
CHRISTMAS ISLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Down
(copy)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND CONSTRUCTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS SUMMARY.

AS AT FRIDAY 21ST FEBRUARY 2003.

- * IRPC Project Services contract.....completed.
- * IRPC Project Accomodation contract.....completed.
- * IRPC Construction Camp (15 occupants)completed.
- * Rebuild Temporary IRPC Camp(after fire).....completed.
- * CIDHS construction of Extensions contract....completed.
- * Wharf Demolition contract.....2-3 weeks to completion.
- * Chor Nui Nui Port Facility.....3-4 weeks to completion.
- * East Coast Boat Ramp project..5-6 weeks to completion.
- * ADF Airport Hangar contract...4-5 weeks to completion.
- * New Crane for Main Port Tender.....current.
- * APSC Project.....Unknown!
- * Linkwater Road contract.....Unknown!
- * Airport Extensions contract.....Unknown!
- * New Sports Complex Project.....Unknown!
- * IRPC N/W Point Project(initial earthworks contract).....
6-7 weeks to completion.
- * IRPC N/W Point Main Construction Project....Unknown.



**SUMMARY: WITHIN 2 MONTHS VIRTUALLY ALL
CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS AND PROJECTS WILL
CEASE ON CHRISTMAS ISLAND!**

This report has been compiled by the Contractors Sub-Committee of the Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce.

Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce (Inc.)

APPENDIX THREE

PO Box 510, Christmas Island 6798
Indian Ocean

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The Hon. Wilson Tuckey MP
Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

21st February 2003

Dear Minister,

Immigration Reception and Processing Centre (IRPC) - Christmas Island

The announcement by your Ministerial colleagues, Senator Minchin and Minister Ruddock on the 19th February 2003 in regards to cancellation of the existing contract with Walter Construction Group has been received by members of the Chamber of Commerce firstly with dismay, followed by anger and disbelief.

Although not confirmed in writing, it has been verbally conveyed to owner operators and employees at the North West site, that all works will cease within 6 weeks. Many of these large and small operators **have** taken up the challenge as voiced a number of times by yourself and your Ministerial colleagues during visits to the Island and become part of this "great opportunity". Concern deepens to despair as there is no other alternative works in progress on Christmas Island. Unlike on the mainland, there is no opportunity to diversify or move to other announced projects as they also have not moved beyond the planning stage.

The whole business community across the Island is known to have made substantial economic and personal commitments to be part of this "great opportunity" and other projects announced by the Government over the last 18 months. The effect of a major delay in the construction phase of a project of this size on our small community is going to have a severe impact on the Island economy. Many people, employers and employees are heading for financial disaster whilst these delays continue.

Members of the Chamber have requested that the following be placed before you and are seeking your replies while you are on Christmas Island. We are aware that your schedule is tight however we feel that the needs of the people must be given some priority under the circumstances and that answers to these questions are critical to the Islanders and their futures.

We are entitled to receive definitive answers to the questions below in order for the business community to satisfy the demands that will be made by financial institutions, banks, etc and creditors. They must be given the ability to manage what for many of us will be acute financial circumstances that you and other Ministers have created.

Q1 Will the scaled down 800 person purpose built IRPC as detailed in the Government News Release dated 19 February 2003 be a new permanent construction at North West Point, Christmas Island or a de-mountable facility?

Q2 What is the latest start and completion dates of the construction project?

Q3 With major delays now disclosed and with the ongoing financial hardship that will result to the whole Christmas Island Community will you immediately instigate with Minister Philip Ruddock the re-location of offshore displaced persons currently located on the Australian Mainland, Manus and Nauru Islands to the temporary facility at Phosphate Hill, Christmas Island?

Q4 With delays and changes to the IRPC project resulting in financial difficulties to a wide range of the business community persons, will the Government be establishing a compensation package and a process for the lodgment of claims against Government Departments?

Q5 Will the Minister on behalf of DOTaRS release by 31 March 2003 the infrastructure plans with financial commitments for Christmas Island for the next 3 - 5 years?

Q6 To boost tourism and create economic flow-on to businesses on the Island, will the Government provide special assistance to maintain the Northern route to Asia?

