



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

**Reference: Development of canine kennelling and training facilities for the
Australian Federal Police at Majura, Australian Capital Territory**

FRIDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2006

CANBERRA

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**

Friday, 8 September 2006

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

Members in attendance: Senator Troeth, Mr Forrest, Mr Jenkins and Mrs Moylan

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

Development of canine kennelling and training facilities for the Australian Federal Police at Majura, Australian Capital Territory

WITNESSES

BIGGERSTAFF, Mr Joseph Walter, Project Manager, New Business Environments, Australian Federal Police 1

NEWTON, Ms Mandy, Assistant Commissioner, National Manager, Aviation, Australian Federal Police 1

NOLAN, Mr Andrew Douglas, Director, Rider Hunt Canberra Pty Ltd..... 1

STRAUSS, Mr Jamie Dean, Manager, Specialist Groups, Aviation, Australian Federal Police 1

VAN DAM, Mr Trevor Anthony, Chief Operating Officer, Australian Federal Police 1

Committee met at 12.20 pm**BIGGERSTAFF, Mr Joseph Walter, Project Manager, New Business Environments, Australian Federal Police****NEWTON, Ms Mandy, Assistant Commissioner, National Manager, Aviation, Australian Federal Police****STRAUSS, Mr Jamie Dean, Manager, Specialist Groups, Aviation, Australian Federal Police****VAN DAM, Mr Trevor Anthony, Chief Operating Officer, Australian Federal Police****NOLAN, Mr Andrew Douglas, Director, Rider Hunt Canberra Pty Ltd**

CHAIR (Mrs Moylan)—I declare open this public hearing into the proposed development of canine kennelling and training facilities for the Australian Federal Police at Majura ACT. This project was referred to the Public Works Committee on 22 June 2006 for consideration and report to parliament. In accordance with subsection 17(3) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969:

- (3) In considering 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.

Early this morning, the committee received a confidential briefing from the Australian Federal Police and inspected the site of the proposed works. We thank you for your cooperation in assisting the committee with its inspection. The committee will now hear evidence from the Australian Federal Police. Do you have anything to add about the capacity in which you appear?

Ms Newton—I am a federal agent.

Mr Strauss—So am I.

CHAIR—Thank you. The committee has received a statement of evidence from the AFP. This will be made available in a volume of submissions made to the inquiry. They are also available on the committee's website. I understand that you wish to submit some amendments. Would you like to proceed to read those for us?

Mr Van Dam—There are a few minor amendments. At paragraph 50, we would like to add ‘the Department of Defence’ into the first list under ‘Australian government’ immediately after ‘Australian Customs Service’. Also at paragraph 50, we would like to add ‘the Girl Guides Association ACT Branch (property to the west)’ to the list under ‘other organisations and neighbours’ immediately after ‘owner of Avonley (property to the south)’. Those two paragraphs relate to consultation. In paragraph 52, replace the last sentence with the following: ‘The AFP has also written to the Girl Guides Association ACT Branch, which has camp cabins on the opposite side of Majura Road from the AFP site. All three parties have responded to the invitation and each participated in consultation meetings with AFP representatives.’

At paragraph 69, we would like to replace the last sentence with the following: ‘On 14 July 2006, an amended development control plan for the site was approved by the National Capital Authority and this development control plan provides for the proposed expansion of the dog training facilities on the site.’ Our last amendment is at paragraph 89. Add an additional sentence as follows: ‘An assessment of the expected impact of canine noise emissions has indicated that with appropriate design and construction levels at neighbouring residences and future AFP accommodation it can be contained within accepted standards.’

CHAIR—Would you now like to make a brief opening statement, and then we will go to questions.

Mr Van Dam—This proposal by the Australian Federal Police is for the development of new training facilities at Majura in the ACT to provide for the increase in AFP canine services required to support the expanded role of the AFP in aviation security at major airports across Australia. This expanded role is the outcome of decisions by the Australian government, with the agreement of the Council of Australian Governments. COAG has agreed to a unified policing model at 11 designated airports—the counterterrorism first-response airports—which provides for an airport police commander, a dedicated joint intelligence group, a counterterrorism first-response capability and a permanent community policing presence. Initiatives agreed also include strengthening of air cargo security arrangements.

These new initiatives require a substantial increase of AFP canine services and provide additional canine teams, trained dogs and handlers for use in firearms and explosives detection, drug detection and aviation security. The AFP canine service currently has a total of 22 canine detection teams working at major airports. The intention is to increase the number of effective canine teams to a total of 60.

