

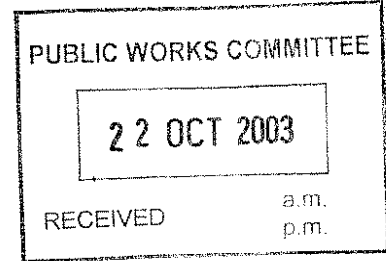
THE HON WILSON TUCKEY MP

Member for O'Connor



17th October 2003

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



Dear Secretary

I write regarding your inquiry into the Immigration, Reception and Processing Centre (IRPC) on Christmas Island (CI).

I refer in particular to the submission of Department of Finance and Administration (DOFA) as published.

The area of my interest is in the design and use of construction materials that will provide economic and durable facilities considering the special difficulties of building on CI and the past predilection of detainees to commit arson.

For instant – whilst rock crushing machines exist on CI and the rock that forms the pinnacles is apparently suitable for concrete aggregate it has been the choice of local contractors for both quality and price to import rock aggregate and sand by barge from Indonesia.

Durability from both the elements and the actions of detainees such as arson require the buildings to be constructed using pre manufactured concrete panels. This means of construction, which is common on the mainland, should be made obligatory and undertakings given by DOFA to ensure that potential bidders consider pre manufacture in Indonesia and barging as a complete product to CI.

The divisional panels used in the bed-sitter buildings already completed on CI were pre manufactured in Perth and this option can also be considered. Clearly substantial financial savings should be achieved by manufacturing the panels under Australian supervision in Indonesia and the employment generated could be identified in our foreign aid programme.

There would still be ample employment for workers on CI in terms of all other aspects of construction but when the finished product is easier why import a raw material.

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The use of concrete can extend to many of the internal facilities of the building including tabletops and bed bases, as it has been the internal fittings and furniture that have been used to start fires.

The detail provided in 2.8.5 and 6 is sketchy. It was previously argued that corrugated iron could meet such criteria however I submit it is not sufficiently fire resistant nor capable of long term resistance to rusting due to the close proximity of the facility to the Ocean sprays. This is evidenced at the CI Resort/Casino but not further inland on the Island.

I am further interested to know why some two story buildings are proposed as I consider that cost and maintenance issues would favour single story. Again fire risk and personal safety might also add to administrative costs.

The plans shown in the submission provide no elevation or perspective drawings, which is surprising considering the ease of production with contemporary computer technology.

I assume the committee will properly acquaint themselves with what these very brief drawings actually represent.

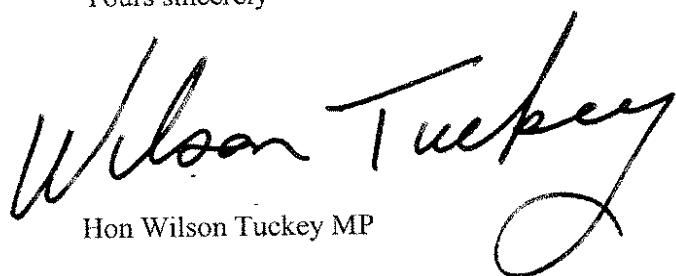
The open spaces identified are clearly of value, however, there appears little reference to the capacity for detainees to participate in vegetable growing or self food preparation which can fill a boring day. Not everyone is fit enough or interested in sporting activities.

Whilst those expert in security may have an explanation I was interested in the vacant spaces caused by the angling of the buildings relative to the "building line" fence creating an opportunity for the accumulation of rubbish or items and/or individuals of a more serious nature.

I do not think a personal appearance is necessary but I would be willing to be available on a phone hook up should members of the Committee consider it could be beneficial.

I certainly know the area well and was the responsible Minister for Works completed to date on CI.

Yours sincerely



Hon Wilson Tuckey MP