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HQJOC Project 113/2004

Ms Vivienne Courto
Inquiry Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Courto

**HEADQUARTERS JOINT OPERATIONS COMMAND PROJECT
RESPONSE TO PWC SUBMISSION FROM QUEANBEYAN CITY COUNCIL**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the submission dated 27 May 2004 from the Greater Queanbeyan City Council. Defence notes that the submission refers to the Headquarters Joint Operations Command Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement was prepared in accordance with the Guidelines issued by Department of Environment and Heritage and placed on exhibition for public review in accordance with the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* for a period of 35 days from 17 October 2003 to 20 November 2003.

Twenty-three submissions were received from ACT and NSW Government planning authorities, local planning authorities, businesses, community groups and individuals. Defence acknowledges that the matters raised by the Greater Queanbeyan City Council in their 27 May 2004 submission were also raised in their submission to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in late 2003. The matters raised are being addressed in the Supplementary Report to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which is being finalised by a consultant external to Defence for submission to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. The completion of the Supplementary Report has been extended by the need to undertake additional surveys and studies, and is anticipated to be ready for submission in June 2004.

The following paragraphs provide responses to the Queanbeyan City Council in the order that they are raised in their submission.

Traffic

The Traffic Impact Study undertaken as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement assessed key locations along the Kings Highway route for impacts with and without the Headquarters generated traffic. The study examined the Yass Road / Bungendore Road / Ellerton Drive intersection (Bungendore side in Queanbeyan) and the Molonglo Street / Maldon Street intersection (Bungendore) as they were considered to be the two intersections with the greatest potential to suffer an adverse impact from traffic traversing to and from the new Headquarters.

The Traffic Impact Study indicated that the Molonglo Street and Maldon Street intersection in Bungendore was expected to be marginally influenced by the proposed development. The Yass Road / Bungendore Road / Ellerton Drive intersection was considered to be the most critical in terms of performance, and that the level of service, queue lengths and delays were expected to deteriorate, particularly during the PM peak hour. The deterioration was expected to occur only after the completion of the Headquarters in later 2007.

As other submissions on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement also highlighted the need for additional investigations of road capacity and traffic management issues, a further analysis of the likely impacts, together with identification of mitigation measures was undertaken. The analysis took into consideration the expected 2007 and 2017 performance, again with and without the Headquarters generated traffic.

The additional traffic analysis for the Supplementary Report has examined the Yass Road / Bungendore Road / Ellerton Drive intersection and the Kings Highway / Captains Flat Road intersection as they were deemed 'key intersections' to the traffic impact assessment of the Headquarters on the local road network. Intersections beyond these two would be affected, but not significantly, as it is assessed that the extra traffic would disperse rapidly beyond these intersections.

The analysis indicates that the Headquarters would have an adverse affect on all approaches to the Yass Road / Bungendore Road / Ellerton Drive intersection from late 2007, with delays and queuing in the PM peak hours. Consequently, the intersection may require upgrading at or before late 2007. The study also indicates that the intersection would require an upgrade prior to 2017 regardless of the Headquarters location.

The analysis also identifies that the Headquarters traffic is likely to have an adverse affect on right turning traffic into and out-of the Captains Flat Road by late 2007. Road improvements might include such measures as lengthening of the designated right turn lane off the Kings Highway and the provision of a roundabout. The situation is expected to worsen from late 2007 to the point where vehicles turning right into Captains Flat Road in the PM would queue longer than 100m, and block east bound traffic along the Kings Highway. Also vehicles turning right out of Captains Flat Road would suffer long delays.

Additional to the above analysis, Defence notes the advice contained in the 27 May 2004 submission from the Greater Queanbeyan City Council on the possible impact of the Headquarters traffic on other intersections in the road network. Any road capacity improvements that may be required as a result of the Headquarters, with the exception of the Kings Highway / Headquarters primary access road intersection, would be undertaken by Roads ACT and NSW Roads and Traffic Authority as appropriate. The Headquarters primary intersection will be funded as part of the Headquarters Project. Safety and risk issues associated with the operation of the Kings Highway and Captains Flat Road are the responsibility of the relevant road authorities, who conduct road safety audits to assess compliance with the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority and AustRoads safety standards.

Defence is committed to ensuring that Roads ACT and NSW Roads and Traffic Authority are provided with the necessary information on the likely and projected impacts of the Headquarters on traffic management and road capacity in a timely manner to enable their planning to proceed. This will help to ensure that any potential capacity constraints resulting from the location of the Headquarters are identified and addressed to maintain appropriate safety and amenity levels on the affected road network

Further, Defence has commenced initial discussions with local providers on the provision of a commercial bus service to and from the Headquarters, which would result in some reductions in the volume of traffic using the Kings Highway. The additional traffic analysis indicates that a bus service would not eliminate the need to upgrade the Yass Road / Bungendore Road / Ellerton Drive intersection, nor the need for some road improvements works to the Kings Highway / Captains Flat Road intersection.

Developers Contributions

The Greater Queanbeyan City Council submission notes that as approval for the Project is being sought under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, there is no provision for the NSW State Government or the Greater Queanbeyan City Council to impose appropriate and reasonable contributions for the provision of public amenities and services in Queanbeyan.

Defence will consult with the Council regarding the above matter.

Telecommunications Installations – Additional Approval Required

The vast majority of communications from the Headquarters will be along dedicated Defence optic fibre to HMAS HARMAN, or through commercial communications bearers, into the wider Defence and civil communications network. Defence will undertake further detailed work in consultation with relevant authorities, including the Greater Queanbeyan City Council, and service providers to determine the most appropriate access route for this and other required services.

Yours sincerely

Original signed on 3 June 2004

B.E. PLENTY

Air Commodore

Director General Headquarters Joint Operations Command Project

June 2004