If you recall, members of the Chamber during your initial visit in 2001 to discuss this project, strongly and unanimously supported the Government in the establishment of the IRPC on Christmas Island both in writing and by verbal communication. Bearing in mind the subsequent benefits that would eventually flow to the Island Community, we continued to support the Government in the establishment of diverse commercial, industrial and professional infrastructure on Christmas Island.

We cannot understate the serious impact this announcement will have on all the residents of Christmas Island. We now seek your support to provide immediate information as to the long term opportunities for our vibrant business community.

N. P. (Don) O'Donnell



President

Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce
Mobile 91648111 ext 5223

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The Hon. Wilson Tuckey MP
Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

21st February 2003

DOTARS NEWS RELEASE MPS009/2003 – IMMIGRATION RECEPTION AND PROCESSING CENTRE

Dear Minister,

The announcement by your Ministerial colleagues, Senator Minchin and Minister Ruddock has been received with deep concern by members of our Chamber.

This announcement has serious financial implications to our membership because it is apparent that this centre will now be extensively delayed. It is the opinion of the Chamber that the construction of these buildings will not now commence until late 2003. When you made the announcement on Christmas Island on 12th March 2002, you indicated that there were enormous opportunities available to those individuals and companies prepared to take up the challenges presented by this project. Many Island businesses responded to your challenge, and that action has now placed them in a severe financial position.

In order for our members to manage the current circumstances, not of their doing, we urgently require the following information;

- Who is now responsible for the planning and design
- Has the planning and design for the reduced complex been completed – If not when will it be finalised.
- What is the time frame for the tendering process. When will it be advertised and when will tenders close.
- What will be the scope of the project, and what is the budgeted total cost of the revised project.
- What is the construction time-frame for commencement and completion of the centre

This specific information is vital to the business community of Christmas Island, to enable them to pro-actively participate in the project. If this project is delayed, it will have severe ramifications on the entire island because the business community has already made long term financial commitments based on Ministerial announcements made early in 2002.

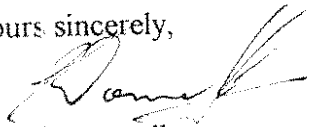
In the event that this project is deferred beyond 2003, the Island Community will go into deep decline, and we seek your support to bring forward other projects including;

- Linkwater Road Bypass – Can this project be fast-tracked to commence before May 2003?
- Airport Extensions –The major cost component is the runway lengthening and widening. We ask for your consideration to commence earthworks with respect to the apron, in order to utilize heavy construction equipment already located on the Island, which will otherwise remain idle. This will also assist the Navy, who have commenced construction of a hangar and maintenance facility adjacent to the apron at the Airport.
- Sports Complex – Can this project be fast-tracked to commence on an urgent basis?

The questions asked above are extremely important to the Island business community, as the announcement leaves so many questions un-answered relating to the future prosperity of Christmas Island

We look forward to meeting with you and your support staff, although we are again concerned with the time allocated to cover this and the important issues which concern the future of Christmas Island. Because of that limited time-frame, another report is attached concerning other issues for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Don O'Donnell
President
Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce

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Hon Philip Ruddock MP
Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
Canberra ACT 2600

21st February 2003

Dear Minister,

The Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce is in receipt of your joint press release with Senator Minchin of 19th February, 2003. Your announcement has been noted with anger and disappointment by the business and general community of Christmas Island. Numerous businesses have made substantial financial commitments based on the announcement by Minister Tuckey on 12th March, 2002, and your announcements to the community during your visit to Christmas Island.

The Chamber has been concerned over the past four months with what appeared to be either interference by the bureaucracy or other Ministers in this project. When you made the announcement on Christmas Island, you indicated that there were enormous opportunities available to those individuals and companies prepared to take up the challenges presented by this project. Many Island businesses responded to your challenge, which now will place them in a severe financial position.

Additionally, the project schedule and its confirmation of proceeding with the project has been verbally stated on numerous occasions by senior Government officials from both your department and DOTaRS to this Chamber.