The AFP is currently training dogs and handlers at several locations with outdated and quite inadequate facilities. All training for the detection teams and their regular recertification after time in the field is carried out at the AFP’s rudimentary leased premises in Canberra, with recertification occasionally conducted at airport locations at times of heavy workload. Canine facilities at the AFP owned property on Majura Road, which date back to the 1980s, are limited and outmoded, with kennel capacity for only six dogs in substandard conditions; these are used by ACT policing dog teams. AFP canine training personnel and handlers operate from leased premises at Fairbairn, with the dogs also in leased kennels at Fairbairn. None of these premises is of the appropriate standard required for modern training of detection dogs and their handlers.

With the increased numbers and training, new facilities are essential if the number of dogs and handlers are to be properly trained and regularly recertified to provide the quality of service required. This proposal for the development of new facilities at Majura is to satisfy this need. Other options were considered, but none of these offered a practical or cost-effective alternative. Since AFP plans to maintain and further develop its property at Majura as a centre of excellence for national and international law enforcement training, it was considered appropriate and cost effective to consolidate the AFP canine training function at the same location. The proposed works comprise offices and training rooms, an advanced training shed for the canines, facilities for kennel management, dog kennels and runs, and external works.

In line with the recommendations of the Wheeler review, the AFP has already commenced training canine teams for aviation duties. The first graduates of this process will be due to return to the training centre in July 2007 for recertification. The proposed works program allows for completion of the expanded kennelling facilities by this time, whilst the rest of the facilities on the site will be completed by the end of November 2007. This will provide the AFP sufficient kennelling capability to maintain aviation canine effectiveness whilst concurrently training additional canine teams to provide essential services during APEC events in the latter half of 2007.

The Department of the Environment and Heritage and the Australian Greenhouse Office have recently confirmed that they have no objections to the proposed works. The National Capital Authority has been consulted on master planning for the site, and a development control plan has been prepared and approved by the National Capital Authority. The proposed development of canine facilities is consistent with the approved plan. The proposal is for a cost-effective development that will meet the needs of the AFP for a high-quality canine training facility drawing on best international practice in this field. It will meet all current codes and standards, address environmental factors and include environmentally sustainable and energy efficient designs.

Senator TROETH—Is it possible for you tell us which are the 11 airports at which you will be operational?

Mr Van Dam—Yes, indeed it is. I will ask Mandy Newton to advise you on that.

Ms Newton—The airports are: Cairns, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Perth, Alice Springs and Darwin.

Senator TROETH—So dogs are not currently in use at those airports?

Ms Newton—They are in use at a number of those airports. There are currently 22 dogs that we have got operational at the moment in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Perth. We anticipate that as a result of the completion of training we will maintain dogs at all airports. Potentially, there will be some movement with Alice Springs airport in terms of its usage and whether we fly the dogs in occasionally to use at that airport.

Senator TROETH—Given that you hope to go from the 22 teams now to 60, at what stage in the future will you be getting to the 60 level?

Ms Newton—The 60 level incorporates ACT policing teams that operate now within Canberra. It also includes those handlers that will be trainers as well. So we are currently at a stage where we have got probably about 27 teams that we can operate with right now. Four of the 22 additional ones graduated at the end of last week and that has added to those teams. I anticipate that we will have that full capability by July next year.

Senator TROETH—Will there be any crossover between the Customs Service use of these facilities and your use of other Customs Service facilities?

Ms Newton—At the moment we are currently working through with Customs an evaluation of exactly how we will intend applying our canines at each location. A lot of the customs facilities that exist where we have held canines in the past at airports have resulted in an increase in their approval for the canines, so we have had to remove our dogs from those facilities. At the moment we are scoping the ability to either extend those facility areas or have long-term separate facilities because of the footprint of the land.

With regard to Canberra's facilities, we have indicated to Customs that they will be able to utilise our facilities at any time as long as we can coordinate dog numbers. And they have made an offer that once they are in a position to build new facilities themselves, if we want to do additional maritime work—particularly if it relates perhaps to our international deployment group—it will be viable to use their facilities as well. We plan on undertaking continued joint training with them and also ensure that we have a strong memorandum of understanding that sits underneath the existing Customs-AFP memorandum of understanding in how we will deploy the dogs operationally and share those capabilities.

