



AUSTRALIAN ARMY
Land Warfare Development Centre
MINUTE

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Inquiry Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

DEVELOPMENT OF ON-BASE HOUSING FOR DEFENCE AT PUCKAPUNYAL

Reference:

A. Your letter Development of On-Base Housing for Defence at Puckapunyal, Victoria dated 11 Mar 05

1. In my capacity as Senior Army Representative (SAR), I am writing to confirm receipt of the reference and formally request the provision of an increase to on-base housing within the Puckapunyal Military Area (PMA). There is an urgent need for this proposal to increase on-base housing to meet operational requirements, due to the unique working and lifestyle conditions of ADF members and their families. This proposal also forms part of a coherent strategy to provide modern service housing within the PMA, to a high community standard and it is an essential part of the strategy to retain service personnel.

2. The profession of arms is significantly different to civilian employment and affects service families in various ways. They are subject to strict discipline, arduous and dangerous physical conditions, deployed on operations at short notice and/or subject to frequent and extended absences from home. Spouses and members share fully in the consequential family disruption, friction and stress of service life. As I highlight below, the provision of on-base housing helps alleviate this stress and contributes to individual, family and unit morale.

3. The proposed work will satisfy the immediate needs of the PMA and it also meets several issues that I believe need to be considered in regard to the provision of on-base housing:

- a. Providing a choice of residence in close proximity to Tobruk, Hopkins and Bridges Barracks, allows members to live close to where they work thus minimising travel time. Due to the unusual and extended working hours of Defence members this is particularly important as it increases the member's responsiveness to short-notice work requirements whilst simultaneously increasing time for families to be together after work.
- b. Often ADF members are required to work at any time of the day and on weekends. This puts an enormous strain on service families, especially if they only have one car; therefore close proximity of housing to work does alleviate this strain.
- c. As ADF personnel are regularly deployed on operations or extended periods of training, being able to live in a community close to other service families provides

both a family support network and additional security. The PMA also offers extensive support networks and the venues for information sessions for the families of ADF members deployed on operations.

- d. By buiding service housing within the PMA families readily have access to a primary school, child-care for three and four year olds or all-day care for full-time working spouses; all of which have been proven to aid with the retention of ADF members.
- e. Additional facilities within the PMA provided for ADF members (e.g. area pool, area gymnasium, tennis courts, etc) are required to maintain departmental standards of physical fitness for deployment on operations. These facilities not only provide an alternate resource for families to maintain their own fitness and an avenue to deal with stress individually, but also provide the venue for community activities thereby providing a social outlet to deal with stress as a group.

4. I strongly support the Defence Housing Authority's intent to build 80 service houses with the PMA. The initiative meets the needs of the PMA. It will provide modern housing for families in an established Defence community.

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