

34 9/4

## **ROBERTSON BARRACKS REDEVELOPMENT**

### **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE HEARING – Darwin 16<sup>th</sup> April 2008.**

I wish to bring to the attention of the Public Works Committee the effect the proposed redevelopment of Robertson Barracks will have on the residents of Knuckey Lagoon and in particular those who live on Farrar and Brandt Roads.

When Robertson Barracks were being planned and constructed it was the common view that the vast majority of those who would work at Robertson Barracks would live in Palmerston and that they would commute via Thorngate Rd from Palmerston.

This expectation did not eventuate. The current situation is that a great number of those who work on the base live in Darwin and the Northern Suburbs and choose to commute via the residential roads of Knuckey Lagoon.

The choice to short cut through the residential area rather than travel via McMillans Rd and Stevens Rd saves approximately 1km travel and perhaps 2 minutes – but this impacts greatly on the quality of life of residents living on Brandt and Farrar Rd.

The problem of increasing traffic has been brought to the attention of the Army, NT Govt., Lichfield Shire and Politicians of all persuasions over the past 4 – 5 years.

The most recent outcome of all these representations has been a press release from Dave Tolner MP that the previous Federal Govt. committed \$375,000 towards addressing the traffic issue. I understand that the NT Govt. and Lichfield Shire were also willing to contribute a similar amount.

The proposal was to realign Campbell Rd so that it was more attractive for commuters to use McMillans arterial road and Stevens Rd rather than the residential Brandt and Farrar Rds.

My view is that it is unreasonable to continue to develop the base in a manner that will increase vehicle traffic through the residential area of Knuckey Lagoon.

Robertson Barracks is already one of the largest commuter traffic generators and it is quite extraordinary that the planners have ignored the effect this has on the nearby rural residential area of Knuckey Lagoon.

That the traffic effect on Knuckey Lagoon residents has been totally ignored is clearly demonstrated at Clause 92 of the Army Submission, where it is inferred that all traffic enters and leaves the base via the Thorngate Rd entrance directly to the Stuart Hwy.

The proposed increase of 400 personnel, of which 75% are expected to live off base, could result in a further increase of 200 – 300 vehicles, morning and afternoon, through

the residential area and further night time traffic as a result of the increased personnel living on the base.

I expect that this current planned redevelopment will not be the last that will result in increased personnel living on and off base and that unless action is taken to provide a more attractive route to commuters, then the residents of this previously quiet rural residential area will have to continue to suffer the effects.

Some of the effects of the Robertson Barracks traffic are:

- Morning and afternoon peak hour congestion.
- An inordinate number of traffic accidents. - Residents who have attended these accidents report that in most cases the driver is a soldier and is under the influence of alcohol.
- Speeding/hooning/noise..... a high proportion of those living on base and commuting are young men with an inclination to speed in their hotted up cars and motor bikes at all times of the day and night.
- Rubbish – given that most of the traffic using Brandt and Farrar Rd is travelling to or from Robertson Barracks, and assuming locals do not throw rubbish from their vehicles onto their own residential street, one can assume that the Bundy and Red-bull cans, take-away food containers etc are thrown onto the road by these same young soldiers who don't appear to have any consideration for the local environment and residents.
- Safety of pedestrians and horse riders. With increased volumes of traffic, speeding vehicles, dangerous acts like the regular cutting to the inside of the traffic island at the corner of Brandt and Farrar Rds, it has become more dangerous for residents using these roads.

In conclusion, I submit that for any further development of Robertson Barracks that will lead to an increase in vehicle traffic, an alternative access from McMillans Rd or the diversion of Campbell Rd must be an integral part of the development.

The NT Govt. and Lichfield Shire are willing to contribute to addressing this problem.

It is now time that the Army acknowledge the problem that exists in the Knuckey Lagoon residential area and commit to fixing it one way or another.

  
Trevor Davey

8<sup>th</sup> April 2008.