



Greg Hunt MP



PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

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Submission

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Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

Defence Force School of Signals Redevelopment, Simpson Barracks, Watsonia, Victoria

The proposed redevelopment of the Defence Force School of Signals to improve the delivery of Communication and Information Systems (CIS) training is welcome. Together with the \$101.3 million upgrade of Simpson's Barracks at Watsonia, the proposal should bring considerable benefits to CIS staff and students alike.

However, the proposal will also involve the relocation of the Maritime CIS Wing at HMAS CERBERUS, in my electorate, to Watsonia.

As the Department of Defence *Statement of Evidence* to the Committee makes clear, the relocation of the Maritime CIS Wing from HMAS CERBERUS to Watsonia will not impact substantially on HMAS CERBERUS' role as an important base for Defence.

The move will nevertheless have a significant impact on the local community, and particularly the towns of Crib Point, Balnarring, Somers and Bittern, and the regional centre of Hastings.

Although a small proportion of the entire population at HMAS CERBERUS, the proposed relocation of 49 CIS staff and 200 to 250 CIS students and their families is unlikely to be viewed positively by the wider community, particularly local business.

The servicemen and women at HMAS CERBERUS and their families make a considerable contribution to the local economy around the base, and the proposed relocation of the Maritime CIS Wing will necessarily reduce this contribution and harm local businesses.

HMAS CERBERUS is a vital part of the local community and will remain so following the recent guarantee by the Minister for Defence, the Hon Brendan Nelson MP, securing the long-term future of HMAS CERBERUS at its current site.

In this context, I would strongly encourage an amendment to the current proposal on the Defence Force School of Signals redevelopment which retains the Maritime CIS Wing at its current site.

GREG HUNT MP

29 January 2007