

Proposed Base Infrastructure Works Project under the Base Security Improvement Program

- 5.1 The proposed Base Infrastructure Works (BIW) project under the Base Security Improvement Program (BSIP) is one element of a range of new security measures at military bases around Australia.
- 5.2 Defence has been implementing such measures in response to a 2009 government-directed review of Defence protective security arrangements. This review was initiated following the discovery of planned terrorist attacks on Holsworthy Barracks in Sydney.
- 5.3 The purpose of the project is to deliver tailored infrastructure works at 16 priority sites, in order to reduce the risk of specific types of terrorist attack upon Defence personnel. These works would complement other non-infrastructure BSIP elements to achieve acceptable residual security risk profiles for the identified BSIP terrorist risk events.
- 5.4 To meet this objective, the BIW project will deliver infrastructure treatments tailored to each site's specific security risk profile, function and other environmental factors.
- 5.5 The cost of the project is \$203.502 million.
- 5.6 This proposed construction project was referred to the Committee on 24 May 2012.

Conduct of the inquiry

- 5.7 Following referral to the Committee, the inquiry was advertised nationally.

- 5.8 The Committee received one submission and two supplementary submissions from Defence, and four confidential supplementary submissions detailing the project costs. The Committee also received two submissions from other stakeholders. The list of submissions can be found at Appendix A.
- 5.9 The Committee received briefings on the proposed works for all 16 sites. On 2 July 2012, the Committee conducted a site inspection at Simpson Barracks, Yallambie, Victoria. On 10 August 2012, the Committee conducted site inspections at Victoria Barracks Sydney, Paddington, NSW, and Garden Island Defence Precinct, Potts Point, NSW.
- 5.10 The Committee held a public hearing and an in-camera hearing on the project costs on 10 August 2012 in Sydney.
- 5.11 A transcript of the public hearing and the submissions to the inquiry are available on the Committee's website.¹

Need for the works

- 5.12 The 2009 review involved a security risk assessment of 88 Defence sites. This assessment identified 16 sites that required priority treatment.²
- 5.13 Defence explained the need for the project and its relationship to other recommendations from the 2009 review:

In total, 33 recommendations were delivered by the review. In addressing these recommendations, through the overarching base security improvement program, Defence is providing an integrated and layered approach to security at Defence sites. During the period 2009 to present, 30 of those 33 recommendations have been implemented and closed. The changes implemented so far include legislative changes, policy and procedural improvements, the introduction of armed response capabilities at some sites and improved local security and emergency management processes and measures. [...]

The project's primary aim is to protect our personnel from terrorists who may seek to target establishments. While this project is delivering works at 16 priority sites other non-facility

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

2 Defence, Submission 1, p. 2.

elements of the department's base security improvement program have already been implemented and will continue to be so.³

5.14 The Committee is satisfied that there is a need for the works.

Scope of the works

5.15 The project will involve works at 16 priority sites:

- Holsworthy Barracks, Holsworthy, NSW
- RAAF Base Richmond, Richmond, NSW
- Steele Barracks, Moorebank, NSW
- Garden Island Defence Precinct, Potts Point, NSW
- Victoria Barracks Sydney, Paddington, NSW
- Randwick Barracks, Randwick, NSW
- Defence Plaza Sydney, Sydney, NSW
- Duntroon Garrison, Campbell, ACT
- Russell Offices, Russell, ACT
- Brindabella Park, Majura, ACT
- Victoria Barracks Melbourne, Southbank, Vic.
- Defence Plaza Melbourne, Melbourne, Vic.
- Simpson Barracks, Yallambie, Vic.
- HMAS CERBERUS, Crib Point, Vic.
- RAAF Base Amberley, Amberley, Qld
- RAAF Base Williamtown, Williamtown, NSW.⁴

5.16 The security treatments involve enhancing entry zones to increase access control capability. This will be achieved by implementing a range of measures aimed at enhancing the security arrangements that apply to pedestrian and vehicle access. These measures will be applied at specified locations across each site, depending on the site's operating profile.⁵

