3

Issues and Conclusions

Codes, Standards and Policy Guidance

3.1 According to Defence's written evidence, the proposed fence will be designed to satisfy the relevant sections of:

- The Building Code of Australia;
- Australian standards and codes;
- the Defence Manual of Fire Protection Engineering;
- the Environmental Protection Act and regulations; and
- the Occupational Health and Safety Commonwealth Employment Act.[1]

3.2 It is also intended that the fence will comply with the following policy guidance:

- Protective Security Manual;
- Defence Security Instructions;
- RAAF Ground Defence principles; and
- Federal Government Security Equipment Catalogue.[2]

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1 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 26

2 ib id, paragraphs 21 and 25

3.3 At the public hearing, Committee members observed that the Australian standard applicable to fencing

> "…is not really in accord with current material practices"[3]

and requested that Defence clarify their intentions in this regard.

3.4 Defence explained that the fence would be designed to the British standard, as the Australian standard is somewhat outdated in terms of security measures.[4]

3.5 Committee members also requested that Defence supply information on the currency of the policy guidance publications listed in the main submission, with a view to ensuring that these documents have been updated to reflect contemporary requirements for security measures and fence design.

3.6 Subsequent to the public hearing, Defence confirmed in writing the currency of all quoted policy guidance documents. The specific dates are shown in the table below.

Table 1 Currency of Defence Policy Guidance Publications

Name of Publication	Date Published	Date Amended
Security of RAAF Bases DI (AF) OPS 5-22	26 February 1997	8 June 2001
Defence Security Manual SECMAN 4	1994	8 January 2002
RAAF Ground Defence Policy AAP4130.001	23 July 1987	2 July 1997
Federal Government Security Equipment Catalogue	1997	April 2003 (most recent issue)

Source *Letter from Defence Corporate Services and Infrastructure, 15 July 2003*

3.7 Defence noted further that, following construction, all works would be checked by qualified certifiers to ensure compliance with required design standards.[5]

Construction Features

3.8 During the course of the public hearing, Committee members raised a number of questions in relation to the physical specifications of the proposed fence.

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3 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 4

4 ib id

5 ib id, p. 6

Protection against Animal Damage

3.9 Following an aerial inspection of the proposed fence alignment, members wished to know how Defence planned to mitigate damage to the fence by animals such as feral buffalo.

3.10 Defence responded that the alarmed perimeter fence would be protected by a non-electrified stock fence, in conjunction with continuing feral animal eradication programs.[6]

Protection of Native Avifauna

3.11 At the hearing, Defence referred to an environmental study that had revealed the potential for a local native bird species to be damaged by collision with the barbed wire component of the fence. Defence proposes to prevent such damage by colouring or marking the top strand of barbed wire.[7]

Culverts

3.12 In considering the culvert design proposed by Defence, Committee members expressed concern that, without rigorous maintenance, water-borne debris may block the steel security screens and undermine the fence structure during times of high water.

3.13 Defence witnesses concurred and assured the Committee that the issue would be addressed under the proposed maintenance plan.[8]

Technological Features

Cameras

3.14 The Committee was interested to learn why Defence had chosen to incorporate surveillance technology into the amended design for the fence and how the cameras would operate.

3.15 Defence explained that the advantage of combining both detection and surveillance technology into the fence was the ability to obtain

6 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 3
7 ib id, pp. 3 - 4
8 ib id, p. 13

visual verification of any security breach. Defence added that, under the original proposal

> "…we would have detected that something was happening but we would not have known what was happening."[9]

Defence believes that the new proposal will allow for better identification of false / nuisance alarms.[10]

3.16 Defence proposes that two security cameras will be fixed back-to-back along the fence at 1 km intervals, effectively providing a 500 m range for each camera. While the cameras will monitor at all times, recording will only commence when movement is detected.[11]

Other Features

3.17 Although the surveillance security technology now proposed by Defence differs from the 'taut wire' technology described in the original submission, the Committee was reassured that features such as solar power and a secondary control system would be retained in the amended fence design.[12]

Heritage Protection

3.18 While Defence's written evidence indicates that no significant archaeological or heritage sites will be adversely impacted by the fence construction, Committee members sought reassurance that this would hold true for the proposed new alignment.

3.19 In verbal evidence, Defence confirmed that there were five Aboriginal heritage sites and one historical World War II site in the vicinity of the alignment, none of which would be affected by the proposed construction. Defence maintained that:

> "…the latest information is that all of that has been updated with the proposed change to the fence alignment and still applies."[13]

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9 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 11

10 ib id, p. 12

11 ib id

12 ib id, pp. 4 and 10

13 ib id, p. 5

Consultation

3.20 The Defence submission lists nine bodies consulted by Defence in the course of planning the proposed works.[14] At the public hearing, Committee members questioned Defence as to the nature and progress of the consultation conducted.

3.21 Defence stated that discussions were held with all listed authorities during the original investigations and noted further that

> "…where there have been changes, we have gone back to consult with the relevant stakeholders."[15]

Access to Civil Terminal

3.22 At the public hearing, the Committee observed that changes to the proposed fence alignment had alleviated potential difficulties associated with public access to the civil terminal at Tindal.

3.23 Defence confirmed this view, stating that the revised alignment would permit improved control of access to the civil terminal, and had resolved concerns held by the Katherine Town Council in relation to airport access.[16]

Expected Design Life

3.24 Having been informed at a previous hearing that Defence projects are built with a design life of 25 years, the Committee was interested to know the expected design life of the proposed security fence and its associated components.

3.25 Defence replied that the road has a design life of 20 years, but could not be certain as to the life expectancy of the fence, and undertook to investigate the matter.

3.26 In a letter forwarded to the Committee following the public hearing, Defence noted that it was an ASIO requirement that all Type 1

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14 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 40

15 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 5

16 ib id, pp. 8 - 9

Security systems, such as the proposed fence, have a minimum design life of ten years. Comprehensive information on the expected life of specific fence elements is shown in the table below.

Table 2 Minimum Life Expectancy of Proposed Fence Elements

Fence Element	Expected Design Life (years)
all-weather road	20 (engineers advise 30+ with appropriate maintenance)
culverts	50
fence poles and plinths	No formal design life (engineers expect 50+)
detection technology	No formal design life (engineers expect 15+)
cameras	No formal design life (engineers expect 12+)
Type 1 Security Panel	No formal design life (engineers expect 15+)
computer hardware	3 – 4 industry norm (to be regularly updated by contractor)

Source Letter from Defence Corporate Services and Infrastructure, 15 July 2003

Security of Areas Excluded by Revised Alignment

3.27 Committee members noted that under the amended alignment, some of the RAAF Base Tindal facilities lie outside the proposed fence line.

3.28 Defence explained that these facilities are explosive ordnance stores, which are individually fenced and alarmed, and meet all current security specifications.[17]

Costs

3.29 Following a private briefing on project costs, the Committee requested that Defence provide detailed cost breakdowns showing the impact of the proposed design amendments upon the total project budget.

3.30 Defence supplied this information in writing subsequent to the public hearing.[18]

17 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, p. 10

18 Letter from Defence Corporate Services and Infrastructure, 15 July 2003

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the proposed perimeter security fence at RAAF Base Tindal, Katherine, NT, proceed at the estimated cost of $9.25 million.

Hon Judi Moylan MP
Chair
20 August 2003