



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL SERVICES

**PROPOSED COMMUNITY
RECREATION CENTRE ON CHRISTMAS
ISLAND**

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE TO THE
PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC WORKS**

August 2003

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IDENTIFICATION OF THE NEED

INTRODUCTION

1. The proposal presented in this submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC) is for the construction of a community Recreation Centre in the form of a new facility adjacent to the existing community sports oval at Phosphate Hill (upper plateau) on Christmas Island.
2. The proposal includes:
 - (a) construction of an outdoor swimming pool, multi-use recreation hall, change room and ancillary areas; and
 - (b) an upgrade of the adjoining sports ground.
3. The proposed facility is intended to provide improved community infrastructure services for all Christmas Islanders.
4. The Department of Transport and Regional Services has completed the tender process and is well placed to award a Design and Construction Contract at short notice.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5. At the same time the Government announced the construction of an Immigration Reception and Processing Centre (IRPC) and associated housing and infrastructure on Christmas Island, it also announced that it would construct a dedicated Community Recreation Centre.
6. It is recognised that with an increased population comes increased pressure on community infrastructure, the Government therefore announced it would fund the construction of dedicated sports facilities on Christmas Island (to the value of \$8 million).
7. The Christmas Island Administration through the Administrator's Advisory Council (AAC), together with Regional Office Perth (ROP), are jointly managing delivery of the Recreation Centre proposal.
8. Christmas Island is currently provided with a number of facilities, which cater for casual and organised sports. However, with the exception of the swimming pool, these generally occur in conjunction with the District High School.
9. The existing swimming pool in particular is likely to continue to be used for recreation swimming, with swim lessons and lap swimming relocating to the proposed new facility.
10. The proposed new facility will allow for consolidation of sport facilities around the existing cricket club and sports oval, which currently serves as an umbrella facility for many sports.
11. The new facility will relieve the pressure on use of existing facilities at the District High School.

12. Existing facilities include:

(a) Swimming pool

The swimming pool located in the Settlement serves a community need and is well used by a variety of user groups including recreation swimmers, lap swimmers, mothers and toddlers and the school learn-to-swim programme. The pool is not of a length suited to competition and cannot address conflict between the various user groups such as lap swimmers and children.

(b) Gymnasium

The gymnasium on Gaze Road previously provided basketball facilities but was more recently used as temporary accommodation for detainees. The facility is now used for childrens' holiday activities organised by the Shire.

(c) Basketball Courts

The outdoor basketball court in Poon Saan provides a local facility and while it is not in an excellent condition, it is well used by the local community.

(d) Community Hall

The community Hall adjacent to the Technical School in Taman Sweetland was purpose built for badminton. The centre is well used and serves as church and community meeting room.

(e) School

The school site contains a soccer pitch, tennis courts and covered sports arena. :

- Soccer pitch – used for soccer training by the general community one night per week and for a game on Sunday.
- Tennis Courts – constructed six years ago and well used by the community.
- Covered sports arena – generally used only by the school but has been made available occasionally for volleyball (although roof line too low)

(f) Golf Club

Used predominantly by golfers on a regular basis. Limited power and space at this site restricts expanded use.

(g) Dive Club

Located in clubrooms near the Christmas Island Club. Requires location close to ocean.

(h) Cricket Club and Oval

The cricket club provides a central umbrella association for a variety of sports clubs, including tennis and basketball. A cricket club and sports club membership is required to use the sports facilities.

The oval provides for cricket, football, touch football and softball. It is also the arena for large-scale community events such as those held on Territory Day.

The cricket club facility comprises an older building housing a function room, storeroom, and bar. A steel portal frame extension (4 years old) provides for a kiosk, storage room for sports equipment and an open area.

NEED

13. On 12 March 2002 the Hon Wilson Tuckey MP (Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government) announced details to the community of Christmas Island of a new permanent Immigration Reception and Processing Centre to be built at North West Point, Christmas Island.
14. Recognising that with an increased population comes increased pressure on community infrastructure, Minister Tuckey also announced that the Government would fund the construction of dedicated sports facilities.
15. Funds up to \$8.0 million are available for a dedicated sports facilities including a Community Recreation Centre. The facility will be integrated with the adjacent community sports oval at Phosphate Hill (upper plateau) on Christmas Island.
16. The proposed Community Recreation Centre is considered essential to the plans for achieving conformity with mainland Australian standards. In addition, the provision of the infrastructure provides a broader community benefit to Christmas Island and will contribute to allowing for all year round undercover sporting activities.
17. In normal circumstances the State or Territory would be expected to provide community infrastructure. The Commonwealth has the equivalent role of a State Government on Christmas Island and therefore the provision of this infrastructure is the Commonwealth's responsibility. The Department of Transport and Regional Services will be responsible for undertaking the project.
18. The proposed Recreation Centre will:
 - (a) support the Government's objectives for Christmas Island of matching comparable mainland standards;
 - (b) provide an all weather recreation facility infrastructure. At present, there is no reasonable alternative for under cover sports and consequently community organisations suffer severe disruption for extended periods; and
 - (c) create short and long term job opportunities for the local community and develop the local skills base.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