This resulted in our community;

1. Taking a long term strategic position with respect to business investment.
2. Obtaining finance on a long term basis from financial institutions on a personal and corporate level.
3. Purchasing expensive construction equipment, mostly on credit terms
4. Purchasing land from your Government at high market prices for sub-divisional development.
5. Purchasing stock and increasing stock levels to cater for the anticipated population increase.

There have been a number of negative effects;

1. Price increases in basic essentials – Food and services
2. Excessive price increases in property rental prices – Over \$500 per week for one and two bedroom basic accommodation.
3. Inflated property prices.
4. Increase in Island wages to match construction wage levels.
5. Excessive borrowing based on the initial and subsequent announcements.

We ask your assistance in the following;

1. Confirmation of the time-frame for the completion of this project.
2. Utilisation of existing facilities for refugees with the transfer of refugees from other centres, mainland or off-shore to the Christmas Island temporary facility, which is now available for use.
3. Confirmation that the new Christmas Island facility will be one of the main IRPC locations and will be continuously utilised whilst Australia still continues to receive un-authorized refugees.

Yours Sincerely



Don O'Donnell
President
Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce Inc.

**Christmas Island
Chamber of Commerce (Inc.)**

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SENATOR MINCHIN

**DOTARS NEWS RELEASE MPS009/2003 – IMMIGRATION RECEPTION AND
PROCESSING CENTRE**

Dear Senator,

The Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce is in receipt of your joint press release of 19th February, 2003. Your announcement has been noted with anger and disappointment by the business and general community of Christmas Island, as a number of businesses have made substantial financial commitments based on the previous announcement by other Ministers.

We would like the following information clarified;

- Who is now responsible for the planning and design
- Has the planning and design for the reduced complex been completed – If not when will it be finalised.
- What is the time frame for the tendering process. When will it be advertised and when will tenders close.
- What will be the scope of the project, and what is the budgeted total cost of the revised project.
- What is the construction time-frame for commencement and completion of the centre

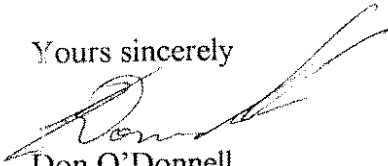
This specific information is vital to the business community of Christmas Island, to enable them to pro-actively participate in the project. If this project is delayed, it will have severe ramifications on the entire Island because the business community has already made long term financial commitments based on Ministerial announcements made early in 2002.

In the event that this project is deferred beyond 2003, the Island Community will go into deep decline, and we seek your support to bring forward other projects including;

- Linkwater Road Bypass – Can this project be fast-tracked to commence before May 2003?
- Airport Extensions –The major cost component is the runway lengthening and widening. We ask for your consideration to commence earthworks with respect to the apron, in order to utilize heavy construction equipment already located on the Island, which will otherwise remain idle. This will also assist the Navy, who have commenced construction a hangar and maintenance facility adjacent to the apron at the Airport.
- Sports Complex – Can this project be fast-tracked to commence on an urgent basis?

The questions asked above are extremely important to the Island business community, as the announcement leaves so many questions an-answered relating to the future prosperity of Christmas Island.

Yours sincerely



Don O'Donnell

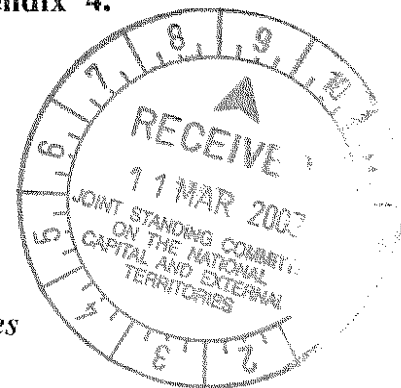
President

Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce

Appendix 4.

Christmas Island
Chamber of Commerce

*Summary of Private Sector Investment by
Christmas Island Residents and Business Enterprises
over the last 18-24 months.*



Excluding Christmas Island Phosphates investment in plant and equipment over the last 18 - 24 months, and that of Wagners and Walter Construction, the Chamber has made private inquiries and close estimates of the amount of private investment that has been made by Island residents and enterprises, investing in the future of the Island to supplement and compliment Government investment in capital works projects. The figures provided are, of necessity, conservative and have, after inquiry and for the sake of simplicity, been broadbanded under categories.