3 Mr L. Robbins, Defence, *transcript of evidence*, 10 August 2012, p. 2.

4 Defence, Submission 1, p. 16.

5 Defence, Submission 1, p. 17.

- 5.17 Additional treatments will:
- provide some protection from a number of security risks with particular focus on highly populated and other vulnerable areas
 - enhance the site's security operating capability, including through the use of CCTV systems at selected points of interests.⁶
- 5.18 Furthermore, security patrol arrangements will be modified and enhanced to increase each site's daily protective security arrangements.⁷
- 5.19 Treatments include:
- alert systems
 - command and monitoring facilities
 - detection systems and policy
 - electronic access systems
 - physical access systems
 - enhanced reception facilities.
- 5.20 Defence provided comprehensive information on some treatments being implemented at each site in its initial submission.⁸
- 5.21 Subject to Parliamentary approval, construction is planned to commence in early 2013, and be completed by mid-2015.
- 5.22 The Committee finds that the proposed scope of works is suitable to meet the need.

Cost of the works

- 5.23 The overall project cost is \$203.502 million.⁹
- 5.24 The Committee received four confidential supplementary submissions detailing the project costs and held an in-camera hearing with Defence on these costs.
- 5.25 The Committee is satisfied that the costings for the project provided to it have been adequately assessed by the proponent agency.

6 Defence, Submission 1, p. 17.

7 Defence, Submission 1, p. 17.

8 Defence, Submission 1, pp. 18-27. (Note that some changes to scope were discussed at the public hearing.)

9 Mr L. Robbins, Defence, *transcript of evidence*, 10 August 2012, p. 2.

Project issues

Traffic at Simpson Barracks, Yallambie, Vic.

- 5.26 The project proposes the construction of a new access point to Simpson Barracks, on Yallambie Road at the intersection with Watson Street. This would involve the construction of a roundabout at this intersection.
- 5.27 This proposal would occur in conjunction with the closure of the two existing access points along this road.
- 5.28 A local resident, Mr Philip Pyros, opposed the location of the new access point, stating that it would increase traffic congestion along Yallambie Road.¹⁰
- 5.29 Mr Pyros advocated the use of either or both of the existing access points along Yallambie Road, or the construction of a new access point on Greensborough Highway, directly opposite Erskine Road.¹¹
- 5.30 On 2 July 2012, the Committee inspected the proposed new access point and the existing access points along Yallambie Road.
- 5.31 These issues were discussed at the public hearing in Sydney.¹² Defence subsequently provided detail on the options considered for new access points to the site, which included the use of the existing access points along Yallambie Road. All options considered and disregarded were excluded for various traffic, safety, spatial, geographic and security reasons. Mr Pyros' suggested options for Yallambie Road were discounted due to spatial and security requirements.¹³
- 5.32 Defence also addressed Mr Pyros' suggestion of a new access point on Greensborough Highway, stating that it was not considered viable for the following reasons:
- The civil works associated with constructing a new roadway between Greensborough Highway and Crew Street would incur significant costs due to the distance and complex (vegetation and relief) terrain.
 - There would be a significant environmental impact on both flora and fauna. This option would require detailed studies

10 Mr Philip Pyros, Submission 3, p. [1].

11 Mr Philip Pyros, Submission 3, p. [2].

12 *Transcript of evidence*, 10 August 2012, pp. 6-8.

13 Defence, Submission 1.5, pp. 10-12.

associated with swift parrots, eastern dwarf galahs and the grassy plains woodlands.¹⁴

- 5.33 Defence reiterated that its preferred option has been assessed for traffic impacts and that a roundabout would reduce traffic queuing and therefore reduce the potential impact of traffic flows on Yallambie Road.¹⁵
- 5.34 Defence also stated that the roundabout is the same as others along Yallambie Road and 'removes the need for designated turning lanes which would have a greater impact on the surrounding residential properties.'¹⁶
- 5.35 Defence noted that it had consulted with both Banyule City Council and VicRoads regarding the proposal, and that both organisations have issued the required approvals for the project to proceed.¹⁷

Committee comment

- 5.36 The Committee understands Mr Pyros' concerns that a new access point on Yallambie Road would impact on traffic patterns, particularly for local residents.
- 5.37 The Committee is concerned that roundabouts may be perceived to cause less of an impact on local residents than traffic lights. However, the Committee accepts that Defence has considered multiple options for access points to Simpson Barracks and given a satisfactory explanation for its decision to construct a new access point and roundabout on Yallambie Road.
- 5.38 The Committee notes that Defence contacted Mr Pyros following the public hearing to arrange further discussions of the proposed works and to better understand his concerns. Defence reported that it met with Mr Pyros and five other residents on 29 August 2012.¹⁸
- 5.39 The Committee understands that Defence intends to liaise with relevant local authorities on behalf of Mr Pyros and the other residents regarding local traffic concerns.
- 5.40 The Committee expects that Defence will continue proactive consultation with local residents to address any issues that may arise.

