



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

# Official Committee Hansard

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

**Reference: C17 heavy airlift infrastructure project**

TUESDAY, 24 JULY 2007

IPSWICH

BY AUTHORITY OF THE PARLIAMENT



## **INTERNET**

The Proof and Official Hansard transcripts of Senate committee hearings, some House of Representatives committee hearings and some joint committee hearings are available on the Internet. Some House of Representatives committees and some joint committees make available only Official Hansard transcripts.

The Internet address is: **<http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard>**

To search the parliamentary database, go to:  
**<http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au>**

**JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC WORKS**

**Tuesday, 24 July 2007**

**Members:** Mrs Moylan (*Chair*), Mr Brendan O'Connor (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Hurley, Parry and Troeth and Mr Forrest, Mr Jenkins, Mr Ripoll and Mr Wakelin

**Members in attendance:** Senator Parry, Mr Forrest and Mrs Moylan

**Terms of reference for the inquiry:**

To inquire into and report on:

C-17 Heavy Air Lift Infrastructure Project

**WITNESSES**

**GRICE, Brigadier William Alfred, Director General, Infrastructure Asset Development Branch,  
Department of Defence ..... 1**

**MARTIN, Group Captain Gary James, Director, C17 Transition Team, Airlift Group,  
Department of Defence ..... 1**

**MUNDT, Mr Laurie Edward, Business Development Manager, Ipswich City Council..... 12**

**OLESEN, Mr Benjamin Peter, Project Director, Infrastructure Asset Development Branch,  
Department of Defence ..... 1**

**PISASALE, Councillor Charlie, Councillor, Division 8 and Chair, Arts, Community and  
Cultural Services, Ipswich City Council ..... 12**

**PISASALE, Councillor Paul John, Mayor of the City of Ipswich, Ipswich City Council ..... 12**

**RINAUDO, Mr Michael Aubrey, Business Group Manager and Project Director for Project  
Manager/Contract Administrator, C17 Project, GHD Pty Ltd ..... 1**

**WARD, Group Captain John, Base Redevelopment Project Officer, Royal Australian Air Force ..... 1**



**Committee met at 2.55 pm**

**GRICE, Brigadier William Alfred, Director General, Infrastructure Asset Development Branch, Department of Defence**

**MARTIN, Group Captain Gary James, Director, C17 Transition Team, Airlift Group, Department of Defence**

**OLESEN, Mr Benjamin Peter, Project Director, Infrastructure Asset Development Branch, Department of Defence**

**RINAUDO, Mr Michael Aubrey, Business Group Manager and Project Director for Project Manager/Contract Administrator, C17 Project, GHD Pty Ltd**

**WARD, Group Captain John, Base Redevelopment Project Officer, Royal Australian Air Force**

**CHAIR (Mrs Moylan)**—I declare open this public hearing into the proposed C17 heavy airlift infrastructure project. This project was referred to the Public Works Committee on 31 May 2007 for consideration and report to parliament. In accordance with subsection 17(3) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, which concerns the examination and reporting on a public work:

... the Committee shall have regard to:

- (a) the stated purpose of the work and its suitability for that purpose;
- (b) the necessity for, or the advisability of, carrying out the work;
- (c) the most effective use that can be made, in the carrying out of the work, of the moneys to be expended on the work;
- (d) where the work purports to be of a revenue-producing character, the amount of revenue that it may reasonably be expected to produce; and
- (e) the present and prospective public value of the work.

Earlier, the committee received a confidential briefing and evidence from the Department of Defence, and the committee will now hear evidence from the Department of Defence and from the Shire of Ipswich—we will hear from both Councillor Pisasale and Mayor Pisasale—related to RAAF Base Amberley redevelopment stage 3.

I now call on representatives of the Department of Defence. I remind the officers that you have all been sworn in at the private hearing and that that continues; I do not think there are any new witnesses to be sworn in. So welcome, and thank you once again for meeting with us today and for facilitating the committee's inspection of the site. Is there anything any of you would like to add about the capacity in which you appear today?

**Group Capt. Ward**—I am the representative for Base Commander, Amberley.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. The committee has received a statement of evidence and five supplementary submissions from Defence. These will be made available in a volume of submissions for the inquiry and they will also be available on the committee's website. I understand Defence has a small amendment to make to its original submission. Would you read that into the *Hansard* record, Brigadier Grice.

**Brig. Grice**—Thank you. It is with regard to paragraph 23 in the evidence, with respect to the project location. I think we need to be a bit more specific about the project locations in that, so we would like the existing paragraph 23 to be deleted and replaced with the following text.

The location of the proposed works is within the existing base boundaries of RAAF Base Amberley in Queensland, RAAF Base Darwin in the Northern Territory, RAAF Base Edinburgh in South Australia, RAAF Base Pearce in Western Australia and RAAF Base Townsville in Queensland. RAAF Base Amberley is located approximately eight kilometres west of the city of Ipswich at the western edge of the Brisbane metropolitan area. RAAF Base Darwin is located approximately 6½ kilometres north-east of Darwin's central business district. RAAF Base Edinburgh is located approximately 30 kilometres north of Adelaide, in the Edinburgh Defence Precinct. RAAF Base Pearce is located adjacent to the town of Bullsbrook, north of Perth. RAAF Base Townsville is located approximately seven kilometres from Townsville's central business district. The location plans for each base are shown in the evidence at attachment 1 for RAAF Base Amberley, attachment 15 for RAAF Base Darwin, attachment 20 for RAAF Base Edinburgh, attachment 26 for RAAF Base Pearce and attachment 31 for RAAF Base Townsville.