19. The dedicated sports facility is proposed to be provided by way of a new Community Recreation Centre (including swimming pool, multi-use recreation hall, change rooms and ancillary rooms and service areas). It is to be integrated with the adjacent existing community sports oval. The proposed facilities are intended to balance the commercial and social benefits for all Christmas Islanders.

Community Recreation Centre Usage

20. The main user groups of the proposed recreation facility are anticipated to include: school children, adult residents, IRPC staff, detainees, Defence personnel and tourists.
21. The following outlines the functional components of the proposed multiple use Recreation Centre:

Lobby/Foyer; Reception, Staff administration offices; Kitchen / Kiosk; Public toilets/change rooms; staff toilets; Creche/Child minding facilities, a multi-purpose sports hall to cater for net ball, volley ball, basketball, equipment stores, hall viewing and seating, multi-purpose activity room, Gymnasium, First aid, 25m pool, External paving / Hardstand for pedestrians, Car parking and drop off facilities, General power and site lighting, Sewage collection from toilet facilities, Stormwater and runoff collection, treatment and disposal and screen fencing.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

22. The Department of Transport and Regional Services commissioned GHD to undertake a concept study in full consultation with the Christmas Island Community to examine the options for a new facility on Christmas Island.
23. The aim was to provide a schedule of recreation facilities, which might be realised within the established budget, and which provide the range of facilities typically provided to a population base and location such as Christmas Island.
24. Additional/alternative facilities were also identified and cost estimates provided to allow for flexibility following consultation with the community and stakeholders.
25. To determine the most appropriate site for the facility, a study (completed in February 2003) included a general survey of the island, consultation with local personnel with relevant expertise, and a review of the currently provided facilities.
26. Factors taken into consideration in assessing the sites included:
 - (a) Location and Tenure;
 - (b) Services;
 - (c) Constraints and Opportunities; and
 - (d) The views of stakeholders and other groups obtained during consultation.
27. In narrowing down the possible locations, those areas with recreation or tourism potential were generally considered.
28. The site is preferred because:
 - (a) The site is relatively flat;
 - (b) The former go-kart area is adjacent to services;
 - (c) The site is not within the 150 m buffer area of the Non-Directional Beacon (NDB) located on the vacant cleared land north of Vagabond Road;
 - (d) there is good road access in the vicinity of the site;

- (e) there is sufficient room;
 - (f) potable water is available; and
 - (g) based on local knowledge, the site is not in the path of a major crab migration route.
29. Constraint on the site is the location of the site adjacent to the temporary detention centre, will require that screening be installed along the eastern boundary.
30. The preferred site has been selected by visual inspection and by geo-technical survey.

Comparisons with similar Regional Communities

31. Information on recreation centres in rural areas of Western Australia was collated from a number of Local Authorities. This allowed for identification of the level of facilities typically provided to a relatively isolated community where the population base was similar to that of Christmas Island.
32. The Shire of Derby provided the greatest comparison with Christmas Island; in population, isolation and climatic conditions. While the recreation centre does not have a swimming pool, the range of indoor and outdoor facilities is similar to that proposed for Christmas Island.
33. Shire of Derby
- Population :

Shire	8,900
Town	3,500 (increases to 5,000 in Wet Season)
 - Outdoor Facilities :
 - Basketball courts X 2 (multi-use)
 - Kiosk
 - Storage room
 - Indoor Facilities (air –conditioned)
 - Squash courts x 2
 - Community room and kitchen
 - Crèche facility
 - Offices x 2
 - Change rooms x 4

Users: predominantly sports associations. Estimate that only 5% of population use facilities.

Cost of construction: \$2.8m (2001).