Senator TROETH—With the 60 teams that you anticipate having, obviously the traffic through the relative airports will determine how many teams you have working at each airport, I would think.

Ms Newton—Yes. The position is that Sydney has the highest volume. Also take into consideration that we will be utilising the canines for our national operations so, because we have a large number of national operations operating from Sydney as well, over a period of time we will continue to adjust the locations of the dogs according to where the demand of workload is.

Mr Van Dam—It is perhaps also worth noting that canines and their handlers are highly mobile within Australia and so we deploy on the basis of threat as well. In the event that there was an increased threat risk at a particular location, we have got the capability of deploying extra teams into any locations at relatively short notice.

Ms Newton—That is consistent with having the regional rapid deployment teams that we deploy to local airports around the country. They have a canine capability that flies in and out or goes by vehicle to those locations as well.

Senator TROETH—The only other question I want to ask is about noise with the way that you look at designing the site. What techniques in these new buildings will be to mitigate aircraft noise?

Mr Van Dam—I can broadly address that at a couple of levels. Ironically, in relation to the dogs themselves, airport noise is quite good. We are trying to train these dogs to work in noisy environments and we have had no ill effects at all from the current kennels. Ironically, we do not necessarily want to mitigate that noise effect. In respect of the administration and training buildings, it is essentially roofing and construction materials and layout combined with landscaping treatments that will mitigate noise from the road. We have had experience now with our firing range and we have demonstrated that we can achieve the appropriate Australian standard outcomes by choice of material and design of facility.

Mr FORREST—How often is it required to bring the dogs back for retraining or recertification, or decertification if they are too old? I imagine that it is a regular or periodic thing as new drugs and new odours become apparent.

Mr Van Dam—You are absolutely correct, and I will ask Mr Strauss to give you a little bit of an overview of that process.

Mr Strauss—When they are initially trained with new handlers they go out to the airport environment and come back for a four-week revalidation to validate the work they have done over 12 months. Post that, they come back for one week a year to be revalidated—so it is an annual revalidation. You then have other periods when the dogs get retired and they need to come and be retrained with their handler so they do more periods of training. Also, if we are going to introduce new odours, which we are going to do post APEC for drug detection, it is a full 13-week course including the six weeks before that, because the dogs need to be imprinted with that capability. With that capability there are quite a few different things which the dogs have to come back to Canberra for, for different lengths of time, to be trained in at the facility.

Mr FORREST—If they are relocated to Darwin, how are they transported? Do they come by air?

Mr Strauss—By air.

Mr FORREST—So they have got to get used to that environment as well, don't they?

Mr Strauss—Correct.

Mr FORREST—Is that part of the training process?

Mr Strauss—The advantage has been in having the regional rapid deployment teams. We have to have a canine capability to deploy and it has been a good learning experience in an operational environment for dogs to be transported to remote areas. The dogs are already well accustomed to travelling by air to some remote areas and they get used to that travel.

Mr FORREST—So it is an ongoing investment, isn't it? The other question I had was about the security fence. The whole site is surrounded by a security fence and I am trying to figure out whether that is to keep the varmints in or to keep the varmints out. I suppose it is a bit of both, is it?

Mr Van Dam—To keep the vermin out. You are correct, Mr Forrest, that the fence has a dual purpose. I will ask Mr Biggerstaff to give us detail on this. The runs are individually fenced but we do need a broad perimeter fence because dogs will be moving between those runs and various training facilities. So, yes, it has a dual purpose.

Mr FORREST—What sort of fence is it? Has it got any extra electronic security or anything like that?

Mr Biggerstaff—There will be an electronic automatic gate at the front entrance to the facility, as you can see, coming off the main road. That is to allow vehicles to enter the site. The fence itself will be two metres high, which the dogs cannot scale, and it is all within the external AFP boundary, so there is a secondary layer of fence in there. There will also be a 20-metre landscaping buffer between this fenced facility and the external AFP fence.

Mr FORREST—Tell me about the car parking and why the car parking spaces have to be covered. It says 16 covered car parking spaces.

Mr Biggerstaff—Quite often the canines need to be left in the vehicle while the handler is in the office momentarily or retrieving another canine or putting another canine back in the kennels. I will pass to Mr Strauss to see if there are any other occasions when dogs are left in that position.

Mr Strauss—My understanding is that it is not for long periods of time that they are out in that environment. But, yes, if there are periods of time when they need to swap canines or they need to respond quickly—say, a general purpose job—they will have the canine there ready to go.