**CHAIR**—Thank you. I will now invite you, Brigadier Grice, to make a brief opening statement before we go to questions.

**Brig. Grice**—Thank you, Madam Chair. The new C17 aircraft provide Australia with a new global airlift capability, which will significantly enhance the Australian Defence Force's ability to support national and international operations and major disaster, rescue and relief efforts. This proposal seeks approval of the essential facilities and infrastructure required to support the introduction and operation of the C17 heavy airlift aircraft in Australia. This proposal includes facilities, airfield pavements and infrastructure at the home base, RAAF Base Amberley, and deployment bases in Darwin, Edinburgh, Pearce and Townsville. No. 36 Squadron operate the C17 aircraft and they relocated to Amberley from RAAF Base Richmond in late 2006 prior to the arrival of the first aircraft in December 2006. The second aircraft arrived in May 2007 and the remaining two aircraft are due in February and March 2008. No. 36 Squadron are currently operating out of interim facilities at Amberley which are not suitable for permanent working accommodation. This project will construct the necessary working, logistics, training and maintenance accommodation at RAAF Base Amberley to enable the squadron to effectively support the ongoing operation of the aircraft.

The existing cargo facilities at the home base and supporting deployment bases were designed primarily to support the RAAF C130 Hercules aircraft and they have insufficient capacity to handle the increased loads to be carried by the C17. This project proposes to either construct new or expand the capacity of existing terminals and cargo preparation facilities at each of the five sites. The increased aircraft weight, dimensions and fuel and cargo capacity require an



investment in airfield pavements at Amberley and the four deployment bases. This project will construct the necessary new airfield pavements, including aircraft parking aprons and the widening and strengthening of taxiways and explosive ordinance aprons to allow effective operation of the aircraft at each of the five airfields.

The estimated out-turn cost of this proposal is \$268.2 million and this includes the construction cost, management and design fees, furniture, fittings and equipment, and contingency and escalation allowances. Subject to parliamentary clearance, Defence intends to commence construction works in early 2008 and complete the works by 2011. That completes the opening statement and we are ready to answer questions from members of the committee.

**Senator PARRY**—Brigadier, you indicated that options were looked at for potentially expanding each of the five bases. Was any other greenfield site looked at as an alternative to Amberley?

**Brig. Grice**—No other greenfield site was looked at. RAAF Base Amberley was chosen as the home base. Group Captain Gary Martin might be able to provide a little bit more information on that. There is substantial infrastructure in place at Amberley which led to a decision to base the aircraft here. That included the prior decision to base the home base of the Multi-Role Transport Tanker aircraft here, which gave us the opportunity for both airframes to co-use a hangar which was being built under Amberley stage 2 for the MRTT aircraft. If we had located the home base elsewhere we would have been up for the expense of a hangar at that home base, so there were substantial savings to the Commonwealth through basing the aircraft here at RAAF Base Amberley. Group Captain Martin, would you like to add anything to that?

**Group Capt. Martin**—Yes. Further to the fact of not having to add a hangar to our facilities was the fact that the aircraft obviously, with the weights that it is taking out, requires longer runways than is available at Richmond, because of the airspace, and there is an inability to extend the facilities at Richmond. As such, Amberley was behoved to be the best place that we could go and, because stores for the Department of Defence and government are stored across the east coast of Australia, it would not put the aircraft too far north in places such as Townsville or Darwin, which would make the collection of items that it is carrying for the customers another cost driver as against a cost saver.

**Senator PARRY**—We noted in evidence earlier today for the stage 3 development, which is separate to this, that infrastructure issues were met with local authorities. Are there any additional infrastructure issues that the C17 facility has which impact upon the external reticulated water or sewerage?

**Brig. Grice**—The engineering services—no. The trunk services that were proposed and have been put in place as a result of the Amberley stage 2 project were designed to provide capacity to cope with the C17 and also provide spare capacity for future developments over the 30-year life of the infrastructure put in place under Amberley stage 2, should it be required. So no additional base-wide infrastructure will be required to support the C17, apart from the connection of the new facilities to the trunking services in the area of the flight-line precinct.

**Senator PARRY**—As it is unique that we are doing two hearings in one day concerning infrastructure in particular, does the same situation apply to power? I asked this question this morning, but I would like to get it on the record in this particular hearing.

**Brig. Grice**—Yes, it applies to power as well as water, communications, infrastructure, sewerage—the whole range of engineering services.

**Senator PARRY**—As far as the actual hangar that will be utilised as part of an existing public works approved project is concerned, are any modifications required for this project?

**Brig. Grice**—I will ask Mr Olesen to provide a more detailed answer. Prior to construction of the hangar, we were able to make a small number of changes to the design of some of the elements of the MRTT hangar at very limited cost. Those changes were made prior to the construction of the hangar, so that has resulted in very little additional cost to the Commonwealth.