14 Defence, Submission 1.5, p. 13.

15 Defence, Submission 1.5, pp. 13-14.

16 Defence, Submission 1.5, p. 14.

17 Defence, Submission 1.5, pp. 14-15.

18 Defence, Submission 1.6, p. 1.

Traffic at Victoria Barracks, Paddington, NSW

- 5.41 The project proposes the construction of a new access point to Victoria Barracks Sydney, adjacent to the existing entry from Moore Park Road. The Committee inspected the site of the proposed new access point.
- 5.42 Concerns about traffic and road safety at the Moore Park Road entrance were raised during the public hearing in Sydney. Defence's design consultant stated that the proposed new intersection had been assessed by traffic engineers.¹⁹
- 5.43 In a supplementary submission, Defence provided further information on the options considered for Victoria Barracks Sydney, including the heritage concerns at the site and the reasons for choosing to develop the Moore Park Road access point rather than the Oxford Street access point. The submission outlined the preferred design for the expanded access point, including safety measures.²⁰
- 5.44 Following the Committee's concerns, Defence has identified two further opportunities to improve safety at the intersection:
- A safety mirror will be provided at the gate in the Barracks wall to minimise blind spots and to assist vision between vehicles entering or exiting through the narrow opening.
 - Directional signage has been proposed to be erected on Moore Park Road in advance of the new ACP [access control point] entry lane identifying the new entry point and to warn motorists of impending exits.²¹
- 5.45 The Committee had queried why a slip lane for vehicles turning left into the new access point was not included in the design. Defence provided the following explanation:
- Peak traffic turning into the site occurs in the morning. At this time the peak traffic volume on Moore Park Road is in the west-bound lanes, which are on the opposite side of the road to the proposed ACP. During the afternoon peak traffic flow, the number of vehicles [accessing] the site is greatly reduced.
 - The combined effect of the relatively low traffic numbers moving into the ACP, the speed limit on Moore Park Road of 50 km/h, the ACP entry speed off Moore Park Road of 25 km/h (indicated by signage) and the oblique (45 degree) entry lane results in an entry situation that is well within the acceptable

19 Mr G. Lowe, Webb Australia Group, *transcript of evidence*, 10 August 2012, pp. 9-10.

20 Defence, Submission 1.5, pp. 6-8.

21 Defence, Submission 1.5, p. 8.

safe limits as prescribed by RMS [NSW Roads and Maritime Services] and traffic design standards. As such the Project's traffic experts and the agencies consulted advise that there is no technical requirement for a slip lane or a deceleration area due to traffic flows or speeds.

- The inclusion of a slip lane to the east of the proposed entry lane would require the following:
 - ⇒ The relocation of the existing footpath adjacent to Moore Park Road onto the area that is occupied by the heritage listed Stormwater Retention Basin and Stop Butt Wall. This action would result in additional project cost and would most likely require considerable heritage and environment assessments.
 - ⇒ Approximately five mature trees would need to be removed resulting in further Council approvals and commensurate planning. It is preferable that the works [have] no impact on flora.
 - ⇒ The elevation (ground level) of the proposed ACP, including the Pass Office and the entry lane would potentially have to be lowered. This would result in a significant cost increase due to existing geotechnical conditions (rock) and existing site contamination issues associated with the Retention Basin. This action may also require considerable heritage and environment assessments as the setting of the ACP against the listed Barracks wall would be altered.²²

5.46 Defence stated that the City of Sydney Council and NSW Roads and Maritime Services had no concerns with the proposed design, and that the proposed works do not impact on the heritage value of the site.²³

Committee comment

5.47 The Committee has significant concerns about the Moore Park Road access point, particularly with regard to road safety. However, the Committee recognises that the new access point has met all the relevant approval requirements.

