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Ms Janelle Saffin MP
Chair

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Saffin

HMAS ALBATROSS REDEVELOPMENT, NOWRA, NSW
PUBLIC HEARING SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION

On 6 December 2011 the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (the PWC) held a public hearing and inquired into the proposed redevelopment of HMAS *Albatross* by the Department of Defence.

Subsequent to that inquiry the PWC sent Defence a number of follow-up questions relating to the public submission and the Statement of Evidence. The attachment to this letter sets out each of the PWC's questions (in italics, bold) with answers provided following each question.

Defence is pleased to have the opportunity to make this Public Hearing Supplementary Submission which is complementary to information already provided to the PWC.

Yours sincerely,

D.S. Naumann
Brigadier
Director General
Infrastructure Asset Development Branch

18 January 2012

Attachment 1: HMAS Albatross Redevelopment – Public Hearing Supplementary Submission.

<p>Submission No. 1.2 <i>ao</i> (HMAS Albatross) Date: 18/01/2012</p>

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Attachment 1
HMAS ALBATROSS REDEVELOPMENT
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Need for the Works

What would be the potential consequence(s) for the Royal Australian Navy if the redevelopment of HMAS Albatross did not proceed?

Defence has assessed the redevelopment as a high priority and all works are essential to meet the project objectives as set out in the Statement of Evidence. The immediate impact to capability of not proceeding with the works would be minimal in the short-term for up to two years when the existing facilities would no longer be able to support the required capability outputs at HMAS *Albatross*.

The proposed works contribute to the long-term sustainment of Defence capability at HMAS *Albatross* including the generation of maritime aviation capability and safe Army parachute training. The significant reinvestment in engineering services and common facilities will ensure the Base has the ability to support the introduction of the new MRH-90 helicopters, the new Seahawk helicopters, and the proposed joint Army and Navy helicopter aircrew training school.

Consultation with Stakeholders

Please outline the consultations which have taken place to date with the stakeholders outlined in Submission 1, Attachment 1 and detail the outcomes of these consultations. What concerns did the stakeholders raise during the above-mentioned consultations and how have these been addressed?

Defence visited the Federal Member for Gilmore, Mrs Joanna Gash MP, at her Nowra offices on 24 October 2011, presented her with a copy of the Statement of Evidence and provided her with an explanation of the need and objectives for the proposed redevelopment. Mrs Gash supported the project proceeding and noted that, subject to compliance with the National Code of Practice for the Construction industry, there were many upcoming employment opportunities for local trade contractors from the proposed redevelopment. Mrs Gash was also concerned about recent reports of non-payment of local sub-contractors on another Defence project in the area. Defence is aware of these issues and can confirm that the situation has been resolved.

Defence visited the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales Member for South Coast, Mrs Shelley Hancock MP, at her Nowra offices on 24 October 2011, presented her with a copy of the Statement of Evidence and provided her with an explanation of the need and objectives for the proposed redevelopment. Mrs Hancock was concerned about opportunities for indigenous employment during the proposed project. Defence advised Mrs Hancock that indigenous groups would be encouraged to tender for the sub-contract works. The Commonwealth Government's Indigenous Opportunities Policy applies to this proposed redevelopment. Our proposed Managing Contractor for construction of the works, Leighton Contractors Pty Limited, has an approved Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Indigenous Training, Employment and Suppliers Plans (IOP Plan) that is valid to August 2014. That IOP Plan will be tailored to suit the locality of the proposed redevelopment and submitted to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Indigenous for approval.

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Defence made several unsuccessful attempts to consult with the Nowra Local Aboriginal Land Council both by telephone and by visiting their offices on 26 September 2011.

Defence met with representatives of both the Shoalhaven City Council and the Shoalhaven Business Chamber (formerly the Shoalhaven Chamber of Commerce as described in the Statement of Evidence) at their offices in Nowra on 24 October 2011. The Shoalhaven City Council was particularly interested in the progress of Defence's discussions with Endeavour Energy for the proposed increased power supply to the Base. The Council was also interested in the range of proposed treatments to control stormwater flows onto and off the Base, and the proposed road works at the intersection of Albatross and BTU Roads.

Defence routinely consults with the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities about its infrastructure development program, to determine the requirements for referral of proposals under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. For the proposed HMAS Albatross Redevelopment project, referral has been considered but as there are no issues of concern, is not required.

Defence provided a copy of the Statement of Evidence to the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency and no comments or concerns were received.