**Mr Olesen**—Essentially, the docking situation for the KC30B, or the MRTT, aircraft was a fixed solution. We got in very early in the piece. The docking was one of the last things to be installed. It is not yet in the hangar; it is still being designed. We switched that to an underwing removable system that swings down and out of the way, so that the low-slung wings come over the top. That was the only change. There was very little to do. We moved a few services in the floor, again, during the design phase, rather than physically going out and ripping up the new concrete. It is hard for us to put an exact price on it, but we would say that there is an upper estimate of maybe \$75,000, with very small implications, for cost or program.

**Brig. Grice**—The removable stands are there to get access to the aircraft when it comes in for maintenance. The original design for the MRTT would mean that they would be in there permanently and that the aircraft would come in and go up to them. The redesign means that they are not fixed but can be moved out of the way so that the C17 aircraft can come into the hangar without hitting them.

**Mr FORREST**—Will the tail fit?

**Brig. Grice**—Yes.

**Mr FORREST**—I remember the helicopters.

**Senator PARRY**—In relation to future development on the site, if you end up with, say, double the number of aircraft that are currently proposed, would that require an additional hangar? If so, has design on the base sufficiently provided for an additional hangar in the future?

**Brig. Grice**—I will ask Mr Olesen to talk about the aircraft parking arrangements and maintenance.

**Mr Olesen**—We are extending the existing MRTT apron. It is a direct extension. It has saved us a considerable amount of pavement because we will use one common taxi lane between the eight parking positions. Realistically, that is as big as the apron can get without a break. We need to put in some lighting, power and services. There is master planned space to provide additional

apron parking positions. With the additional concrete apron parking positions come sufficient airside real estate for any particular structure you might want to put in place.

**Senator PARRY**—Which could include another hangar.

**Mr Olesen**—And regarding apron hydrant refuelling, we took a conservative approach to running a separate hydrant line back to the fuel farm, so we have two independent loops, and that allows us to extend that hydrant at very little cost in due course. We put the isolation valves outside the concrete. It would be a simple exercise to come back later and move them if we need to.

**Senator PARRY**—That is good. We are keen to see future planning taken into account rather than coming back seeking large sums of money all the time for these expansions.

**CHAIR**—As Senator Perry has just said, we canvassed a lot of the important issues with regard to ongoing developments, at Amberley in particular, earlier today in the hearing with regard to the stage 3 redevelopment of Amberley base, and they included of course some of the water issues, environmental issues, energy use and so on. I think that most of those apply to the C17 project that we are looking at this afternoon. I suppose that brings me to the question of why you would not have presented these as one project rather than two. I am sure there is a good answer, but I think that we should have that answer on the public record.

**Brig. Grice**—It is to do with the timing of the proposals. Amberley redevelopment stage 3 has been in development for about 2½ years. This project was programmed in the major capital facilities program seven or eight years ago and its development has occurred as a matter of course. The rapid acquisition of the C17—the decision by government announced in March 2006 to rapidly acquire the four C17 aircraft—meant that Infrastructure Asset Development Branch were given a hot potato. We were given a situation where we had to develop this project in a short time so that we could expedite the delivery of first the interim and then the permanent facilities to adequately support the new capabilities. So it was a matter of timing. Two-and-a-half years ago, when we started Amberley stage 3, we did not know that this project would come along, and we have reacted in a 12-month time frame, from being given this project in May 2006 until referral to the committee in May 2007 and this subsequent hearing. We were able to catch up and expedite our development so that we could refer the C17 project at the same time as we referred the Amberley stage 3 redevelopment project so that we could at least take advantage of having you in the one spot on the one day and reduce your travel.

**CHAIR**—Has this precluded you from perhaps making efficiencies by appointing one tenderer and so on? Can you explain how that is going to work and the efficiency of the project in the way that you have structured it?

**Brig. Grice**—I will pass to Mr Olesen to give a bit more detail, but first I will say this. Because the majority of the elements in the Amberley stage 3 redevelopment project are in greenfield sites away from the sensitive area of the flight line, we have been able to design those elements and they will be delivered as a series of head contracts. The C17 facilities are on the flight line and their construction includes major construction on the active airfield with taxiways and parking aprons. This meant that the appropriate method of development delivery for that, so that we did not interfere with the ongoing operation of the airstrip, was for us to take a managing

contractor approach. So the project methodology that we used for the Amberley stage 3 redevelopment was not ideal or optimal for the delivery of this project. There would have been very limited economies to be made if we had done both at the same time. They were different projects and different delivery methods were optimal.

**CHAIR**—Can you therefore see any problems in delivering these projects concurrently?

**Brig. Grice**—No. Maybe Mr Olesen could talk about the expenditure we expect to achieve and our prior experience with Amberley stage 2.

**Mr Olesen**—Sure. Last year on Amberley stage 2 we spent in the order of \$155 million in the financial year in running three separate projects, essentially, under one umbrella. We do not expect next year or the year after to be any different.

The site tour today may have been confusing, given the extent of works we had to look at, but the C17 scope of works is distinctly separate from the remaining stage 3 scope and has a distinctly different risk profile to the Amberley stage 3 scope. Notwithstanding that, this was \$600 million worth of work into one market, and one series of design consultants for 12 months, and it has been documented very quickly. It has all the biggest guys in town and their whole office involved. To try to put that down and rationalise the number of consultants would have increased Defence's risk profile exponentially with regard to the quality of the documentation. So this is the lowest-risk approach for us.

**CHAIR**—I am sure that other committee members will join me in thanking you for the way in which the inspection was structured today because it did make our job easier. As I say, we have three days of hearings on three entirely different projects of some complexity, so we appreciate the assistance that has been given to help the committee get across the important details in this particular project, given its complexities. Mr Forrest?