Business Type	\$ Million
Food Retailing/Supermarket & Misc. Small Businesses	1.67
Construction Plant & Machinery	6.00
Stevedoring - Plant, Equipment & Training	0.75
Private Accommodation & Subdivision Development	7.80
Aviation Services to Jakarta	0.25
Carhire - Private Vehicles Imported for Proposed Private Sector plus Other Commercial Units	2.00
Refrigeration/Airconditioning/Electrical	0.60
Plumbing Services	0.50
Laundry Services	0.25
Shipping & Transport Freight Cost Outlayed by Private Sector	2.22
Miscellaneous - Real Estate/Communications/Cleaning/ Fishing/Diving/Tours/Golf & Cricket Club	0.71
TOTAL	22.75 Million

CHAMBER LETTERHEAD

Hon Wilson Tuckey MP
 Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government
 Parliament House,
 Canberra ACT

24th February, 2003



Dear Minister,

Following the meeting and discussions with you today, you confirmed that the IRPC will continue, but be on a reduced scale. We assume from your comments that the project may not commence for 6-8 months, and we would ask you to confirm in writing the proposed construction schedule and time-frame.

In order to support local business operations we ask that you consider the continuation of the IRPC construction to the extent of works that are required to be completed before building can commence. At this stage, local contractors will be severely affected from the end of March, when all current contracts are completed.

The items listed below could commence and be completed during 2003 to endure the Island contracting workforce is maintained. This will also then sustain other service industries of the Christmas Island community.

IRPC Earthworks Stage 1 and 2

- Complete all earthworks
- Construct sewerage line from IRPC site to town-site
- Construct sewerage treatment plant
- Lay electrical cabling from power station to IRPC site
- Lay power, storm-water and fire services to the IRPC site.
- Construct the pursuit road around the site
- Construct site fencing

Other projects that could proceed during 2003 to ensure our community does not go into a severe economic decline are as follows;

1. Linkwater Road

The proposed works are necessary in order to facilitate the establishment of the port facility at Mar Chor Nui Nui – Without this road, this port facility is not usable – Heavy traffic will destroy the existing road through the Settlement residential area. We understand that all documentation and designs have been completed for this road, however at the last minute Softstar Holdings have objected to the design.

We ask that this issue be resolved quickly to permit the project to proceed.

2. Airport Extension Project

We are aware that the main works on the airport extension may be tied to other projects – eg APSC. Some parts of this project are immediately necessary, including the airport apron and surrounding parking areas. Some of this work is required to facilitate the current hangar and maintenance workshop being constructed for the Australian Navy helicopter facility. We ask that you consider commencing construction on this segment of the airport extension project as soon as possible.

3. Community Recreational and Sporting Complex

We understand that you already have requested GHD to prepare a design for this facility, and ask that this project be fast-tracked to commence as early as possible in 2003 to maintain employment and to assist local businesses to maintain reasonable activity.

4. Existing Detention Centre

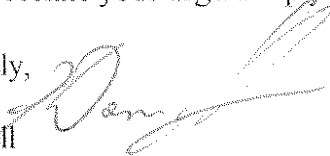
As far as we are aware, the Immigration Department are proposing to dispatch the balance of refugees held at this centre to other centres, dismiss or transfer all staff, and “moth-ball” the facility. With the deferment of the IRPC project the potential closure of the temporary facility, the roll-on effect to the Island economy will be totally disastrous for Christmas Island. It will cause the cancellation of the Northern charter, the closure and departure of many businesses and a significant reduction in the Island population.

We ask you to apply every possible effort to have this decision reversed, and that refugees are transferred from other overseas and mainland centres to Christmas Island to maintain this important industry to our economy.

We would appreciate your urgent reply on these matters.

Yours Sincerely,

Don O'Donnell
President



SUPPLEMENT

CHAMBER LETTERHEAD

Hon Wilson Tuckey MP
Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT



24th February, 2003

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Yours Sincerely,

Don O'Donnell
President