Mr Van Dam—I think we will also have vehicles parked there. There will be vehicle storage here during evenings et cetera so it is also about protecting vehicles from the weather elements.

Mr FORREST—What sort of structure is that, then? Is it an open carport type structure with just a roof or is it enclosed?

Mr Biggerstaff—It is open.

Mr FORREST—I meant to ask that question earlier. I want to go back to the training aspect. I am fascinated. The dog has to be trained to be handled by a whole number of different people. How do you avoid the attachment that can occur over a 12-week training period with an individual handler? Do you spread it around? Does it mean more people have to be involved? I have just twigged that that might be an issue.

Mr Van Dam—I will come back to that question, if you do not mind.

Mr FORREST—This question is a bit insensitive, but it comes from the inspection we did this morning: does training include some defecating training for the dogs? What I saw in the kennels I found a little bit offensive. I hope there is some training that teaches them that there is a spot where you do that. I am thinking of them being at airports and all the rest of it.

Ms Newton—They do train their dogs. They cannot take them through terminal areas if they are going to defecate within a terminal area. So they are trained to some degree. But within the kennelling area they have the ability to move between where they sleep at night and, as you would have seen, out in the concrete area where they defecate—they do not defecate within their sleeping area. It is very difficult when you have dogs in a kennel overnight to constantly train them. We have had to train them quite closely for our regional rapid deployment teams. In fact on occasion we have had dogs at hotels or places we have kept them where the handler has to take them out at night.

Mr Van Dam—What you will find, particularly at airports, is that there are areas that are set aside as dog-run areas outside terminals so that we, Customs and Quarantine, generally have an area for the dogs to be periodically taken out and given a break. They are in a grassed area where they can tend to their business. That is done on a regular basis because the dog is not going to operate at peak performance without that periodic opportunity for a break and a refresh.

Mr FORREST—I did not see that in any of the briefs. Is this something that is going to be better treated in the new kennels than the place we saw today? Will there be regular cleaning?

Ms Newton—They would have had their breakfast. Normally dogs do their business after that. Due to the size of the facility, we will have kennel managers and staff who will assist in ensuring that they are maintained and constantly cleaned out—as they are at the moment by the current staff.

Mr FORREST—You are not allowed to do it on your nature strip.

Mr JENKINS—Following on from Mr Forrest's question, the kennels we saw today seem to have been designed so there is the ability to hose them out into an open drain. Is the open drain a stormwater drain or a drain that goes back to a sewage treatment plant?

Mr Van Dam—Under the new facilities and new arrangements, all of the waste products will be collected, macerated and put into the sewerage facilities. That will be strictly controlled so that there will not be run-off into the site. Because we will have proper accommodation at the new facilities, as Ms Newton indicated, we will have kennel management staff. So there will be staff responsible daily for feeding the dogs, cleaning the kennels out et cetera. We have not been able to bring that into play at the moment, but under the new arrangements that certainly will be the way that it is done.

If I may come back to your earlier question—Mr Strauss will be able to give you a more detailed answer—it is not generally the case, as I understand it, that dogs are paired with multiple handlers. In fact, dogs are paired with one handler. What is envisaged is that a handler may be paired with one or two dogs. So, if one dog is not operable for some reason, the handler can utilise the other dog, or they can maximise their flexibility in terms of the type of dogs that they might handle. You want the dogs to bond with the handler, because they respond to the handler; that is my understanding, but I will let Mr Strauss give you more details.

Mr FORREST—What I am getting at is that by the time they get to Darwin it will be a new handler—

Mr Van Dam—No, the handler travels with them. Normally a handler comes down to train with the dog. If something breaks down between those two—for example, if the dog is injured or the handler has got to be away for a period of time—my understanding is that we reteam. If you want to bond a new dog to a handler, you have to go through a reteaming process, which means they have to be trained together, because each dog is unique.

I think the underpinning principle here is that the dog bonds to the handler and responds to the handler. That does not mean that a trained handler cannot periodically pick up another dog and get it to work, but they will generally not get it to work as effectively as the handler to which the dog has bonded.

Mr Strauss—I will carry on from that. In the first five to six weeks of a 13-week course, all the handlers interact with all the dogs. It is a one-on-one relationship. They work out which handler works best with which canine. That bond is important for the effectiveness, because the handler starts to learn the signs of the canine. That is why the course is 13 weeks.

