

15 February 2012

The Secretary
Public Works Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Via Email: pwd@aph.gov.au

Attention: Ms Renee Toy

**Submission to the Federal Government's Parliamentary Standing Committee
on Public Works**

Defence Housing Australia's Plans for the Ermington Site

1. I am writing to you as Chairman of the Ermington Residents' Committee. This Committee was set up in April 1996 at a public meeting of some 400 people at the Ermington Community Centre, with the support of Parramatta City Council, for the purpose of representing the community interests in the development of the former Naval Stores site on Spurway Street Ermington adjoining Parramatta River.
2. At the time the Committee was setup, the Department of Defence owned the site and our Committee worked closely with the Ermington community, Council and Defence as the site was rezoned, remediated from contamination, filled above 1:100 year flood level, compacted, master planned, development applications sought and received, and site works undertaken. This active involvement started back in 1996 and has continued to 2011 when DHA has acquired the site.
3. The Committee has been the conduit for gathering and representing the Ermington Community's views of the redevelopment and taken a lead role in the various communications that have included:
 - Preparing and distributing newsletters,
 - Hosting forums with the Committee to review plans and proposals,
 - Hosting site open days and sausage sizzles,
 - Hosting meetings with Councillors for the Elizabeth Macarthur Ward (this Ward currently is represented by Councillors John Chedid, Mark Lack and Michael McDermott), and
 - Representations to Parramatta City Council and NSW Government.
4. The Committee initiated and proposed the street naming for the site that has now been approved and incorporated by the Geographical Names Board of NSW. This celebrates the Navy history of the site and in particular, commemorates the 1941 Naval Auxiliary Ships that were a large group of privately owned pleasure craft seconded by the Royal Australian Navy and

called the 'Hollywood Fleet' used for defence duties in Sydney Harbour until the end of WWII. The street names now in place including, Silverse Str, Seamist Ave, Haleyam St, Yarramona St, Bundarra St, Koorine St, Corsair St, Zanana St, Winnya St, and Rondella St are all names of vessels in the Hollywood Fleet.

5. The Committee was an active participant in the Public Works Committee hearings that were held in Ermington in February 2001. These hearings were related to Defence's works that have now been largely completed that included filling the site above the 1:100 year flood level and installing infrastructure to support the future housing. I draw your attention to the Hansard Record of Parliament of Thursday 24 May 2001 page 27061 where the Committee's involvement on the site was acknowledged in the Approval of Work motion. I include a brief extract as follows at 6.
6. *Mr ROSS CAMERON (Parramatta) (5.08 p.m.) — I rise to support the motion, to commend it to the House and to do three things: firstly, to pay tribute to my parliamentary colleague, Mr Bruce Baird, the member for Cook, whose efforts have some bearing on the value of the site; secondly, to commend the Defence asset disposals group, who have conducted themselves with great professionalism, and it is to the great credit of the department on this occasion that community support for the redevelopment is very high; and, thirdly and most importantly, to commend the members of the residents committee that was created to work closely with the department to represent the views and concerns of the residents in redevelopment of this most significant site— Mr Slipper—As the local member, you've worked with them too. Mr ROSS CAMERON—As the local member, as the parliamentary secretary says, it has been my pleasure to be involved as some sort of support and encouragement to the residents, but I have to confess that they have really discharged this responsibility very effectively, without great assistance from their local member. This is a community with a great sense of spirit and cohesion. There has been no real internal politics of an unhelpful kind—it has just been a common sense discussion, a raising of concerns, and an addressing of them in a sequential and rational way. The residents of Ermington will derive enormous long term benefits from that process.*
7. During the course of the Defence works arising from the 2001 Parliamentary Approval, Defence continued with a proactive community consultation program lead by Project Managers NPC, working collaboratively with the Committee. Information newsletters, site open days, community briefing sessions and the like were used to keep the community informed and involved. This was very effective in dealing with the community concerns typically associated with construction works such as dust, noise, vehicle movements and the like. The Committee asks that this same approach is adopted during the DHA initiated works.
8. The Committee worked very effectively with Defence and its Management team. The Defence initiated Master Plan (now the approved Development Control Plan for the site) and the Defence initiated Development Applications/Consents for the site that were approved by the NSW

