

Ms Margaret Swieringa  
Committee Secretary  
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Swieringa

**PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR HEADQUARTERS JOINT OPERATIONS  
COMMAND, NSW**

Thank you for your invitation to provide a submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works regarding the Department of Defence's Headquarters Joint Operations Command. I am replying on behalf of ACT Forests' Director, Tony Bartlett, who is currently on leave.

As land managers of Kowen Forest, which is to the north-west of the proposed Headquarters, ACT Forests welcomes the opportunity to provide comment to the Standing Committee prior to the facility's construction.

Given the Headquarters' close proximity to our plantation, ACT Forests has an interest in the construction and operation of the facility. Our comments are as follows:

- I. The January 2003 bushfires destroyed approximately 10,500 hectares of the ACT's pine plantation estate. Kowen's 5,500 hectares remained unscathed, and as such, it is an important asset in terms of its value as the source of raw materials for the local timber industry. The construction of Department of Defence's new facility should not hinder or restrict ACT Forests' normal land management operations in the area, which include harvesting, weed control, aerial operations, and replanting.
- II. Similarly, with the loss of two-thirds of the ACT's plantation estate, Kowen Forest is used extensively by the Canberra community for recreation, from large-scale organised events (rallies, mountain bike competitions) to individual use (walking, running etc). The new Headquarters Joint Operations Command should not restrict or inhibit this recreational use, nor should it limit the hours during which these events normally take place.
- III. ACT Forests welcomes Defence personnel to use Kowen Forest, and take advantage of its facilities for approved activities. Users will however need to meet the same requirements and have the same obligations as any other individual or group. This includes booking in advance and filling out the necessary application forms.

- IV. ACT Forests would not support any request to enlarge current buffer zones within the plantation for the purposes of fire protection for the new facility. Specifically, any requirement for buffering around the Department of Defence's Headquarters Joint Operations Command will need to be incorporated into the land adjoining ACT Forests.
- V. To progress these issues, ACT Forests proposes to enter in to a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Defence. Such an approach would provide an opportunity for both parties to discuss issues of mutual concern, and seek agreement on such issues prior to the commencement of construction.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 6207 2486 if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Hilton Taylor  
Acting Director  
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