

Issues and Conclusions

Project Costs

3.1 At the public hearing the Committee requested clarification of project costs to which DHA responded that the

...project cost of \$50.7 million represents what DHA expects to spend on construction, professional fees and all expenses associated with undertaking this construction, including payment of GST, notwithstanding that some of that GST may be credited back to DHA through input credit arrangements.¹

Project Delivery

Civil Works and House Construction

3.2 DHA explains in its main submission the project plan for the proposal.² The Committee noted the separation of civil works and the construction of houses and asked DHA to explain the contract arrangements for the specified project delivery process.

¹ Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 2

² Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 16.1

- 3.3 DHA responded that it has made a short-list of companies who submitted an expression of interest to the project. A tender process will be undertaken to select a company for the civil works part of the project. Similarly, expressions of interest will be sought to establish a panel of builders selected via an internal select tender process.
- 3.4 Furthermore, DHA approached two architectural firms to provide submissions and create a development control plan to ensure that house designs from builder's tenders through the design and construct process, are compatible with DHA's estate design.³

Lot Allocation

- 3.5 Upon further examination of the site plan and discussion regarding project delivery, the Committee asked DHA to further explain the selection process for a particular builder for a particular lot.
- 3.6 DHA explained that the panel of builders are provided with DHA specifications for housing as well as land and individual lot information. Based on the particular builder's range of products, the builder will make a bid on an individual lot with a suitable house design. DHA quantity surveyors analyse the bids against DHA selection criteria and ensure the bids are marketable and are economically viable. House design and construction both lie with the builder.
- 3.7 Whether DHA select one builder, or a combination of different builders, to provide the houses for the estate, DHA assured the Committee a probity approved process provides for the best offer for individual blocks. DHA states that:

The selection criteria documentation that we [DHA] work to is probity approved and we [DHA] follow an evaluation plan which has been approved by probity lawyers.⁴

As a result of this process DHA expect,

...to get a contemporary product meeting the current market standards, suitable for the blocks of land at an economic price.⁵

3 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 2

4 *ibid*, page 3

5 *ibid*

RAAF Base Amberley

- 3.8 According to DHA, the long term Defence planning for RAAF Base Amberley has contributed to the increase in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) housing requirement forecast for the Ipswich area.⁶ The Committee sought more information about the timing of the housing construction with the RAAF Base Amberley redevelopment. DHA responded that it is confident that the staging of the two projects will allow for the first large influx of ADF families in 2008.⁷

Nature of Development

House Design

- 3.9 DHA states in its main submission that all DHA residences will be four bedroom detached housing with ensuite and family room, double garage and at least 18 square metres of covered outdoor living area.⁸ The Committee asked DHA as to the reason for the house design for all dwellings as four bedroom residences.
- 3.10 DHA explained that there are two main reasons for proposing all houses be four bedrooms:
- there is a large demand for more space and larger houses, and Fairview Rise presents an opportunity to provide four bedroom houses due to larger lot sizes when compared lot sizes closer to Brisbane city; and
 - the existing houses in Fairview Rise are generally four bedroom, if not larger. DHA intends to maintain the standard of housing within the area.⁹
- 3.11 DHA also assured the Committee that while air-conditioning would be supplied, it is required to provide a four-star energy rating for all houses.¹⁰

6 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 2.3

7 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 7

8 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 3.5

9 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 5

10 *ibid*, page 15

Integration into Community

- 3.12 DHA has found that significant numbers of defence families support living in close proximity to each other in neighbourhoods where modern community standard housing is provided.¹¹ The Committee sought further detail on how DHA is addressing preferences of ADF personnel.
- 3.13 DHA responded that ADF families prefer not to be in new isolated developments. Fairview Rise provides close proximity to RAAF Base Amberley, local amenities and Ipswich.¹²
- 3.14 Furthermore, ADF personnel moving to Fairview Rise will predominantly come from the on-base housing of the Puckapunyal Military Area, and would be accustomed to living in a “close-knit” community. The largest contingent, moving to Fairview Rise in 2008, will be personnel of the 9 Force Support Battalion (9FSB). Members of 9FSB can be away from home for 10 months a year on training exercises, hence appreciate a support network provided by living in a neighbourhood with fellow Defence families. Fairview Rise provides an opportunity to live amongst other Defence families, and also be part of a greater community of Ipswich.¹³

Site Services

- 3.15 DHA states in its main submission that infrastructure works involving roads, water, sewerage and stormwater will be undertaken to current ICC standards.¹⁴ The Committee sought confirmation that adequate stormwater system, gas reticulation and telecommunications would be provided.
- 3.16 DHA confirmed that stormwater quality will be maintained using natural, water sensitive urban design methods such as though the use of swales. DHA continued that the appropriate gas reticulation would also be provided, as advised by the local gas provider, Origin Energy.¹⁵
- 3.17 The provision of telecommunications services was also confirmed by DHA, however the Committee further questioned on the provision of broadband internet facilitation. The requirement for broadband capabilities is made more important considering the housing development would have a high number of Defence families looking to maintain contact

11 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 2.4

12 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 7

13 *ibid*, page 8

14 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 3.3

15 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, pages 9-10

with service people who may be away from home. At the public hearing, DHA were unable to assure the Committee that broadband internet connectivity would be provided to Fairview Rise.¹⁶

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Defence Housing Authority advise the Committee on the provision of broadband internet connectivity within the Fairview Rise estate.