Government, were a collaborative effort of the community via the Committee, and Defence's team. Importantly, the Committee now expects DHA to adopt the principles and details contained in the Master Plan and if it wishes to depart from any aspects, to work with the Committee in considering any changes. The Committee has adopted a reasonable and common sense approach to dealing with the development of the site and ongoing close cooperation by DHA is essential.

9. The Master Plan permits a maximum of 700 and a minimum of 550 dwellings on the entire former Defence site. The Committee understands that DHA is proposing to build a lesser number of dwellings that will ultimately mean that the total number will be around 585 dwellings, some 115 less than the maximum permitted. The Committee supports this lesser number. It is acknowledged that the earlier Defence planning for the site and the existing development consent have been based on the 700 maximum; this will mean the DHA proposal will have a lesser impact than anticipated in the existing consent which of course is positive for the community.
10. The Committee provided significant input to Defence during the preparation of the site Master Plan. This led to the opening up of the foreshore as a foreshore public park and the inclusion of a number of parks through the development as well as the significant upgrade to Tristram Reserve. Some of these are now complete and some will be completed as part of the DHA works. These provide great amenity to the local community. The Committee is keen to see these facilities completed as part of DHA's works so they are available to both the new DHA population and the wider community. The Committee considers these as a very positive aspect of the overall development and strongly endorse them.
11. Defence initiated a world class community consultation regime lead by NPC, its Project Managers. NPC on behalf of Defence lead an effective and proactive communication and participation approach with the Committee and other stakeholders that ultimately caused a positive and supportive approach from the community. This resulted in the Committee being nominated for a Prime Minister's Community Partnership Award. As the Chairman of the Committee, I have been invited to speak at other Council community groups to tell them of our experiences and how positive community partnerships can be managed. The Committee expects that DHA will continue with the same approach.
12. Since DHA purchased the site in 2011, the Committee has worked with the DHA team in reviewing the preliminary housing proposal and facilitating community involvement and feedback. This includes a very effective on-site open day and 'sausage sizzle' in early December 2011 managed by the Committee where community feedback was sought, and the distribution of newsletters. A briefing session with the Committee is planned for 25 February 2012. The Committee acknowledges DHA's good efforts to date and expects this close engagement and cooperation to continue.

13. It is noted that Defence as part of its works constructed a new 'left-in left-out' access from the site to Silverwater Road. This was very important to the community as Defence ensured that all heavy construction traffic used this entrance and avoided driving through local streets. The Committee requires DHA to similarly ensure all construction traffic use this entry/exit and avoid Spurway Street and River Road.
14. Dust generation during the construction works was a matter of concern for nearby residents during the Defence works. This was well managed by the Defence Project Managers with a pro-active approach with the neighbours abutting the site boundaries. The Committee requires that DHA adopt a similar approach during its works.
15. The Committee understands that DHA propose to seek the Public Works Committee's support for its program of works that we understand to be:
 - Finishing the urban infrastructure works partially completed by Defence, and
 - Building the housing on the site that will be occupied by Defence personnel.
16. The Committee strongly supports the completion of the development on the site generally in accord with the Defence Master Plan and Development Consent, and supports DHA's application to the Public Works Committee to obtain the necessary funding. However, it is vitally important that DHA continue to consult closely with the Committee and take account of the views of the community particularly through both the detailed planning stage and during the construction of the works.
17. As Chairman of the Committee I look forward to attending the Public Hearing and confirming the Committee's views on the proposal.

Yours faithfully

KR (Ken) Newman JP 110433

Chairman, Ermington Resident's Committee