

Engineering Services

Our Ref: RAF;LMB05448

Your Ref:

30 October 2009

The Secretary of the Committee
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

Dear Sir

**Re: Inquiry into Enhanced Land Force Stage 2
Facilities – Wide Bay Training Area, Gympie**

I refer to the proposed works to take place at the Wide Bay Training Area (WBTA), Gympie and the Inquiry into Enhanced Land Force Stage 2 Facilities.

The current access from Brisbane to the Wide Bay Training Area is via the Bruce Highway, through Gympie and thence along Tin Can Bay Road. Whilst Council is fully in support of the proposed upgrading of the facility, it is concerned that there is only one road of access, and it passes through a sensitive area of Gympie with four (4) schools and a major regional junior sports field complex. Potential issues include the volume of traffic, type of traffic and the nature of cargoes (fuel, munitions etc).

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (Qld) and Council have been planning for several years a new road that, when constructed, will provide the WBTA with an excellent alternative access. Currently, however no funds are available for the final twelve kilometres at the northern end which is a section of the road called Counter Road.

Counter Road is the final section of the route from Cooroy on the Bruce Highway. It joins Tin Can Bay Road from the south, fifteen kilometres from the main entrance of the WBTA. Currently it is a low standard gravel forestry road. Council's current estimate to upgrade Counter Road to two lane bitumen sealed all-weather public road standard is \$6.0M (tourist traffic) to \$9.0M (significant commercial traffic).

The two relevant Regional Planning documents recommend the construction of Counter Road. The Great Sandy Regional Management Plan 2005 and the Wide Bay Integrated Transport Plan 2006 refer. Both acknowledge that no funding has been identified.

The proposal to upgrade Counter Road has come to the attention of the Federal Government previously. In July 2006 it was submitted to DOTARS for funding under the Auslink Strategic Regional Program (unsuccessfully). In June 2001 an application for funding under the Roads of National Importance was unsuccessful.

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DOTARS would be aware also of the bad crash history of the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Gympie. The availability of an alternative route north/south which could be used by coastal tourist traffic and Army traffic would have a beneficial effect on road safety on the national highway.

The option of two access roads to the WBTA may have strategic benefits, giving the Army the benefit of two options for delivery / exit routes.

You are urged to consider the construction of Counter Road if the expansion of the WBTA is to proceed. The need is particularly important if the new facility is to be serviced by bulk munitions transport.

Yours faithfully

Signed by K.A. Mason

for K.A. MASON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER