

**Australian Government****Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs**

The Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
Suite R1 - 119
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Attention: Vivienne Courto

**DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS
AFFAIRS (DIMIA) RESPONSE TO PWC SUBMISSION FROM THE
MARIBYRNONG CITY COUNCIL**

1. Thank you for referring a copy of the letter dated 10 February 2005 from the Maribyrnong City Council regarding the Maribyrnong Immigration Detention Centre (MIDC) Expansion Project.
2. The letter raises a number of issues regarding:
 - (i) immigration detention policy,
 - (ii) the capacity of the extended facility to accommodate an extra 50 people,
 - (iii) the need for a health or social impact study,
 - (iv) planning and amenity issues which need to be discussed with Council and developers, and
 - (v) the level of consultation.
3. The Maribyrnong City Council asserts that the expansion may result in an increased number of women and children in detention, and could be interpreted as an expression of the Government's recent policy on detention. Immigration detention policy issues are outside the scope of the PWC hearing, therefore DIMIA has not responded to this issue.
4. The MIDC meets Immigration Detention Standards and the relevant building codes. The Centre has adequate space for the current design capacity. The Centre is in need of urgent extensions. The works are about providing improved accommodation capacity, welfare and safety to the residents and staff at the Centre that meet the Building Code of Australia, local authority and disabled access standards. The additions will create benefits for all residents through improved reception, visitor, medical, education and recreation facilities.
5. DIMIA is currently checking the requirement for health and social impact studies under State regulations. The Project Managers are unaware of this requirement. This is a relatively modest extension on a discrete block that is away from public view.
6. DIMIA recognises the importance of consulting the Maribyrnong City Council on the project. DIMIA representatives met with the Mr Panagakos and Mr Matteo of the

Maribyrnong City Council on 15 September 2004 to discuss the project. DIMIA wrote to the then Mayor of the Maribyrnong City Council, Cr Joseph Cutri on 31 August 2004. DIMIA also wrote to the Maribyrnong City Council on 14 October 2004 and offered to fully brief the Council.

The interaction with the town planning representatives of Maribyrnong City Council has been very cordial to date. Preliminary consultation confirmed that the preliminary design was of a high standard and would have little if any impact on the surrounding neighbours. The Department's representatives have made a commitment to continue consultation with the MCC. Senior managers of the department have met with Council and community representatives on 28 January 2005. A public meeting is planned for 17 February 2005 where the Department will meet with the community and present the project and answer questions. The Department is responsive to Community views and will consider them as the design process continues.

DIMIA had discussions with the owner of the adjoining factory and advised the other neighbour, Victoria University of the expansion. PWC material was sent to other neighbours and other state and community authorities.

The consultation process is ongoing. DIMIA will continue to consult with relevant stakeholders including residents at the Centre.

David Doherty
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February 2005