

31170 REPRESENTATIVES Thursday, 20 September 2001

Third Reading

Bill (on motion by **Mr Ruddock**)—by leave—read a third time.

COMMITTEES

Public Works Committee

Reports

Mrs MOYLAN (Pearce) (5.24 p.m.)—On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works, I present the 9th and 10th reports

for 2001 of the committee, relating to RAAF Base Townsville redevelopment Stage

2, Townsville, and redevelopment of the Army Aviation Centre, Oakey, Queensland. Ordered that the reports be printed.

Mrs MOYLAN—by leave—On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works, I would like to make brief comments on the two reports I have just tabled.

The first report relates to the ongoing redevelopment

of RAAF Base Townsville. It is one of a chain of airfields maintained for defence and surveillance of the northern areas

of Australia and, together with RAAF Base Scherger in Weipa, North Queensland, the Townsville base provides operational and support facilities for the air defence of northern

Queensland and its approaches. During the inspection of the base the committee saw at first hand inadequate and aging facilities. The committee needed little convincing that the redevelopment project was appropriate and timely. The committee supports this project.

In relation to the Army Aviation Centre in Oakey in Queensland, it involves the upgrading

of the Army Aviation Training Centre and includes facilities for the introduction of the armed reconnaissance helicopter and the Army component of the Australian Defence

Force Helicopter School. The committee has found the proposed works necessary and recommended that they proceed.

The need for the redevelopment of the Army Aviation Centre has four elements. They are, firstly, the government's decision to move the Army component of the Australian

Defence Force Helicopter School from Canberra to Oakey; secondly, the strategic decision to retain the Oakey base in the long term; thirdly, the acquisition of a new armed reconnaissance helicopter for the Australian Defence Force; and, fourthly, the inadequacies

of existing facilities at Oakey. The training of pilots, ground crew and maintenance

technicians for the armed reconnaissance helicopters will be undertaken at Oakey.

The project cost is \$78.5 million, and this is the current estimate of the cost of the proposed

work, including escalation and contingency.

Defence informed the committee that it will refine the details of the scope of the work through value management workshops and further develop the design for each facility.

As I have already indicated, the committee supports the redevelopment of the Army Aviation Centre at Oakey and has therefore recommended the proposed work proceed at an estimated cost of \$76.2 million.

I commend these reports to the House.

Mr LINDSAY (Herbert) (5.28 p.m.)—by leave—Over the last 10 years, virtually all of Australia's overseas operations have been run out of RAAF Townsville, so it is certainly

welcome to see the government making a prudent decision to upgrade the infrastructure

facilities at RAAF Townsville. It is very important indeed to the 1,100 people who run that base to have new working conditions

and new accommodation facilities to make sure that it is a modern base that is ready and willing to go—as the ADF needs to be. The future ahead is uncertain with what we have seen occur in recent weeks. As all other bases across Australia are on a high level of readiness, so is RAAF Townsville.

The relocation of the main gate will be terrific, the new dangerous goods store will be very good and the new accommodation that is planned is also very good. I know that the officers, men and women of RAAF Townsville are very much looking forward to

this new development and I certainly

strongly support the PWC's
recommendation
to the House tonight.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by **Dr Stone**) proposed:
That the House do now adjourn.