**Mr FORREST**—With the two projects today, that is half a billion dollars, and if you add stage 2 for Amberley, which I think you said was worth \$665 million. How much of that gets into the community here at Ipswich?

**Mr Olesen**—It is difficult to measure that. We look at the local Ipswich area and the Brisbane area, and the Gold Coast market, which gets involved as well. We have some numbers which managing contractors looked at for involvement, and we suspect that within the 30-kilometre radius you would get most of the expenditure back into the market. We get a range—from very small through to very large national subcontractors. It is quite a large mix. Maybe Brigadier Grice would like to say more?

**Brig. Grice**—No.

**Mr FORREST**—I want to ask some questions about the integrity of the base until these works are done. I am a bit concerned because this is a heavier aircraft and I am wondering about the capacity of the existing taxiway pavements, and the runway itself, to bear its weight. Have you been able to make an assessment of that? And I hope that any such contingencies are included in the estimates.

**Brig. Grice**—I might pass to Gary after this, but you will recall that, in Amberley stage 2, with the Multi-Role Tanker Transport aircraft, there was some strengthening of a section of the main taxiway. We are using that section of the taxiway at the moment for the C17 to exit the runway into a very confined area to park the aircraft. Gary, you may want to talk about that operation. So Amberley stage 2 and the works for MRTT provided some work to enable us to commence operations and get the aircraft off the runway onto the apron. Gary?

**Group Capt. Martin**—Thanks, Brigadier. During the last six months we have been operating the aircraft out of a variety of airfields here in Australia—primarily its home base and its future deployment bases which it will be taking its main customers from—through a variety of weights, and working with the engineering analysis people as to what we can take the aircraft up to on those runways. Various findings have been made. We have been operating at normal C17 maximum all-up operating weights at Amberley, Darwin, Pearce and Townsville, and we have assessed the strength at Edinburgh where we know we will have to use a lower weight until that airfield is improved by the Air 7000 project in turn, which is what they are planning for an aircraft replacement for the P3. That is just on the runways.

As to the taxiways: again, what we have included in the taxiway developments in between Amberley and the deployment bases takes care of the C17 and also the KC30B; it actually allows a KC30B to operate both on a civil and on a military side. Previously, the KC30B aircraft was restricted in some airfields operating on the civilian side. We have now made that a much easier operation, including with that underground hydrant refuelling as well. So, overall, our concept is to provide facilities and, because the KC30B and the C17 are very similar in their loading patterns, although the C17 is slightly lighter on its wheels in comparison, we have been able to structure the airfield accordingly, to support our heavy airlift and all other aircraft underneath at all of the airfields.

**Mr FORREST**—What if an aircraft is returning from a deployment somewhere and it is excessively loaded but it has to go to a base—in the interim, until you have strengthened everything?

**Group Capt. Martin**—At this stage, if, for instance, we are doing a redeployment of Australian forces from overseas, the way that AQIS and Customs are handling those forces is that we bring them into the main airfields—primarily Darwin, to the north, which is structured for 747 capability—and we Customs-clear them there, et cetera. Then we fly, with a relevant fuel load in the aircraft to get us down to a minor base, as it is now, to offload that equipment and again take off out of there in a light configuration. It is the same for a deployment, just using the reverse sequence. We will go out heavy with equipment but, again, balance that with a lower fuel weight; we will position ourselves at a northern airfield, where we can load the aircraft up with a fuel load to go internationally, and then conduct our activities further on.

**Mr FORREST**—There has to be a bit of management in the interim; are pilots well-briefed on where they are allowed to taxi and where they are not?

**Group Capt. Martin**—Yes. We already have charts out there. We have worked with the engineering infrastructure division on this, and our tasking authorities are well aware of it. It goes right back into the paperwork planning of deployment moves for our forces or if we have to do relief aid at very short notice. We have already got that advertised out at our tasking

agencies—the maximum weights that we can accept with an aircraft empty; fuel loads for ranges, and then balancing it out with loads. We have put that in place in the last six months.

**Mr FORREST**—I am asking the question because I had the Deputy Prime Minister fly into one of my electorate airports and I leant on the airport engineer. He has never forgiven me; it left ruts in the bitumen pavement! I have a couple of questions and, again, I am catching up because I did not attend the inspection and missed most of the earlier hearing, so this might be just my own ignorance at not being better briefed. The working accommodation housing No. 36 Squadron is not suitable for its purpose. Is this going to be included in stage 3? I forget which part of the evidence it comes from.

**Brig. Grice**—Are we talking about the interim accommodation?

**Mr FORREST**—Yes.

**Brig. Grice**—No. 36 Squadron were flying C130s out of Richmond and then were redesignated to fly the C17 and came to Amberley in about October or November last year. In order to accommodate them, we did an early works package of about \$5.9 million to provide some ground support equipment shelters, flight line tool storage and that type of thing. We refurbished an existing heritage building in the flight line to provide accommodation for the administrative and logistics staffs. We squeezed into No. 6 Squadron a portion of their facility, where we renovated and housed the command and operational planning elements. It was all done on an interim basis so that the aircraft and the squadron—at reduced capacity with reduced numbers, because not all the aircraft are in yet—could operate in the interim until we built the new facilities. They are in substandard facilities but able to operate the aircraft. We are on a tight time line to deliver the permanent facilities so that, after all of the aircraft arrive and the squadron builds up to its full capacity, it is able to provide the full capability.