34. Shire of Broome

Population :

Shire 13,500

Town increases to 20,000 plus in Tourist Season

Pools

- 8 x 25m lap pool
- leisure lagoon pool
- spa area
- BBQ & landscaped gardens
- Kiosk facilities
- Change rooms

Stadium

- double indoor stadium - for netball, basketball, badminton, volleyball, indoor soccer & other sports.
- air conditioned change rooms
- Kiosk facilities

Squash

- 2 x air-conditioned squash courts
- air conditioned change rooms
- Kiosk facilities

Tennis & Netball / Basketball Courts

- 8 synthetic grass tennis courts
- 4 'Latexite' netball/basketball courts
- Kiosk & restricted bar facilities
- toilets
- Landscaped shaded entertaining area

Reception/ Admin

- air-conditioned crèche/multi purpose room
- administration
- 2 x first aid
- 4 x club offices

Skate Park

- Located at the front of BRAC & consists of beginners to medium jumps, rails and slopes. Entry is free.

Users: Sports associations and the general public.

Cost of construction: \$4.8m (2001) not including swimming pools

Operational costs: \$200,000 running cost for the pools per year, the cost of running the dry facilities is not known.

REASONS FOR ADOPTING PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION

35. The proposed sports facilities, including a Community Recreation Centre, are considered necessary to support an increased population on Christmas Island. The proposed facility has been designed to serve a maximum population of 6,000.
36. While the population of Christmas Island is currently estimated at 1,500, long-term growth to 5,000 has been estimated in the “Christmas Island Local Planning Strategy. The Recreation Centre project would potentially reduce future calls on Commonwealth funds to support community infrastructure on Christmas Island.
37. Following the completion of the support housing and associated water, power and communications infrastructure associated with the IRPC works there is currently a community expectation of an early commencement of the project.
38. Recently tenders were called for the design and construction of the proposed Recreation Centre and DOTARS is now in a position to award a contract for an immediate start.
39. The pattern of sports usage on Christmas Island includes regular participation in relatively small groups at a variety of venues. There are, however, occasions when a major event draws considerable crowds to the sports ground. It is anticipated that the proposed recreation centre will supplement the facilities at the cricket club and will provide a community focus for sport and recreation activities
40. The proposed new facility allows for future expansion.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

41. Preliminary investigations have been undertaken for the proposed facility. The investigations found that no specific conditions arise from the proposed redevelopment of the site (former go-cart track).
42. None of the more vulnerable seabird species found on the coastal zone of Christmas Island nest in this area.
43. However crabs still use this area, the large Robber Crab also occurs on this and other sites of Christmas Island.

HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS

44. The most significant building in the vicinity is the cricket clubhouse located approximately 100m northeast of the proposed facility. The clubhouse has some community value and in view of this, consultation was undertaken with the committee who indicated that the proposed location of the new recreation facility was acceptable.

ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

45. A comprehensive Community Consultation programme was implemented throughout the planning and development stages of the proposed upgrading of facilities, involving Christmas Island Administration, stakeholders and the local community.
46. DOTARS has progressed the Community Recreation Centre through full consultation with the Shire of Christmas Island and the Christmas Island Community.

47. The consultation process, which included agreement on the construction site location and concept design, was progressed through the Administrator's Advisory Council (AAC) on Christmas Island.
48. During the consultation process for the recreational facilities the following organisations were consulted:
 - (a) Shire of Christmas Island;
 - (b) Christmas Island Phosphates;
 - (c) Australian Federal Police;
 - (d) Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs;
 - (e) ECOZ;
 - (f) Parks Australia North;
 - (g) Union of Christmas Island Workers (UCIW);
 - (h) Christmas Island Chamber of Commerce (CI CoC);
 - (i) Indian Ocean Group Training Association (IOGTA);
 - (j) Christmas Island Tourist Association (CITA);
 - (k) Indian Ocean Territories Health Services (IOTHS)

REVENUE DERIVED FROM PROJECT

49. Discussions with the Shire of Christmas Island revealed that it would consider leasing out areas such as the Gymnasium, Kiosk and Creche.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

LOCATION

50. Christmas Island, with an area of 135 square kilometres, is located in the Indian Ocean, at latitude 10° 25' south and longitude 105° 43' east. It is approximately 360 kilometres south of Java Head at the southern entrance to the Sunda Strait, approximately 1300 kilometres from Singapore and approximately 2600 kilometres from Perth. The nearest point of the Australian mainland is Northwest Cape which lies approximately 1400 kilometres to the southeast.
51. The Island is the summit of a submarine mountain. It rises steeply to a central plateau dominated by stands of rainforest. The plateau reaches heights of up to 316 metres and consists mainly of limestone interstratified by layers of volcanic rock.
52. In shape the Island is thought to resemble a standing dog. The residential/commercial area of the Island is located next to Flying Fish Cover in the Dog's Head area in the northeast corner of the Island. From the settled areas in the northeast to the proposed Recreation Centre location is approximately 2-7 kilometres (depending on community precinct).