There is a stringent selection process for the handlers within the agency—who can become handlers and be trained as handlers. The second part to that process is that there is one dog to one handler. The one handler can also have three different types of canine capability: drug detection, general purpose and firearms-explosive detection. So the handler can have three dogs under their control at any point in time. That is where the capability is expected to go in the next couple of years.

The reason we require so much kennel space is that we need to have a constant, ongoing replacement program. We need to have canines ready at any point in time to replace a canine if it gets sick or if it has to be retired. There are also puppies and dogs being brought into the program and housed at the canine facility. So, if it happens that a canine handler loses their canine, we have a quick program so that we can reteam them and send them back out to their area to do their job.

CHAIR—Can we move on from there?

Mr JENKINS—I will return to cleaning out the kennels. I understand that there is going to be a kennel management process and people in there doing it, but I am really a little concerned about where fluid, waste products and things like that will end up when the kennels are cleaned down.

Mr Van Dam—Our aim is to capture that.

Mr Biggerstaff—That is right. The solids are all collected from the kennels and the dog runs before any cleaning is undertaken. Any water run-off will go through drains, and there will be screens there for collecting any dog hair which will obviously run-off as well and may cause problems with the drainage systems. The site is being designed with water conservation in mind, and we will be looking at possible alternatives to stop that water from running into the drainage system. It may even be recycled for irrigation purposes.

Mr JENKINS—Are chemicals used in cleaning down the kennels?

Mr Biggerstaff—I am not aware of that.

Ms Newton—Perhaps I could comment on that. Whilst we might use disinfectants on occasion, it is no different from the sorts of disinfectants that are utilised by normal businesses, in terms of government clearing of sewage related issues if they occur in streets and places like that.

Mr JENKINS—There was a line item for ‘site lighting’. What form of lighting is envisaged?

Mr Biggerstaff—There is lighting envisaged to cover the areas between the buildings. That will all be designed with the overflying aviation in mind—so that it does not present a hazard for that.

Mr JENKINS—Sorry, I have jumped around. There was another question on water. Are you going to harvest water? You have this mighty big shed. I will carefully change the wording of my description of the shed! It has a very big roof area, which gives potential for harvesting—so is there to be harvesting?

Mr Van Dam—I might address that. Our entire objective with the site is to be as ecologically sustainable and efficient as possible, so we want to capture maximum water on the site. So the intention is to actually have all of that roof area capturing water. That water will then be recycled or used for the purpose of washing dogs et cetera. So we plan to use that water.

I apologise, I have just been checking the detail, but I am advised that the run-off water from kennels—we will use disinfectants in the course of that cleaning—will go into the sewage treatment process. So it will not run into the stormwater processes; it will be captured and then put into the sewerage.

Mr JENKINS—There are large landscaping buffers. I am interested in the type of plantings that there will be and whether there has had to be consideration of that planting, given that, with these canines, the aural side is very much what they are on about.

Mr Biggerstaff—The landscape buffers are being designed by a landscape architect who has had input into the AFP’s master plan for the site. The trees are selected for low bushfire vulnerability and also for adequate visual and acoustic screening. The major noise effect on the site at that point is the Majura Road, as you may have experienced this morning. We would certainly be looking to screen that noise out from our site.

Mr JENKINS—What are we doing about the rabbits?

Mr Van Dam—The site will be fenced.

Mr JENKINS—So the rabbits will know where they are supposed to go.

Mr Van Dam—Because this is a dog facility, the fencing will have to be adequately anchored so that you do not in fact find the dogs trying to escape under it. I am hopeful that it will be sufficient to also prevent rabbits coming into the site. As I suspect you know, the site has a very

large kangaroo population and a large rabbit population. There are some control measures, I think, being employed on the site—but, given the size of it, it is going to be an ongoing issue.

Mr JENKINS—Only because the chair has us under very tight time management, I am not going anywhere near the control of the vermin!

Mr FORREST—What is the function of that large arched area, referred to as the ‘day runs’? Is that just to give the animals an opportunity to do a bit of sniffing around the zone but in a regulated environment?

Mr Van Dam—It is a soft grass area. The dogs can run essentially backwards and forwards and around within those runs.

Mr Strauss—When they are not working, they are in the kennels. During the day, when the handlers are there, they let them run free and get exercise. So they are providing an exercise environment for the canines.

Mr FORREST—Would there be two or three in one of those pens together? They don’t have any sort of social life of their own, do they?