5.48 The Committee is pleased that additional safety measures have been identified and will be incorporated into the project.

22 Defence, Submission 1.5, pp. 8-9.

23 Defence, Submission 1.5, pp. 9-10.

- 5.49 Given that Defence was able to find additional safety measures for the Moore Park Road access point, the Committee encourages Defence to explore further safety measures for all 16 sites and implement them where possible.

Heritage considerations

- 5.50 Various sites for the project have heritage considerations. These include:
- Garden Island Defence Precinct, Potts Point, NSW
 - Victoria Barracks Sydney, Paddington, NSW
 - Duntroon Garrison, Campbell, ACT
 - Russell Offices, Russell, ACT
 - Victoria Barracks Melbourne, Southbank, Vic.²⁴
- 5.51 Defence stated that heritage issues were considered when designing the project. Defence explained that there was some flexibility in the location of the works to ensure they would meet heritage, environment and security requirements:

... where the works could possibly have a significant impact on the environment, we have relooked at the design and either changed it or moved it around to remove that impact. [...] So, for instance, when we are siting a multi-use service pole,²⁵ there is an ability to move that pole around to some degree and still capture the types of images that we are looking to catch for that base without impacting on a listed tree or vista.²⁶

Committee comment

- 5.52 The Committee is satisfied that Defence carefully considered heritage values when designing the proposed works and took measures to protect these values while ensuring the proposed works would provide the required level of security.

24 Defence, Submission 1, pp. 3-8.

25 Note that multi-use service poles are associated with the surveillance system.

26 Ms F. Benton, Defence, *transcript of evidence*, 10 August 2012, p. 5.

Ground contaminants

5.53 Defence identified eight of the 16 sites where works may occur within areas of identified or known contamination of varying levels:

- RAAF Base Richmond, Richmond, NSW
- Steele Barracks, Moorebank, NSW
- Garden Island Defence Precinct, Potts Point, NSW
- Victoria Barracks Sydney, Paddington, NSW
- Duntroon Garrison, Campbell, ACT
- HMAS CERBERUS, Crib Point, Vic.
- RAAF Base Amberley, Amberley, Qld
- RAAF Base Williamtown, Williamtown, NSW.²⁷

5.54 Defence explained that the risk of contamination had been assessed at each site. Defence stated that there are processes to deal with contamination if it is found:

Our construction environmental management plan will include how we are going to undertake the works and how we are going to ensure that we manage the contamination correctly. [...] it is not only protecting the people in the area and the people on base; it is also protecting the construction workers, and it will go right down to how we list the soils – whether it is a classified waste and whether it can be remediated on site or has to be taken away.²⁸

5.55 Defence stated that although there is some flexibility in the location of certain aspects of the project (such as the location of multi-use service poles), works relating to entry and exit points could not be moved:

If you find some bad contaminants you would possibly move elsewhere, but here we are doing works to entrance ways. For instance, we have identified that there could be contaminants at Garden Island Defence Precinct. We cannot move that entrance. It is the entrance. So in that case, no. We have put in the right checks and balances to ensure that we can manage that correctly.²⁹

27 Defence, Submission 1, pp. 8-13.

28 Ms F. Benton, Defence, *transcript of evidence*, 10 August 2012, p. 8.

29 Ms F. Benton, Defence, *transcript of evidence*, 10 August 2012, p. 8.

Committee comment

- 5.56 The Committee is satisfied with Defence's stated approach to potential contamination.

Final Committee comment

- 5.57 The Committee commends Defence's comprehensive effort to notify all state and federal parliamentarians whose electorates would be impacted by the project and offer them a briefing.
- 5.58 The Committee acknowledges community concerns about the project, and notes that Defence is working within specific security parameters when addressing such concerns. The Committee encourages Defence to be as flexible as possible when consulting with the community.
- 5.59 The Committee was satisfied with the evidence provided by Defence regarding the proposed high voltage electrical distribution upgrade in the Liverpool Military Area, NSW.
- 5.60 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 4

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: Proposed Base Infrastructure Works Project under the Base Security Improvement Program.

Ms Janelle Saffin MP

Chair

17 September 2012