53. The proposed infrastructure facilities are located in the northern area of Christmas Island, on the upper plateau of Phosphate Hill.
54. The site of the proposed recreation complex is at the former go-kart track at Phosphate Hill. The go-kart site currently serves as a hard stand areas for storage containers.
55. Phosphate Hill currently accommodates the temporary detention centre, the temporary construction camp and the cricket club and oval (Refer Appendix B). A Non-Directional Beacon and other equipment is accommodated on the cleared site on the northern side of Vagabond Road. The NDB has been decommissioned and when dismantled will allow for additional cleared space in the near vicinity.
56. The go-kart site is identified as Crown Land on Pt Lot 513. The construction camp, temporary detention centre and cricket club/oval are also identified as Crown Land.
57. The go-kart site area is approximately 1.1ha.
58. The Christmas Island Town Planning Scheme identifies the go-kart site as “Unallocated Crown Land”, with the cricket club, oval and temporary construction camp site identified as “Public Purpose- Cricket Ground”.
59. The site is adjacent to power, water and sewerage infrastructure which currently service the construction camp and the detention centre. It is anticipated that water services may require to be upgraded to meet the demands of the proposed recreation centre.

SCOPE OF WORK

60. The proposed facility is designed to balance the commercial and social benefits with optimal protection of the terrestrial environment in this unique Commonwealth Territory.
61. In developing specifications for the Community Recreation Centre infrastructure, the Commonwealth has widely consulted through the Administrator’s Advisory Council (AAC) to ensure specifications for the work tendered will deliver the requirements of the Island community.
62. The proposal will provide a new Community Recreation Centre (including swimming pool, multi-use recreation hall, change rooms and ancillary rooms and service areas). The proposal will be integrated with the adjacent existing community sports oval.

Recreation Centre

63. The following outlines the functional components of the proposed multiple use Recreation Centre :
 - (a) Lobby/Foyer;
 - (b) Reception;
 - (c) Staff Administration offices;
 - (d) Kitchen/Kiosk;
 - (e) Public toilets/change rooms/staff toilets;

- (f) Creche/Childminding facilities;
- (g) 1 Multi-purpose sports hall to cater for one netball court;
- (h) Equipment stores;
- (i) Hall viewing and seating;
- (j) Multi-purpose activity room;
- (k) Gymnasium;
- (l) First Aid;
- (m) 25m pool;
- (n) External paving/Hardstand for pedestrians;
- (o) Car parking and drop off facilities;
- (p) General power and site lighting;
- (q) Sewage collection from toilet facilities;
- (r) Stormwater and run-off collection, treatment and disposal;
- (s) Fencing; and
- (t) Adjacent oval reticulation.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND SITE SELECTION

64. Factors taken into consideration in assessing the sites included: Location and Tenure, Availability of Services, Constraints and Opportunities, and the views of stakeholders and other groups obtained during consultation.
65. In narrowing down the possible locations, those areas with existing recreation expansion potential were generally considered.
66. The site of the proposed recreation complex is at the former go-kart track at Phosphate Hill. The go-kart site currently serves as a hard stand areas for storage containers.
67. Phosphate Hill currently accommodates the temporary detention centre, the construction camp and the cricket club and oval. A Non-Directional Beacon and other equipment is accommodated on the cleared site on the northern side of Vagabond Road.
68. The site is preferred because the site is relatively flat, it is adjacent to services, there is good road access in the vicinity of the site, there is sufficient room and potable water is available.
69. The site is adjacent to power, water and sewerage infrastructure, which currently services the construction camp and the detention centre. It is anticipated that water services may require to be upgraded to meet the demands of the proposed recreation centre

ZONINGS AND APPROVALS

70. The go-kart site is identified as Crown Land on Pt Lot 513. The construction camp, temporary detention centre and cricket club/oval are also identified as Crown Land.
71. The go-kart site area is approximately 1.1ha.
72. The Christmas Island Town Planning Scheme identifies the go-kart site as “Unallocated Crown Land”, with the cricket club, oval and construction campsite identified as “Public Purpose- Cricket Ground”.

LAND ACQUISITION

73. The proposed Recreation Centre area is Unallocated Crown Land and is envisaged to remain as Crown land.

CODES AND STANDARDS

74. All structures, services and infrastructure will comply with all relevant Commonwealth and State town planning, building, health and safety regulations, the Building Codes of Australia, and all relevant Australian Standards, including Austroads Standards.
75. The proposed Recreation Centre is also designed to take into account the following requirements: Department of Housing & Works RFT 0620003 document, the associated Performance Specification and the associated Accommodation Schedule.
76. The design process involves the full analysis of site, climate, planning and accommodation considerations.