**Mr FORREST**—Is that included in stage 3?

**Brig. Grice**—No. All of the facilities for 36 Squadron are included in this proposal, except for the interim, which we delivered last year.

**Mr FORREST**—I am just anxious that we approved expenditure and we may well have wasted it because it could have been done a different way.

**Brig. Grice**—We try not to do that, Mr Forrest.

**Mr FORREST**—It is a similar thing with the proposed headquarters building. If there were only one building, would this not deliver economies of scale? Why isn't it being tackled that way?

**Brig. Grice**—Are you talking about the interim accommodation?

**Mr FORREST**—No, I am talking about the headquarters facility.

**CHAIR**—If I can clarify, there are two: one is element 6, the new headquarters combat support group, and then there is the C17A aircraft maintenance and logistics. I think that is what Mr Forrest was referring to.

**Brig. Grice**—They are separate units.

**Mr Olesen**—Combat support group provides expeditionary airfields, health and security type capabilities. That is in stage 3. It is a completely separate group to the C17 No. 36 Squadron people. We have rationalised 36 Squadron's requirements as best as possible to get them into very large building footprints rather than having 15 small buildings around the site. That is seen in the design as to where we are at the moment. We have co-located warehousing and maintenance functions—they have a similar roofline and work well together in a building. The office accommodation building has all their maintainers, flight crews, headquarters and tool store, again all under the same roof.

**Mr FORREST**—My last question is about master planning. Your job must be a nightmare given that you have already stated that there was not a lot of notice for the deployment of this new aircraft. I am looking for some assurances that not just for Amberley but for all of our bases there is some sort of master plan and we do not go and spend a whole lot of money and three or four years later have to rip it up or replace it or make it stronger. How on earth do you do your master planning and still come in here and say, 'We weren't ready for the deployment of this aircraft'?

**Brig. Grice**—Last year we were in the process of developing the master plan for Amberley. There was an inkling that something might be happening, so during our process we started looking forward. We looked into the Defence Capability Plan and looked at all of the capabilities that may come online for aircraft that may operate out of Amberley or be home based at Amberley for the next 30 years that are being procured over the life of the 2007 to 2017 Defence Capability Plan.

Then we got together with people from the capability development executive, the Defence Materiel Organisation, the Air Force—the people who operate the airframes—the people who maintain the base here at Amberley, the defence support regional representatives and landlords who are responsible for these facilities, and all of the users of all of the units that are currently on base. We held a series of master planning meetings over a five or six month period to come up with the base master plan—a zone precinct plan—for Amberley for the next 30 years. That plan was approved in November last year by the defence infrastructure subcommittee and is extant on Amberley at the moment. Once we became aware of the C17, we injected it into our planning. We are confident that the zone and precinct master plan that we have for Amberley is suitable for what we envisage happening here in the next 30 years. For each of the other deployment bases, the project conducted a similar exercise. On some of those bases there is a current master plan. On some of them there is a master plan in draft form that is being updated. The works that we are providing at the deployment bases reflect the intent of the plans that are in place.

**Mr FORREST**—If it is for 30 years you must be building some strength capacity into those taxiways beyond what is needed for this aircraft, because obviously in 30 years they are going to be bigger and better.

**Brig. Grice**—The life of this type of aircraft is 20 to 30 years, so the upgrades that we are making now—the airframes that are being purchased now—will be in service for the next 20 to 30 years. The design that we have to cope with the airframes that we know will be coming here will be able to provide us with the facilities we need as we go forward.

**Mr FORREST**—How would you liken the capacity of the taxiway to its capacity to take a 747? How does it rate?

**Brig. Grice**—We might let Mr Rinaudo talk about that, but the MRTT—the Multi-Role Tanker Transport—is basically an A380, which is a commercial aircraft. Mr Rinaudo may want to give more information about the pavement strengths.

**Mr Rinaudo**—Each airfield has a plan of the strengths of each of the pieces of pavement, whether it be the runway, the taxiways or the aprons. That is under a pavement classification number system. Amberley has different zones with capability for aircraft, and the runway is capable up to a code E aircraft. Not only does the KC30B aircraft fit within that; so does the 747 aircraft. So there are two bits. The first piece is on pavement strength. This plan shows areas where they can go or where they can go with some dispensation—for example, ‘so many operations in a year’—but there are also the physical wing-tip clearance constraints or physical requirements as well. Amberley meets the physical requirements also.

**Mr FORREST**—Is that for 30 years? That is what they said about Tullamarine, but they have just added another four metres on either side.

**Mr Rinaudo**—The most important piece of an airfield is the airside-landside interface—the line that exists so that you can construct in certain areas and not constrain the operation of your airfield. That is what has happened at Amberley and what generally happens on all airport master plans.

**CHAIR**—Brigadier Grice, just as we concluded the hearing into redevelopment stage 3, a couple of members of the public approached myself and the secretary about the facilities that have in the past been shared between Defence and the community such as kindergarten facilities, which I think are attached to the existing school, and the shared use of the post office. Would you like to make a comment about that? Although it is not specific to this hearing, I think that it covers the overall redevelopment on the base.

