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HQJOC Project 110/2004

**Ms Vivienne Courto**

Inquiry Secretary  
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Courto

**HEADQUARTERS JOINT OPERATIONS COMMAND PROJECT  
RESPONSE TO PWC SUBMISSION FROM CARWOOLA COMMUNITY  
ASSOCIATION**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the submission dated 26 May 2004 from the Carwoola Community Association.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Project was prepared in accordance with the Guidelines issued by Department of Environment and Heritage and placed on exhibition for public review in accordance with the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* for a period of 35 days from 17 October 2003 to 20 November 2003.

Twenty-three submissions were received from ACT and NSW Government planning authorities, local planning authorities, businesses, community groups and individuals. Defence acknowledges that the matters raised by the Carwoola Community Association in their submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works were raised in their submission to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in late 2003. The matters raised are being addressed in the Supplementary Report to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which is being finalised by a consultant external to Defence for submission to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. The completion of the Supplementary Report has been prolonged by the need to undertake additional surveys and studies, and is anticipated to be ready for submission in June 2004.

The following paragraphs provide responses to the Carwoola Community Association in the order that they are raised in their submission.

**Traffic**

The traffic study conducted as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement recognised the 'Tee' intersection of the Captains Flat Road and the Kings Highway as a major intersection through which most of the Headquarters traffic would traverse along the Kings Highway route to and from the Headquarters. More detailed traffic analysis has been conducted on the intersection since the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Safety and risk issues associated with the operation of the Kings Highway and Captains Flat Road are the responsibility of the relevant road authorities, who conduct road safety audits to assess compliance with the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority and AustRoads safety standards.

Defence is committed to ensuring that the appropriate road planning authorities are provided with the necessary information on the likely and projected impacts of the Headquarters on traffic management and road capacity in a timely manner to enable their planning to proceed. This will help to ensure that any potential capacity constraints resulting from the location of the Headquarters are identified and addressed to maintain appropriate safety and amenity levels on the affected road network.

## **Communications**

The vast majority of communications from the Headquarters will be along dedicated Defence optic fibre to HMAS HARMAN, or commercial communications bearers, into the wider Defence or civil communications network. The exceptions will be Very High Frequency and/or Ultra High Frequency radio transmissions for limited helicopter movements to and from the Headquarters site and the limited use of highly directional satellite transmissions. Handheld Very High Frequency radio communications would also be used by security guards. Also, the electromagnetic energy generated by electronic equipment (for example, computers, printers and electronic motors) in the Headquarters would be very weak, and is not expected to cause electronic interference to the surrounding rural residential areas.

Studies conducted during the development of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement indicated that radio, television or mobile phone communications to the surrounding rural residential areas would not be impacted by the radio communications or the electromagnetic energy generated at the Headquarters site. Further, any transmitter at the Headquarters site must be licensed in accordance with the Australian Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan, and a usual condition of a license is that transmitters must not interfere with broadcasting services such as radio and television.

## **Visual and Light**

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement notes that the visual character of the Headquarters site is dominated by the major ridgeline running in a north-south direction. It is acknowledged that construction of the Headquarters will alter the existing visual landscape. The works are assessed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement however to have a low visual impact on the local area due to the partially restricted views of the site, and the distance of most viewers from the site. A relatively low number of potential viewers will have an unrestricted view of the site. Defence intends to undertake landscaping and tree plants to further reduce the visual impact of the site.

Lighting associated with the Headquarters will be addressed at the detailed design stage to specifically minimise light spillage from the site. This would be achieved by directing light into the site to avoid direct lines of sight to luminaries. Given the view distances and the proposed design measures to prevent light spill, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement does not expect that the development will significantly impact surrounding rural residential areas.

## Noise

Noise assessments were conducted during the development of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for construction noise, operational noise, road traffic related noise and helicopter noise.

Construction noise from the site would occur over a two and one half-year period, with the majority of the construction activity complying with noise limits set by the NSW Environment Protection Authority. Control measures such as silencers or movable barriers may be required during the bulk earthworks phase, and these will be considered during the design phase of the project.

Following the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, an additional noise assessment focusing on residents located in Carwoola was conducted, and the results incorporated in the Supplementary Report. The results indicate that the operational noise at Carwoola from the Headquarters would be 10DbA, which is well below the 32DbA limit specified by the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

Regarding new aircraft noise over Carwoola as a result of the Headquarters. The operation of the Headquarters will not, of itself, require the redirection of regular civil air traffic movements in the local region, and would not increase the number of military flights through Canberra airport.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement identified helicopter movements to be in the order of 34 per year. The flight paths described in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement are in principle only for the purpose of noise calculations. The error in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that incorrectly identified helicopter flight paths to the South South West instead of South South East has been corrected in the Supplementary Report.

## Community Consultative Working Group

Defence is committed to the establishment of a Community Consultative Working Group during the construction process as stated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and would welcome the participation of a representative from the Carwoola Community Association on the Working Group.

A comprehensive consultation program was implemented during the preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to obtain community feedback. Defence recognises the importance of continuing the community consultation process through further focus group meetings to identify and address more specific issues. Defence is currently in the process of organising the next community meetings at Hoskinstown on 15 June 2004, Bungendore on 16 June 2004, and Carwoola on 22 June 2004. Community consultation will be ongoing throughout the project.

Yours sincerely

*Original signed on 2 June 2004*

**B.E. PLENTY**

Air Commodore

Director General Headquarters Joint Operations Command Project

May 2004