PLANNING AND DESIGN CONCEPTS

77. The proposed design of the community Recreation Centre facilities is based on the Department of Housing & Works’ RFT 0620003 document, the associated Performance Specification and the associated Accommodation Schedule.
78. The proposed site configuration has been determined by the following features:
 - (a) The long wedge shape of the site located between the cricket ground and temporary Detention Centre;
 - (b) Point of access from Vagabond Road at the North end of the site and location of the car park and service access;
 - (c) Orientation of the site;
 - (d) The 3.5m slope of the site falling from south to north;
 - (e) Screening of the temporary Detention Centre on the East boundary; Integration with the oval to the West of the site; and Provision for future expansion of the Sports hall and Gymnasium.
79. A landscaping design will be developed in accordance with Christmas Island environmental guidelines incorporating appropriate plants suitable for the tropical climate.

- 80. The site layout incorporates a balance of soft landscaping, coloured paving, natural rock retaining walls, suitable shade trees and structures.
- 81. A reticulated irrigation system will be provided for the site.

GEOTECHNICAL INFORMATION

- 82. A geotechnical investigation was conducted in March 2003. A copy of the report was provided to tenderers for information only. The successful tenderer is to undertake further investigations if deemed necessary to fully assess the foundation conditions and associated risks.

MASTER PLANNING

- 83. The proposed Recreation Centre facilities will require to be reflected in the Christmas Island Town Planning Scheme.

FIRE PROTECTION

- 84. Services within the building will consist of a fire alarm system: fire alarm panel, cabling, smoke detectors, thermal detectors, break glass buttons and an audible alarm and external bell.
- 85. Fire hydrants and fire hose reels have been positioned to provide total coverage to the entire complex. Therefore, on-site storage tanks and fixed pump sets with in-line boosters have been incorporated in the design.

FUTURE EXPANSION

- 86. The community Recreation Centre infrastructure has been designed to accommodate anticipated demand and known local requirements. The design of the infrastructure will allow for future expansion.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 87. The infrastructure will comply with requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991*.

EMPLOYMENT IMPACT

- 88. The project will create both short and long-term job opportunities for the local community, which will assist in the development of the local skills base. During construction, this will be in the form of sub-contract work available from mainland head contractors. During the operational stage of the Recreation Centre facility, employment will be generated in the management, operation and maintenance of these facilities.

PROJECT COST

- 89. The estimated cost of the Community Recreation Centre is \$8.0 million.

PROJECT DELIVERY SYSTEM

- 90. DOTARS has progressed the Community Recreation Centre through full consultation with the Shire of Christmas Island and the Christmas Island Community. The consultation process, which included agreement on the

construction site location and concept design, was progressed through the Administrator's Advisory Council (AAC) on Christmas Island.

91. The Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) was given responsibility for the provision of the proposed Community Recreation Centre.
92. Open Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the design and construction were sought. Subsequently the shortlisted EOIs registrants were invited to price a Lump Sum Contract, based on a Request for Tender document prepared by the WA Department of Housing and Works, on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services.
93. The tenders were called for the design and construction (D&C) delivery of the proposed Recreation Centre. The submissions have been assessed and DOTARS is now in a position to award a contact for an immediate start.
94. Following a tender bid GHD Pty Ltd has been appointed as the Project Manager for the Superintendence of the contract delivery for this project.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME

95. Subject to the outcome of the Public Works Committee investigations and parliamentary approval to proceed, an award of contract is expected in February 2004, with construction scheduled for completion during 2004.
96. The construction schedule for the community Recreation Facility will be aligned with the specified 40 week construction programme.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

97. In accordance with the Government announcement of March 2002 that it would construct a dedicated Immigration Reception and Processing Centre (IRPC) facilities and infrastructure, the Government also announced that, in conjunction with this IRPC work, it would fund dedicated sports facility to the value of \$8.0 million.
98. The Department of Transport and Regional Services considers that the proposed works as described in this submission are the most appropriate and cost effective way to provide such community infrastructure on Christmas.
99. The proposed Recreation Centre on Christmas Island will meet the current and long-term needs of the community of Christmas Island. The proposed infrastructure will support the Government's objective for Christmas Island to provide conditions and services that are aligned with those in comparable mainland communities
100. The proposed infrastructure upgrade will create both short and long term job opportunities for the local community and develop the local skills base.