Mr Strauss—In some instances, I am advised that they are together. I would have to check what those circumstances were.

Ms Newton—Sometimes certain dogs get on, so there is no trouble putting some of the dogs together; other times they do not get on, so they are kept quite separate.

CHAIR—I think that answers the question. Thank you. I have three questions before we finish up. One relates to bushfire. It would seem likely to me that the site might be prone to fire and flooding. What measures have you undertaken to manage bushfire risk?

Mr Van Dam—They are probably three-phased. One is that we have consulted with the relevant fire authorities, and to the extent that we can achieve it—and I think on this site we can—we will build no closer than 80 metres to the stand of trees.

CHAIR—So there will be a buffer there.

Mr Van Dam—There is a buffer. Because this facility has a quasi-rural character the materials we will select will fire-harden the buildings, particularly the core buildings; and, as I think we indicated in our submission, we will also have fire response sprinklers in the critical buildings on site.

CHAIR—What about an emergency evacuation plan?

Mr Van Dam—Inevitably, yes, we will have an emergency evacuation plan.

CHAIR—Is there a plan or procedure in place now for that?

Mr Biggerstaff—There are individual emergency evacuation plans for the existing buildings.

CHAIR—And off the property?

Mr Van Dam—We will have an egress plan for the entire property once we start getting more people located on it.

CHAIR—Can you keep the committee updated on what your plans are for emergency evacuation procedures. Given that there seems to be only one access and exit point to the property, that becomes an issue.

Mr Van Dam—There is another access point to the property, which you would not have seen today. It is much further down, to the north of the property, and that forms part of our broader emergency evacuation plan. So there is another exit to the site.

CHAIR—Thank you. As part of our work we are expected to inquire into the revenue-producing character of developments. Is it likely that we would be producing any revenue from this? Would there be cost-sharing with other agencies? Are we likely to be offering expertise on canine training to other countries? What is the likelihood of that in the future?

Mr Van Dam—My understanding of the assessment is that there really is not a lot of revenue to be generated. In fact, I do not think we are anticipating revenue generation out of this. As we indicated during the site inspection this morning, there is a possibility that we could undertake the training of canine teams for other countries, but that generally would be done on the basis of our law enforcement cooperation programs. There will be some offsets within the AFP in the sense that there will be certain areas of the business that may purchase services from the facility, but we are not anticipating revenue generation in an external context.

CHAIR—Thank you. Finally, I understand that, at peak, there could be up to 30 people working in the canine training facility; is that right? The office will accommodate 19 people. What is the breakdown of men to women in that 19 to 30 potential staff?

Mr Strauss—There are currently five female handlers in the program, who make up 18 per cent of the current capability. We are still going through the recruiting process for 22 handlers for the APEC meeting. We envisage and would like to see a percentage of female handlers.

Ms Newton—I would like to add that. Because of the current capabilities of Protective Service officers, there has been a very low ratio of women within the organisation in the past; it has been in the vicinity of only 10 per cent. We are actively recruiting to have a higher ratio of women in the future. We find the women handlers to be very good with the dogs.

CHAIR—The reason I asked that question is that I notice on your plans that the shower, toilets and locker area for the males is more than twice the size—I think it is 64 square metres against 30 square metres—of the women's area. Can someone tell me why that is so?

Mr Van Dam—I stand to be corrected, but my belief is that it is based on both a historical and an anticipated gender mix within that function.

Mr Biggerstaff—It will also be to the building code that we put in a ratio of male to female facilities.

CHAIR—Yes, but I am asking why the male toilet, locker and shower areas are double the size of the female toilet, locker and shower areas. Can someone explain to me why a male employee needs more than twice the space? Is that right, or am I misunderstanding it?

Ms Newton—I think it is pretty much based on the ratio of women in the organisation. With the number of staff at a location like that, the likelihood of there being one woman to three men working at the facility is high. The current statistics are that women make up about a third of the organisation.

CHAIR—So you are saying the overall space of the areas is relative to the ratio of male to female employees.

Ms Newton—That is right.

CHAIR—We are not talking about individual spaces.

Ms Newton—No. I would not have accepted that.

CHAIR—That clarifies that point. As there are no further questions, we thank all of the witnesses for appearing today. Thank you again for assisting the committee with its inspection and for the demonstration of the capabilities of canines and their handlers. I also thank Hansard and our secretariat for their assistance today.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Forrest**, seconded by **Mr Jenkins**):

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 1.01 pm