2

The Proposed Works

Need

2.1 The Defence submission identifies three principal elements which constitute the need for the proposed perimeter security fence.[1]

Protection of Property and Capability

2.2 The critical role played by air operations in the defence of Australia's maritime and aerial approaches was emphasised in the Defence White Paper *Defence 2000*.[2] As the home base of 75th Squadron, a tactical fighter squadron equipped with F-18 Hornet aircraft, Tindal plays a key role in maintaining Australia's air combat capability.

2.3 Loss or damage of base property and aircraft through theft or sabotage could impair the base's ability to fulfil its role. Protection of the Base and the aircraft is, therefore, essential.[3]

Prevention of Injury Claims

2.4 As the Base perimeter is not adequately controlled and sign-posted, injury to persons entering the area may give rise to claims against Defence.[4]

---

1 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraphs 19 - 20
2 ib id, paragraph 10
3 ib id, paragraphs 11 and 19

Inadequacy of Current Arrangements

2.5 Security at RAAF Base Tindal currently consists of a 'passive' (non-alarmed) fence which is patrolled by Defence personnel and guarded at key points during times of increased security. According to the Defence submission, the existing fence:

- does not comply with the present Defence Security Policy;
- is poorly sited; and
- is inadequate as both a deterrent to, and an indicator of, intrusion.[5]

Scope

2.6 It is proposed that existing security plans at Tindal be enhanced by the construction of an 'active' (alarmed) perimeter security fence, some 13.9 km in length.[6]

2.7 Works associated with the construction of the fence will include:

- a weld mesh security fence equipped with intruder detection systems and security cameras;
- a standard cattle fence outside the security fence to prevent activation of the alarm by livestock
- a sealed, all-weather access road inside the fence;
- a maintenance track / firebreak outside the fence;
- a computerised control system located inside the base; and
- civil works, including culverts and drainage channels.[7]

2.8 Prior to the public hearing, Defence informed the Committee of four major changes to the construction plan for the new fence that had been instigated since the department's evidence was submitted in June 2002. At the hearing, Defence reported that the changes were the result of:

---

4 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 19

5 ib id, paragraphs 13 – 14 and 19

6 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraphs 12 – 18 and Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 2

7 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 22 and Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, pp. 2 - 3

> "…a value and risk management process … undertaken to develop the scope of the works and to ensure better value for money for the Commonwealth."[8]

2.9 Changes to the original proposal are:

- amendment of the fence alignment to reduce the overall length from 17.7 km to 13.9 km, and to provide improved access to the civil air terminal;
- the use of weld mesh instead of chain mesh;
- the use of an intruder detection system with security cameras in place of taut wire technology; and
- sealing of the all-weather road.

2.10 Defence expects that these changes will improve the through-life costs and efficiency of the fence due to reduced maintenance costs, better access and more reliable detection.[9]

Purpose and Suitability

2.11 The primary purpose of the proposed work is to provide enhanced protection for the valuable Defence assets and capabilities located at RAAF Base Tindal by means of an alarmed perimeter security fence.[10] The proposal addresses the altered strategic circumstances following the events of 11 September 2001.[11]

2.12 Defence believes that the proposed new fence will:

> "…enhance the overall security of RAAF Base Tindal and improve the capability of the base to conduct its role in peace or in contingency situations."[12]

8 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 2
9 ib id
10 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 4
11 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 2
12 ib id, p. 3

Cost

2.13 The estimated cost of the proposed work is $9.25 million, which includes:

- construction costs,
- environmental costs;
- preliminaries;
- professional design and management fees; and
- contingency allowance.[13]

Value for Money

2.14 Having examined several options, Defence is of the view that the amended proposal presented to the Committee represents the most cost-effective expenditure of Commonwealth funds, whilst providing the optimum solution to base security requirements.

2.15 Other options examined by Defence were rejected for a variety of reasons including:

- failure to deliver acceptable level of security;
- requirement for intensive monitoring by Defence personnel;
- poor false / nuisance alarm detection; and
- high maintenance costs.[14]

2.16 Cost and efficiency benefits expected from the current proposal include:

- a reduction in the time taken to respond to a security breach;
- improved remote monitoring;
- a decrease in false / nuisance alarms;
- greater opportunity to use existing roads; and

13 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 30 and Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 3

14 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraphs 12 – 18 and Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, pp. 1 - 2

- reduced maintenance costs and better whole-of-life value, particularly in relation to the sealed all-weather road.[15]

15 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 2