Defence convened two public information nights between the hours of 6:00pm and 8:00pm, on the nights of Wednesday 12 October 2011 (at the Fleet Air Arm Museum), and Monday 24 October 2011 (at the Ex-Servicemen's Club at Worrigea on the Greenwell Point Road). A local couple who reside close to the north-west side of the Base and one other member of the public attended the first night and were interested in a general overview of the proposed works but raised no issues of concern. The second night was attended by two local contractors who inquired about work opportunities. They were invited to contact our Managing Contractor about trade sub contract opportunities, which would be tendered in the local press.

Defence met with the President of the Historic Aircraft Restoration Society at Albion Park on 26 October 2011, presented him with a copy of the Statement of Evidence and provided him with an explanation of the need and objectives for the proposed redevelopment. The President was concerned about the proposed stormwater diversion to the North of the main runway. Defence has separately advised the President that the proposed stormwater diversion will utilise an existing stormwater swale to the north of the Fleet Air Arm Museum.

What is the plan for ongoing consultation throughout the construction process?

Throughout the construction period, Defence will continue its regular monthly consultation meetings where the Base Commander meets with local community groups. Any project specific related issues will be directed to the project team by the Commanding Officer HMAS *Albatross*.

In addition, consultation will continue directly between the Shoalhaven City Council and the Defence Managing Contractor with respect to stormwater management and final design and approval of the proposed road works at the intersection of Albatross and BTU Roads (part of Project Element 12).

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Mitigation re bushfire risks (question by Senator Gallacher on notice)

Please outline your risk mitigation strategy in relation to the potential fire hazard or bushfire risk of the fuel farm/fuel store within HMAS Albatross, noting its proximity to the nearby bush land.

The aviation fuel farm at HMAS *Albatross* is considered important and vulnerable to the effects of bushfire. In accordance with the Shoalhaven Defence Estate Bushfire Management Plan 2009/10-2013/14, two mitigation measures have been put in place to address the potential fire hazard and bushfire risk. The first is the establishment and maintenance of an Asset Protection Zone where the understorey vegetation is regularly cleared to maintain a minimum distance of 100 metres between the fuel farm and the bush to the east. In addition, there are three fixed fire hydrants and fire hoses along the bushland side of the fuel farm to specifically assist with bushfire protection. Those hydrants and hoses, for use by the HMAS *Albatross* Fire Fighting Service, can be either set up as static sprays into the bush or manually directed to a fire threat. These two mitigation measures combine to protect the fuel storage assets in compliance with the Defence Manual of Fire Protection Engineering.

Childcare Facilities

Why is there no provision for a childcare facility to be housed on the base, for the use of staff? Have you assessed whether there is sufficient demand for a childcare facility to be housed on the base, having regard to the number of personnel on the base who have young dependent children residing in the Nowra area?

A Childcare facility is located at HMAS *Albatross*, outside the secure area of the Base on Bedford Road, Nowra Hill, in close proximity to the Parachute Training School and adjacent to the Nowra Hill Primary School on BTU Road. The centre is operated under contract by B4Kids Pty Ltd in Commonwealth owned facilities. The centre has a capacity of 79 children and there are several vacancies for 2012. These facilities have been assessed as being of sufficient capacity and condition to meet the current childcare requirements of the base.

Local road and traffic concerns/impact on local community

Will construction impact on the local external traffic network? If so, to what extent? How will this be minimised?

Defence has assessed that the construction activity generated from the proposed redevelopment will moderately impact local external traffic along BTU and Albatross Road because these local feeder roads carry through traffic from Nowra and Jervis Bay to Braidwood Road. In consultation with the Shoalhaven City Council, Defence intends to provide temporary access and local diversions around the proposed road works at the intersection of Albatross and BTU Roads.

What are the possible disruptions to the local community which may flow from this redevelopment and how will these be mitigated?

The local community may experience traffic queuing in the morning and afternoon peaks when the proposed road works at the intersection of Albatross and BTU Roads commence.

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To mitigate this impact Defence intends to provide a temporary alternate main entry point to the Base for personnel and construction traffic.

When is the new parking area proposed to be constructed at HMAS Albatross (see also project element 12)?

The new car parks associated with the new front entry building are proposed to be built in the second year of construction in conjunction with the Base Support Facility (Project Element 16). The construction of the car parks will lag 12-18 months behind the construction of the new tidal lanes into and out of the Base (Project Element 12). The existing car parking and guard house arrangements will be utilised until the new facilities are complete, prior to being vacated and demolished.

Will the current parking continue to meet the needs of the base and if so, for how long?