**Brig. Grice**—Those facilities are facilities where there is a lease in place between the entity and the Defence Support Group. They are managed by the south-east Queensland region of the Defence Support Group. Defence base and regional representatives have had initial consultations with some of those groups, and the indication from Defence is that, by the time the Amberley redevelopment project is complete, they should make arrangements to go into facilities off base. I spoke to the ladies from the kindergarten myself and they were very concerned about the lack of information. I undertook to get back to the head of the national operations division and inform her of the concerns. If she and her people arrange a series of briefings for those three or four small groups that use those facilities on a lease basis to give them a common understanding of the development project and what the future might be for them, the project made a commitment that we would come along and brief as well.



It is a change from the way business has been conducted in the past. The situation has changed in the last several years, but I am sure Defence will look at each situation on its merits and be is flexible as possible to be able to help with any transition that occurs.

**CHAIR**—I understand our next witnesses have arrived. We may recall Defence.

[3.32 pm]

**MUNDT, Mr Laurie Edward, Business Development Manager, Ipswich City Council**

**PISASALE, Councillor Charlie, Councillor, Division 8 and Chair, Arts, Community and Cultural Services, Ipswich City Council**

**PISASALE, Councillor Paul John, Mayor of the City of Ipswich, Ipswich City Council**

*Witnesses were sworn or affirmed—*

**CHAIR**—We welcome you to this hearing and thank you for taking the time to make a submission to the committee. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

**Councillor P Pisasale**—I am the mayor of the city and am appearing on behalf of the community and acknowledging our support for the development of the base.

**CHAIR**—The committee has received two submissions—one from Mayor Paul Pisasale and one from Councillor Charlie Pisasale—to the proposed C17 heavy airlift infrastructure project. Do you wish to make any amendments to the submissions?

**Councillor P Pisasale**—Just a further statement, Madam Chair, if I may.

**CHAIR**—Yes, please. We invite you to make a brief statement, and then we will go to questions.

**Councillor P Pisasale**—Thank you for the opportunity to come here. On behalf of the city, I think it is a crucial. The City of Ipswich and our family friends at RAAF Base Amberley have always played a vital role in working together. We have always seen the base as a vital part of the city, but we also see it as a vital part of the defence of Australia. As mayor, I cannot remember the last time I had a complaint about the RAAF base. We have developed a really good relationship. We see it as more than flying aeroplanes; we see it as part of our P&Cs and sporting organisations, and something that plays an active role in our community. On Thursday I will be flying to Townsville, like I did at Puckapunyal and Randwick, and I would like to table the information that we are giving to all the defence people who have been visiting our city and who will be coming to make sure they feel part of our community. It is important for the personnel to feel part of a community before coming here.

Our point of view is to acknowledge not only the economic role but, as I stated, the social role. We acknowledge the town-planning commitment we have made as a city with regard to the five-kilometre buffer zone to protect the investment by the Commonwealth in the base. We understand that sometimes noise and people do not mix and that unless we get the proper zoning around the defence base it will be no good for either party. So we have put those things in place. It is also important to acknowledge that we are developing industries around the defence base which relate to aerospace.

The other thing is that we acknowledge the support that we put into the families that are coming—the spouses and the children—to make sure they feel welcome as well. We understand the upheavals that are caused when a family has to uproot itself on a regular basis, so as a city we have an affinity and want to develop that relationship. I think it is important, as the mayor, to recognise that and, as I stated to the committee, to recognise our commitment to working in partnership with not only the contractors but also the families that are coming and the existing families.

I am happy to take any questions. I did bring along some gifts from the city to say welcome. It is a pin on which we acknowledge the partnership of the base. It has the Ipswich flag flying and the Australian flag, which commemorates the Defence Force. We call it our 'pride pin', which shows the pride we have in our country and the pride we have as a city. It is not really a gift.

**CHAIR**—I am sure the committee members will be pleased to receive the pride pin of the Ipswich City Council. Thank you. Councillor, did you want to make some comments?

**Councillor C Pisasale**—Yes, thank you. Again, thank you for this opportunity to express our support. I certainly support what the mayor said. I mentioned before that I am the councillor for division 8, which takes in Base Amberley, and I am very proud to say that. I also have an electoral office, which is located in Leichhardt and is geographically right next door to RAAF Base Amberley—overlooking the base, actually. As well as living there for 39 years, my electoral office is in Leichhardt as well, so I am basically next door and can handle face-on the alleged complaints that one may get about aircraft noise. Luckily, as the mayor touched on, they are very few and far between. So when you look at it city-wise, you will see it is certainly not an issue as far as we are concerned.

I will expand on that a little bit further. The mayor touched on the support for and relationships we have with Base Amberley. They are very strong. It breaks down the so-called wall between defence and the city. We integrate really well with base personnel. We are kept informed and we keep them informed of what is happening—it is a two-way street. It is a great relationship in which we share information, and that is critical in building that relationship up. Again, we recognise that we are not talking just about people in uniforms. We know that they are people with families and that they have kids who need to have education, as well as everything else they need. We are totally supportive of that city-wide. I am trying to say that we totally support this development at Base Amberley. I hope that is helpful.

**CHAIR**—I am sure that my colleagues would join with me in saying how pleased we are to hear about the good relationship. I come from an electorate that has the Pearce airbase within it and, from personal experience, we know that Defence not only do a good job in defending the country but also play a role in the community. We have similar experiences and our council is also very supportive, so we are pleased to hear about the good relationship here.

