

Multi National Base Tarin Kot Remediation Project

- 9.1 The Department of Defence (Defence) proposes to remediate the multi-national base at Tarin Kot (MNB-TK), Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan.
- 9.2 The purpose of the project is to transfer suitable infrastructure and facilities to the Afghanistan National Security Force, deconstruct all other infrastructure and facilities and remediate the site prior to its return to Afghan control.
- 9.3 The cost of the project is \$47.2 million.
- 9.4 The project was referred to the Committee on 24 April 2013. The project was referred through the Governor-General, under Section 18(4) of the Committee's Act.¹ This provision enables the Governor-General to refer a public work to the Committee when the Parliament is not in session, or when the House of Representatives is adjourned for more than one month or indefinitely.

Conduct of the inquiry

- 9.5 Following referral to the Committee, the inquiry was advertised on the Committee's website and by media release.
- 9.6 The Committee received one submission and four supplementary submissions from the Department of Defence. The list of submissions can be found at Appendix A.
- 9.7 The Committee received a private briefing on the project and conducted a short public hearing and an in-camera hearing on 1 May 2013 in Melbourne.

1 *Public Works Committee Act 1969.*

- 9.8 A transcript of the public hearing and the submission to the inquiry are available on the Committee's website.²

Need for the works

- 9.9 On 26 March 2013, the Minister for Defence announced the closure of MNB-TK, Australia's main operating base located within the Uruzgan Province of Afghanistan, by the end of 2013.
- 9.10 As part of the closure of MNB-TK by the end of 2013, Defence is required to undertake the necessary remediation activities in a safe and environmentally compliant manner to ensure the base is returned to Afghan control in a condition suitable for future Afghan use.³
- 9.11 The Committee is satisfied that there is a need for the works.

Scope of the works

- 9.12 The closure of MNB-TK will be managed by a Force Extraction Unit. The Force Extraction Unit will manage the transfer of suitable Australian legacy infrastructure and facilities to the Afghanistan National Security Force and the deconstruction of all other infrastructure and facilities that are not suitable for transfer.
- 9.13 The deconstruction work is anticipated to be performed by both Defence and contracted labour. A specialist environmental officer has been deployed to MNB-TK to assist with environmental clearance activities prior to the transfer of the base back to Afghan control.⁴
- 9.14 The Committee finds that the proposed scope of works is suitable to meet the need.

Cost of the works

- 9.15 The project cost is \$47.2 million. The Committee received a confidential supplementary submission detailing the project costs and held an in-camera hearing with the proponent agency on these costs.
- 9.16 The Committee is satisfied that the costings for the project provided to it have been adequately assessed by the proponent agency.

2 <www.aph.gov.au/pwc>

3 Defence, Submission 1, p. 1.

4 Defence, Submission 1, p. 1.

Final Committee comment

- 9.17 The Committee understands that the \$47.2 million cost estimate for this project is based on a worst case scenario of complete demolition and deconstruction of all Australian owned infrastructure utilising contracted labour.
- 9.18 The Committee notes that Defence expects that the remediation activities will be undertaken by a combination of contractor and military engineering labour, thereby reducing the overall cost of the project.
- 9.19 The Committee thanks Defence for providing a comprehensive private briefing on this significant project and commends Defence on its cooperative approach to project scrutiny.
- 9.20 The Committee was satisfied with the evidence provided by the Department of Defence regarding the proposed project. The Committee is satisfied that the project has merit in terms of need, scope and cost.
- 9.21 Proponent agencies must notify the Committee of any changes to the project scope, time and cost. The Committee requires that a post-implementation report be provided on completion of the project. A template for the report can be found on the Committee's website.
- 9.22 Having regard to its role and responsibilities contained in the *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, the Committee is of the view that this project signifies value for money for the Commonwealth and constitutes a project which is fit for purpose, having regard to the established need.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the House of Representatives resolve, pursuant to Section 18(7) of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, that it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work: Multi National Base Tarin Kot Remediation Project.

Ms Kirsten Livermore MP
Chair
10 May 2013