HMAS *Albatross* is not serviced by public transport and Defence personnel use private motor vehicles for transport to and from the Base. In developing this project, Defence undertook a Base Traffic Management Study to assess the requirement for works to base roads and car parks. The study concluded that there is sufficient car parking available to meet current parking requirements. However, Defence anticipates there is likely to be an increased need for additional car parking in the future as new capability projects are implemented at the Base. Any requirement for additional car parking would be addressed in the development of those projects.

Public Value

What is the value of redeveloping HMAS Albatross for the local community residing near the base?

Defence realises that HMAS *Albatross* provides tangible value to the local community residing near the Base. Defence estimated in 2007 that HMAS *Albatross* contributed approximately \$129 million per annum to the local economy and supported over 2,000 jobs in the Shoalhaven. The redevelopment project affirms Defence's commitment to the Base and positions it to receive the new capabilities due to arrive in the near future.

Upgrade Stormwater System

Where will the storm water flows be diverted to and collected?

The capacity of the existing stormwater system is inundated by flows into the Base from Nowra Hill. Stormwater currently flows through the Base and across the middle of the airfield, prior to discharging to the North-West of the site to the Shoalhaven River catchment. The proposed solution is to de-energise the stormwater flow into the Base, capture the water in temporary detention basins, and slowly release the stormwater into the catchment over a period of time through an existing stormwater drainage swale around the northern end of the

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airfield. Stormwater flow down Gladiator Road and out to the centre of the airfield will be diverted to the Parma Creek system via new pipe work to the south-east of the Base.

Has testing been undertaken to determine the risk of flooding on the base and is the flood mitigation proposed sufficient to mitigate the risk?

Engineering assessments show that the proposed solutions will be sufficient to alleviate the risk. A cost-benefit analysis indicated that the most effective solution was to design for the 1:20 year flood event. A 1:100 year rain event may still flood the airfield. If that occurs, the mitigation strategy is to temporarily relocate aircraft operations to the Jervis Bay Airfield, some 25 kilometres to the south-east of the Base.

Hot Refuelling Point

Do other Defence sites around Australia have hot refuelling capacity? Were there any problems faced and lessons learned in relation to the installation of the refuelling point on those sites, and how will those be addressed in this project?

Similar features have been installed at the Army Aviation Centre Fuel Farm, at Oakey Queensland, that was completed in April 2011. "Lessons learned" from that project have been considered in the design development of the Albatross Hot Refuelling Point, with the project team visiting that facility as part of the design process for this specific project element, and incorporating the outcomes into the *Albatross* design.

Would a hot refuelling pipeline pose more of a safety risk than the current refuelling system and what are the safety risks in relation to hot refuelling points that need to be addressed?

There are both personnel safety and environmental risks that need to be addressed when proposing a Hot Refuelling Point connected to a new fuelling pipeline. The current tanker hot refuelling system is reliant on a fire tender for both fire control and spill retention. Spill retention in the form of booms and sand bagging which are deployed after a spill are the only means available to prevent fuel or fire retardant entering the stormwater system.

The proposed Hot Refuelling Point system comprises a fixed fire suppression system and a spill control facility which is active during refuelling operations. Safety is increased by having a dedicated facility for hot refuelling as in-built fire fighting infrastructure dramatically reduces reaction time in the event of an incident. In the event of a fault being detected safety systems at the hot refuelling point will automatically shut down the pump and fuelling equipment.

Environmental safety is improved as the proposed Hot Refuelling Point is designed to actively contain and detain any hazardous materials that may flow from the bunded refuelling points in a dedicated 100,000 litres holding tank. Trapped contaminants would then be pumped out and treated by a commercial waste treatment facility off site.

Environmental safety is also being improved for the proposed new fuelling pipeline. Defence is proposing to install an industry standard dual skinned pipeline with an internal stainless

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steel pipe and an outer plastic pipe with spacers between the inner and outer skin. The air gap thus created between the inner and outer pipe creates a path of least resistance along which fluid will follow in the event of any fuel leak; this path being graded to a number of inspection pits that allow fuel to be removed. The pits also include fuel detection sensors. Fuel entering the pipeline is metered in and out, providing early warning of any possible faults or leaks in the pipeline if the volumetric input and output numbers do not reconcile. In the event of any of these systems failing, fuelling operations are ceased until the fault is investigated. The line can also be evacuated if required and the system includes a return line so that fuel can be circulated to avoid stale fuel and maintain fuel quality standards. Additionally, the main storage tank fuel levels are continuously monitored by the control system. Any unauthorised change in tank level will initiate an alarm and interrupt any fuel movements.