**Councillor P Pisasale**—Could I put on record that they are not just my and Councillor Charlie Pisasale's views but the views of the entire council that we bring here today, and they are very aware that we are here. It is the unanimous view of council.

**CHAIR**—We appreciate you letting us know that. It is good to see that both parties take pride in good relations with the community.

**Councillor P Pisasale**—Last week, Defence Housing had a conference and I was their guest speaker. We and all the other parts of Defence make sure of a smooth transition, especially with getting housing right and getting the viability for the families right. We have come to work very closely with the Defence family. We know what they go through and the pressures they are under, especially with overseas deployment. While the spouse is away, we have to support the spouse that is left here. We are very aware of the support we have to supply.

**CHAIR**—I am sure that Defence appreciates that and that the Commonwealth appreciates the attitude of council. Thank you. There is an issue that we have discussed in depth during these hearings, particularly in the earlier hearing on the stage 3 development. We flew here and we could see that the country is very dry. Clearly, we are aware of a lot of publicity about water issues in Queensland, as there has been in other parts of the country. Committee members would be particularly interested to hear from you on whether you feel that the arrangements that have been made are satisfactory and that all that can be done is being done to make sure that there is maximum conservation and retention of water for use on the base, perhaps taking some of the pressure off. We heard from Ipswich Water. They seemed to be satisfied, but it would be good to hear from council on that.

**Councillor P Pisasale**—That is a good question and it has been asked at an appropriate time because this morning I was with the Premier and the Deputy Premier—

**CHAIR**—It is nice to see the rain.

**Councillor P Pisasale**—Yes. I was with the Premier and the Deputy Premier, and today we put together the final stages for the link that will go from the Bundamba water treatment plant to Swanbank. That link that will be commissioned in the next four weeks will actually use 20 million megalitres of water, which is really the usage for the city—and that is about four weeks in advance. The infrastructure that the state government has put in with regard to pressure on the use of recycled water has been tremendous, plus our own conservation measures that we built within the community here, such as rainwater tanks, are in place. The second thing is the desalination plant. All those things are on-line. I spoke to the Premier this morning and he has no problem with regard to what we are feeling. The only other thing that we would like to see, regarding some of the infrastructure that is built at the base, is that it links in with the community rather than having separate infrastructure. I know that there are some discussions with regard to the sewage treatment plants—

**CHAIR**—Yes, we understand that to be the case.

**Councillor P Pisasale**—and the water. We are very keen to work together. I also know that the Premier has taken over some of the control especially on water. He spoke to me about it this morning. He wants to make sure that we are unified so that there is no wastage. Rather than having Ipswich water, Noosa water and Caboolture water, there will be a more combined amalgamation of the resources of water; it will not be mine and yours. Whether you are Defence or a local authority, it will be everybody working together in the best interests of south-east Queensland.

**Mr FORREST**—You said 20 million megalitres. Did you mean 20 megalitres?

**Councillor P Pisasale**—Yes, 20 megalitres; not 20 million megalitres.

**CHAIR**—I was pleased to see that Defence have taken measures to save somewhere around 10 per cent of the water used on the base through recapturing water and are putting in water tanks and reservoirs.

**Councillor P Pisasale**—Also, some of the work with regard to the infrastructure that the base is putting in, in working with water, will mean that some of the infrastructure capital works that council wants to put in in some of those areas will assist council and help to assist the community, so there will be a better partnership all round and that will save everybody some money.

**CHAIR**—Good. Thank you.

**Councillor C Pisasale**—On that point, we are also working with projects on site, where they do not have to use the potable water. We are utilising, say, recycled water for some of the road projects and what have you. So we are already doing that on the base.

**Senator PARRY**—What was the main purpose for wanting the base to link in more with Ipswich Water? What is the main benefit to council?

**Councillor P Pisasale**—The main benefit to council is that if you guys are building some infrastructure out there and we have to build infrastructure in the Walloon area then it is better to link in together as it will save both of us money. It means that we can accelerate some of our housing projects, which means that we can work with Defence Housing. The needs of Defence Housing in this area are going to grow and grow. We want to make sure that that housing is not all in the same pocket. We want to make sure that it is integrated throughout the whole community—that is the feeling that we are getting from defence families—and also for investment properties. I think we need to work in partnership rather than separately.

**Mr FORREST**—It is always encouraging to hear evidence of a good working relationship with Defence. We appreciate that. I want to tease out what the key is to that. Obviously it has taken a lot of work from both sides, but are there any special things that you have been able to do?

**Councillor P Pisasale**—Look at some of the ads that we have been running—we were the first to take out ads. When I first got elected in 1991 there were a lot of complaints coming in and we started a program called ‘Defence: more than flying planes’. People did not realise that the base was out there and Ipswich was here. It was like there was a picket fence between the two areas. The first thing we did to take away the picket fence was to start some awards. They were not for the ranking officers but the junior officers who played a role in the community. So we had our yearly awards.

We came up with a \$10 note with what looked like an F111 on it to show people that the sound of freedom also has an economic benefit of \$70 million to the community—so people could see that flow of dollars. We have family day welcomes where we invite the whole community. We portray the whole family so that it is not us and them anymore—it is Ipswich family. It is really funny now: occasionally you will see a person write a letter to the paper

complaining about the noise. I do not have to do anything, because there is such a blast from the whole community that the bloke nearly has to leave town. They do not miss them, and people are not game to complain.

