

# *Carwoola Community Association*

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## **Submission to the Joint Committee on Public Works**

### **Re: Headquarters Joint Operations Command**

Carwoola Community Association (CCA) represents the interests of the rural residential community nearest to the proposed site for the Headquarters joint Operations command (HJOC). The population of Carwoola is approximately 1,000 and the nearest point of Carwoola to the proposed site is just 2km.

CCA understands that the government is now committed to proceeding with this project and has allocated funding in the 2004-05 Budget to commence work.

The purpose of this submission is to draw several unresolved matters of community concern to the attention of the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC).

Carwoola Community Association asserts that these unresolved matters of concern go to the very heart of whether the site for this facility is actually fit for the intended purpose, hence this submission to the PWC.

Carwoola Community Association requests the PWC to consider these matters of community concern along with the proposed solutions. Where the Committee accepts the importance of the community concern and/or the proposed solution, CCA requests inclusion of that view in the Committee's report to both Houses of Parliament.

## **Unresolved Matters of Community Concern**

### **1. Traffic**

The Association sought assurance that the intersection of the Kings Highway and the Captains Flat Road would be examined so that appropriate management controls could be implemented; this has not been addressed in the draft EIS.

This intersection is already dangerous and an increase of over 100% in oncoming traffic volume during the evening peak hour on the Kings Highway could make a right-hand turn into the Captains Flat Road particularly hazardous.

We understand a study was commissioned after the draft EIS was published and the results suggest that evening peak hour traffic may back up dangerously (beyond the right turn lane length) on the King Highway towards the crest at the Ridgeway, 5% of the time or one day per month.

The Association also notes that the report sidesteps "black spots" on the Kings Highway that will be affected adversely by increased traffic volumes and strongly supports the study "on upgrade work in terms of vertical and horizontal alignment, side roads, and road-side clearances needed to ensure the safety of HQAST (now HJOC) commuters and other road users".

#### ***Proposed Solutions:***

- (a) The project brief should include implementation of traffic management measures at the intersection of Kings Hwy and Captains Flat Rd; and*
- (b) The project brief should include an allowance for remediation of Kings Highway "black spots" affected by the proposed HJOC.*

### **2. Communications**

CCA sought assurances that diminished radio and television reception will not be a consequence of the HJOC and that there would not be any other adverse

effects on electronic equipment or health as a result of electro-magnetic or any other radiation. The draft EIS indicates that the HJOC “will routinely make use of optic fibre and SATCOM links for communications traffic, and also VHF and UHF transmitters”. The draft EIS considers the effects of HJOC on the Molonglo Observatory Synthesis Telescope, but not on the adjacent residences.

A public meeting regarding the HJOC was told that mobile phones are a security risk on the HJOC premises. The community is seeking assurances that residents' mobile phone coverage will not be altered adversely.

***Proposed solution:***

*(a) The project brief should incorporate a requirement that the technologies adopted for ongoing operation of the HJOC will not interfere with radio, television or mobile phone communications in the surrounding rural residential areas.*

**3. Light and Visual Pollution**

The Association notes that the issue of light and visual pollution has been assessed in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). However, the community remains concerned that this issue is marked as a low priority with the note that the visual impact will affect a "very low" number of residences.

The Association also notes that, at date of writing, the supplementary EIS has not been issued.

There are more than 120 residences that have direct line of sight views of the proposed facility, many of them in elevated positions where the proposed tree and shrub planting will not have any remedial effect on visual amenity.

While there is little that can be done to address the day time visual intrusion on the landscape caused by the proposed facility, CCA asserts that very efficient

and effective means of minimising the night time light pollution can and should be included in the both the EIS recommendations and the final project scope.

The project should seek and adopt recommendations from an appropriately qualified independent professional as to solutions including installation of low flux lighting, the use of downlights and minimisation of reflective surfaces within the beam of night lighting.

***Proposed solutions:***

- (a) The priority of light and visual pollution in the EIS should be elevated to a level higher than the current assignment of “low”; and*
- (b) The project brief should include measures for minimising the effect on nearby rural residential areas of nighttime light pollution from the HJOC.*

***4. Noise Pollution***

The community sought assurances that it would not be adversely impacted by noise – both during the construction phases and as part of regular operations. The Association notes that analysis has been done on the impact of noise on areas further away (and shielded by topography) than parts of Carwoola. The noise impact on residents at ‘Banjo’ (about 2 kilometres away) and in Molonglo River Park (some less than three kilometres from the proposed facility) and Radcliffe has not been assessed.

Noise effects from increased traffic flow on the Kings Highway have also been ignored in the EIS.

The draft EIS indicates that nighttime construction work other than internal fit-out would not comply with the “inaudibility” requirements.

The Community also sought assurances that there would be no new aircraft noise over Carwoola as a result of HJOC. While we have received verbal

assurances that there will be no changes to current flight paths, such assurance would have been better provided in the draft EIS.

Helicopter noise from the facility is addressed, yet the maps and the explanation are not consistent: for instance, the map indicates a helicopter flight path to the SE of the site, but the explanation describes it as SSW which would direct it over, not away from, residences.

This type of fundamental inaccuracy calls into question the reliability of the entire helicopter analysis.

***Proposed solutions:***

- (a) The EIS should revisit the issue of noise pollution and include noise assessment at the most affected properties in Carwoola, allowing for distance from the proposed facility and nature of surrounding topography;*
- (b) The project brief should include a prohibition on night time external construction work;*
- (c) A statement that no flight paths will be altered to the detriment of the community of Carwoola should be included in the EIS; and*
- (d) Analysis of the effects of helicopter movements should be undertaken again to ensure accuracy of the reported results.*

***5. Consultation During Construction***

We note from the draft EIS that a community consultative working group will be part of the construction process. As the community in closest proximity and most affected by HJOC, the Carwoola community should have the opportunity to nominate a member of this group.

***Proposed solutions:***

- (a) The project brief should include a requirement to form a community consultative working group. The community consultative group should*

*have direct access to senior government officials responsible for the HJOC and should meet regularly during the construction process.*

*(b) Consultative group members should include representatives of each of the communities affected by the construction of the HJOC.*

The community has raised all of the matters raised above during direct consultation opportunities allowed in the project to date, but has not yet received adequate formal assurances.

Thank you for the opportunity of making this submission. Carwoola Community Association believes the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works plays an essential role in reviewing the plans of Government.

One or more members of Carwoola Community Association Committee will be available to attend the PWC hearing if requested to do so.

Gary Rake

President – Carwoola Community Association