



## **Introduction**

### **Background to the proposed works**

1.1 Lavarack Barracks, situated towards the southern edge of the City of Townsville at the base of Mt Stuart, is home to the Army's 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade which is part of the Ready Deployment Force. Lavarack Barracks also houses a Training Precinct and a number of units and elements that provide support to Defence and Army in North Queensland. It is proposed that the Reserve 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade based at Jezzine Barracks in Townsville be relocated to Lavarack Barracks at some future stage. Currently, some 3,500 military and 330 civilian staff are based at Lavarack Barracks.<sup>1</sup>

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade**

1.2 The 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade is the major land component of the Australian Defence Force Ready Deployment Force. The Brigade holds units in a high degree of readiness for a wide range of operational tasks. These include contributing forces to assist in defending Australia against attack (including air mobile, amphibious and mounted operations) and the defence of regional and global interests (including Services Assisted and Protected Evacuations).

1.3 The infantry, armour, artillery, engineer, signals and combat service support elements of the Brigade are supported by elements of RAAF's Airlift Group (Detachment No 38 Squadron) and the Army's 5<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment.

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1 Brigadier Garry Kelly, Evidence, p.2.

- 1.4 The close proximity of extensive training areas and the broad infrastructure network existing at Townsville assist in sustaining the Brigade's readiness requirements.
- 1.5 The 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade in its various forms has been located at Lavarack Barracks for over 30 years. The initial major development of Lavarack Barracks took place in 1965-66 as a result of a Government decision to locate a task force base at Townsville. It provided permanent living and working accommodation for a task force of three battalions and supporting arms and services, based on personnel and equipment establishments current at that time.
- 1.6 In 1980-81 further development was undertaken to provide working accommodation for several additional logistics units to support the Operational Deployment Force responsibility assigned to the Brigade.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.7 In 1988, as part of an Australia-wide program to upgrade Other Ranks living-in accommodation, 1,560 bedrooms (from the original 2,880 dormitory style bed spaces) were upgraded at the Barracks. In addition, 540 high density bed spaces were retained for training, transit, pre-deployment and contingency accommodation.<sup>3</sup>
- 1.8 Up until 1991 various medium and minor works projects, some of a temporary nature, were undertaken for other units at Lavarack Barracks. Those units included 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Ambulance, 162<sup>nd</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron, Base Administrative Support Centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Supply Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Supply Company and 9<sup>th</sup> Transport Squadron. Subsequently, some of the minor units were absorbed into 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Administrative Support Battalion.
- 1.9 Significant redevelopment of Lavarack Barracks commenced in 1992 as a multi-stage project.
- 1.10 The first stage provided operational and support facilities for the base. In particular, new facilities were provided for elements of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Administrative Support Battalion, the Base Medical Centre and 162<sup>nd</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron.<sup>4</sup>
- 1.11 The main focus of the second stage, which is expected to be completed later in 2001, is to replace existing living-in accommodation with modern

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2 The PWC examined and reported on these works in its Eleventh Report of 1980.

3 The PWC examined and reported on these works in its Third Report of 1988.

4 The PWC examined and reported on the first stage redevelopment in its Sixteenth Report of 1992.

facilities and provide three messes collocated with the living -in accommodation precincts.<sup>5</sup>

- 1.12 The Lavarack Barracks redevelopment Stage 3 will start the process of replacing the working accommodation for 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, other Land Command force elements, Training Command units and area facilities at Lavarack Barracks. In addition, it will provide for the proposed future relocation of the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade.
- 1.13 A further stage will be required to complete the redevelopment of the Barracks.<sup>6</sup> Stage 4 will include facilities for the 4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Artillery, a gymnasium and some supporting elements. The approximate cost for the final stage is estimated to be \$130 million.<sup>7</sup>

## Training Precinct

- 1.14 The Regional Training Centre – North Queensland provides training for Defence personnel in North Queensland. The unit has administration and training facilities on Robert Towns Boulevard at the western end of the Barracks next to Headquarters 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, collocated with other Army Training Command units including the Royal Military College – North Queensland Detachment.
- 1.15 The Army Promotions Training Centre and the North Queensland Area Library are also located at Lavarack Barracks.<sup>8</sup>

## 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade

- 1.16 The Defence Reform Program identified in the shorter term the possible disposal of Jezzine Barracks. Accordingly, provision has been made in the Lavarack Barracks Master Plan for the relocation of Headquarters 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade and its subordinate units from Jezzine Barracks.<sup>9</sup>
- 1.17 Training cooperation currently exists between the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade and 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade, as well as the 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Far North Queensland Regiment based at Cairns.<sup>10</sup>

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5 The PWC examined and reported on the second stage redevelopment in its Third Report of 1999.

6 Brigadier Garry Kelly, Evidence, p.2.

7 Brigadier Garry Kelly, Evidence, p.13.

8 Defence, Submission, p.17.

9 Defence, Submission, p.4.

10 Defence, Submission, p.11.

## Units located at Lavarack Barracks

1.18 The 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade units currently located at Lavarack Barracks are as follows:

- Headquarters 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade;
- B Squadron 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment;
- 4<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Combat Engineer Regiment;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Troop Emergency Response Squadron;
- 103<sup>rd</sup> Signals Squadron;
- 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment; and
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Administrative Support Battalion.

1.19 Other collocated and supporting units at Lavarack Barracks are:

- 162<sup>nd</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron;
- Regional Training Centre – North Queensland;
- Royal Military College – North Queensland Detachment;
- 10<sup>th</sup> Force Support Battalion;
- Lavarack Barracks Medical Centre;
- Northern Logistics Group (Townsville);
- 1<sup>st</sup> Military Police Company;
- Defence Corporate Services Agencies – North Queensland; and
- minor supporting agencies.<sup>11</sup>

## Conduct of the Inquiry

1.20 On 24 May 2001 the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration moved in the House of Representatives in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969* that the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works consider and report on a proposal for the Lavarack Barracks redevelopment Stage 3.

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11 Defence, Submission, pp.12-13.

- 1.21 The Committee advertised the Inquiry in the *Townsville Bulletin* on Wednesday 30 May 2001 and in *The Australian* on Wednesday 6 June 2001 and invited submissions.
- 1.22 The Committee sought submissions from organisations, peak bodies and individuals who may have had an interest in the Inquiry. The Committee also wrote to Senators representing Queensland and to State Members of Parliament and members of the local Shires advising them of the Inquiry and seeking submissions.
- 1.23 On 12 July 2001 the Committee inspected some aspects of Lavarack Barracks, including single living-in accommodation and the messes completed under Stage 2 of the redevelopment project. On 13 July the Committee was briefed by the Department of Defence on the Stage 3 proposal. Following the briefing and site inspections relating to the proposed Stage 3 redevelopment the Committee held a public hearing at the Lachlan Wilson Centre at Lavarack Barracks.

## Structure of the Report

- 1.24 Chapter 1 provides a background to the project and outlines the conduct of the Committee's inquiry. Chapter 2 addresses the need for the proposed work and Chapter 3 provides details of the proposed redevelopment. Issues arising from the Committee's Inquiry are set out in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 contains general comments, conclusions and recommendations.