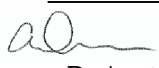




<u>Submission No. 04</u>	
	(Muirhead)
Date: 22/03/2011	

**PO Box 2513, Darwin, NT 0801**

21.3.2011  
The Secretary,  
Public Works Committee,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra, ACT 2600

Submission on 'Proposed Development and Construction of Housing for the Department of Defence at Muirhead, NT.'

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **1. Introduction**

This is a brief submission, as invited by the Hon Gary Gray, as Special Minister of State.

2. Our organization is an incorporated community organization dedicated to improving the living environment in the NT. We work for sustainability in terms of social, cultural, environmental and long term economic implications. Over the years, we have submitted to the Public Works Committee on major projects in the NT of the Defence Housing Authority(DHA) for Commonwealth developments. These include the new suburb of Lyons, also at Lee Point. Reference to that submission may be useful to the PWC now.

3. Our group has already submitted once on Muirhead, to which you may wish to refer. We presented at a very brief hearing of the Parliamentary Works Committee (PWC) held in Darwin last year. We had intended to answer an invitation by the PWC to submit supplementary information in writing. However, we were unable, for reasons of practicality, to do so, and hindered by a perception that the matters about which we so concerned appeared more or less closed.

4. We understand that there was a DHA related hearing in Canberra today, but of course, we were not able to attend.

### **5. Our Present Comments in Summary**

Both the Lyons and Muirhead projects are for small suburbs in northern Darwin proper, to house 50% defence families, and 50% civilians. A strong perception is that the Lyons outcomes are disappointing in terms of the masterplan promise as a planned 'integrated community'. We do not want this repeated in Muirhead.

Prior to this, we, Darwin City Council and Institute of Architects (NT Chapter), as speakers at the hearing, were shocked at the DHA's refusal to use the normal standards of the Northern Territory Planning Scheme (NTPS) as the basis for planning Lyons.

6. In summary - in the eyes of many Darwin residents, the outcomes at Lyons appear to fall short in the following ways and more.

6.1 Lyons resembles a Canberra suburb, there being a failure to provide homes shaded and cooled by flow through breezes. House lots are too small for natural tropical living, and especially dependent on airconditioning. Gardens and healthy outside living are important here.

6.2 Prospective buyers were told that the smaller lots were for defence families. This we feel is wrong.

6.3 Lyons, with hundreds of homes, has no built public facilities except a community centre. We believe this was initiated by a previous PWC Chairperson. What the developers proposed was too small, and had to be supplemented by Darwin City Council. There are no shops. The suburb has little flat green open space, apparently 'piggy backing' on the nearby Tracy Village Sporting and Social Club which is fenced from the public.

6.4 Both Lyons and Muirhead have no schools.

6.5 Almost incessant attempts have been made before the Development Consent Authority(DCA) to reduce setbacks. In many places there are no footpaths, needed to allow children to walk safely, and young mothers to walk their prams and strollers in the fresh air.

6.6 The cost of lots are seen as unexpectedly high.

## 7. Other Special Issues

7.1 The insistence of the DHA on its own prescriptive 'tropical' standards, and failure to recognise and use the standards set out in the NTPS, is causing other problems. Hundreds of homes at Darwin's

RAAF Base are now vacant, as defence families are directed to move to Lyons. Many say they wish to remain at the RAAF Base where there is a school and shops.

7.2 Extra cumulative airconditioning loads add to the burden on Darwin's struggling electricity generation.

7.3 The Muirhead site is limited, being bounded on one side by the Leanyer swamp, famous for its mosquitoes and biting midges. Babies are most vulnerable.

8. We wish to present at the Darwin hearing.

Yours sincerely,

M A CLINCH

Convener