I did suggest to somebody who had only been in town for two months and complained about the noise—that was about three years ago—that they should shift. The base has been there for a significant time. What we have done is as simple as this: you work with the silent majority rather than the vocal minority. Sometimes the vocal minority gets a say that really snowballs. We have been able to educate the community. We have had freedom of the city here. We support a lot of the young people in the air cadets, the naval cadets and the army cadets. The young people play a vital role. Both I and Councillor Charlie Pisasale get involved in all of those things. We make financial contributions to those cadets. We help them with flagpoles and days out. We also help the young kids in the 2 Wing Band to fly to Japan and represent the city. They are the sorts of cultural things. It is more than planes. Now the aerospace industry, with the University of Queensland, has proven to be a vital job link. People like Boeing and the contractors are providing vital jobs for our community. A city that was once know for its value as a coal mining city now has an aerospace industry, and that has happened in 10 years.

**Mr FORREST**—You also mentioned the buffer zone. Can you explain what activities are permitted in the buffer zone, because that is a fairly sizeable chunk of your—

**Councillor P Pisasale**—Yes, we can get you the details of that, but the most important thing is residential encroachment on the buffer zone—the height levels and ensuring that the base is a third party to any development, that they can discuss that with council.

**Mr FORREST**—So some development is permitted, but—

**Councillor P Pisasale**—It is industrial sheds, such as for the aerospace industry, and things that are complementary to the base. We do not want to block development, but I think you have to have a common-sense approach. The last thing you want at the back gate of Amberley is a residential development that is going to hinder the investment by the Commonwealth and also the country.

**Mr FORREST**—So that is a planning scheme regulation you have put in place, but there would be private owners of that land.

**Councillor P Pisasale**—Yes, but overarching that is that we have had that adopted by the south-east Queensland government regional plan. Laurie, do you want to comment on that?

**Mr Mundt**—There are height limits as well, and also the issues of bird strikes and that sort of thing. So it protects against activities which impede the activity of the air base. So it does allow some development, as long as that development does not impede the activities of the air base.

**Councillor P Pisasale**—The base is a third party to any development. When Collex wanted to develop, it went on for about 12 months because they had to do studies in regard to bird activities and some of the things that the base needed to understand. The last thing we wanted to do was to have a development out there that was going to impinge on the safety of the planes.

**Mr FORREST**—Who is the umpire if, say, I am a private owner and there is some development that I would like to pursue, and I put in an application for planning permission or a development application and council refuses it because it does not comply? Who becomes the umpire if I have the view that it is compatible?

**Councillor P Pisasale**—In that case, we have knocked it back anyway. The only thing you could do is appeal against it under IPA and go through the Planning and Environment Court. But the rules are in place. The Planning and Environment Court is going to look at the rules. If the rules have all been met then we could lose the case, but we have it so airtight in regard to the base that it would be very difficult for people to change it. I would like to send you that part of the act, if I may, because I think it is important for other air bases to look at that. The other thing we have protected is the motor sport precinct. We have worked out that noise and people do not mix very well.

**CHAIR**—It is important also in regard to airport development. I wish there was more common sense applied to that issue. Perhaps you should spread the word.

**Councillor P Pisasale**—It is amazing. You get the small subdivisions and you can say, ‘It is only 20 people,’ but 20 people are enough to start a petition—and you know what politicians are like when they get their petitions!

**CHAIR**—We are well acquainted, yes!

**Mr FORREST**—I have only one other point to make—

**Councillor C Pisasale**—If I could interrupt, both Willowbank and Amberley integrate those noise zones, so they interlock.

**Mr FORREST**—My driver had enormous difficulty finding this hotel and, given its attraction and importance to the city, I am wondering if you could give some consideration, Mr Mundt, to this street being a one-way street. I wasted 20 minutes trying to find out how to get into the place!

**CHAIR**—Mr Forrest, I think that is outside the scope of this hearing and that you should direct a letter to the mayor.

**Councillor P Pisasale**—That is actually a very good question, because right next door we are going to have an inquiry which will help the base as well. Next door there will be an inquiry by design. The council has booked out the hotel and, over the next seven days, we will be bringing in experts from all over the world. We are designing the infrastructure of the CBD traffic management and all of those issues that you have just brought up. Rather than—as you were talking about then—developing a CBD by saying, ‘Change this one-way street,’ or, ‘Plant a tree here and fix a pothole,’ we are looking at a long-term vision. We are bringing in representatives from all over the world and from different state agencies. On Saturday, after working around the clock for seven days on the thing called ‘inquiry by design’, we will come up with a structure for the size of our CBD and how it integrates with the rest of the city.

**CHAIR**—You do not want to migrate to the west, do you?

**Councillor P Pisasale**—It is called common sense!

**CHAIR**—Thank you very much. We appreciate your contribution. Mr Forrest, do you require Defence to be recalled?

**Mr FORREST**—No.

**CHAIR**—As the committee does not require Defence to be recalled, I thank all the witnesses who have appeared before the committee today and at the private hearing earlier.

Resolved (on motion by **Senator Parry**):

That, pursuant to the power conferred by section 2(2) of the Parliamentary Papers Act 1908, this committee authorises publication of the evidence given before it and submissions presented at public hearing this day.

**Committee adjourned at 3.55 pm**