Public Transport

3.18 DHA states in its main submission that majority of residents are within 600 metres of the nearest bus stop. An extended bus service could be introduced to the site and bring the majority of residents to within 400 metres of the nearest bus stop.¹⁷ The Committee sought an update on the status of greater access to public transport.

3.19 DHA responded that it is still in discussion with the ICC regarding the extension of bus route to service the site. DHA also confirms that the main arteries are sufficient to accommodate a bus route.¹⁸

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Defence Housing Authority advise the Committee on the provision of public transport, specifically an extended bus route, through the site of the proposed works.

16 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, pages 10, 13

17 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 3.4

18 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 12

Environmental Considerations

Sustainability

3.20 An indicative house landscaping plan, included in DHA's main submission, provides a general layout plan for a house.¹⁹ The Committee raised the question of sustainability, specifically the orientation of houses within the subdivision.

3.21 A town planner from Deicke Richards, consultant for DHA, advised the Committee that,

The lots were designed to take into consideration a number of urban design principles...it is the orientation of the house rather than the lot that is going to drive...sustainability solutions.²⁰

DHA added that its development control plan mechanism addresses sustainability principles, such as best orientation on an individual lot. Builders will determine from these guidelines how best to make use of the individual lot.

3.22 DHA continued later at the hearing that it is required to provide houses that have a four-star energy rating.²¹

Open Area

3.23 Site plans included in DHA's main submission show an area of open space described as a natural vegetated reserve retained for environmental, open space and stormwater management purposes.²² DHA continues that the open space will be remediated, and on completion be returned to its semi-natural state.²³ The Committee sought more information regarding the open space allocation within the estate.

3.24 DHA responded the open area at the south-western end of the estate constituted approximately two hectares, or 10 per cent, of the 19.64 hectares of the total area. The open space has a drainage and stormwater control use rather than a park, and will retain some of the vegetation on-site. The allocation of approximately 10 per cent of the development as

19 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, Item 5

20 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 14

21 *ibid*, page 15

22 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, Items 2-4

23 *ibid*, paragraph 8.8

open area is in accordance with Ipswich City Council (ICC) requirements.²⁴

- 3.25 Furthermore, the drainage reserve is unsuitable for construction of housing due to the steep slopes and the requirement to keep the waterway open. DHA admits that whilst money is allocated to the drainage reserve in bringing it back to a semi-natural state, DHA are confident that it will receive,

...tremendous return for the amount of money we [DHA] are going to invest in the area in terms of the amenity that we [DHA] are going to see coming to the houses.²⁵

Park Area

- 3.26 The Committee acknowledged that approximately two hectares of the development area would be retained as open area, and while it provides environmental benefit to the site, it would not be a park. Site plans in DHA's main submission show an area at the northern end of the site at the end of the existing Lakewood Court that is to be landscaped to complete a park constructed under previous joint venture arrangements.²⁶ Given that DHA anticipate many families to move into the development, the Committee asked for more information on the park proposed for completion.

- 3.27 DHA confirmed that the park,

...is an existing facility which is primarily a bushland type park with an area for barbecues. It has a covered entertainment area. In this project we are completing that part of the park, which was left from the previous development.²⁷

- 3.28 DHA added that there are issues of ongoing maintenance and public liability that local councils take into account when considering the allocation of parks in developments, along with providing amenity and benefit for the community. DHA believe the proposal for open area and park area is an option that satisfies both community and ICC requirements.²⁸

24 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 5

25 *ibid*, page 6

26 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 8.8

27 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 6

28 *ibid*

Clearing of Land

- 3.29 During the site inspection the Committee noted the type of vegetation currently on-site, and asked DHA how it planned to clear the site in preparation for housing construction.
- 3.30 DHA assured the Committee that it has worked closely with its environmental consultant, Chenoweth, to ensure DHA was making best use of the site.
- 3.31 With regard to the clearing of the site, DHA's development application includes details on the clearance process which is ultimately approved by the ICC. DHA proposed a staged clearance process to remove vegetation in an effort to manage any erosion issues. Contractors will also have to comply with this process and will be monitored by both DHA and the ICC.²⁹

Flooding

- 3.32 Whilst DHA assured the Committee that an adequate stormwater system will be provided, the Committee sought more information on the likelihood of flooding at the site. DHA explained to the Committee that it did not have accurate data on the flooding frequency, and based on advice from the ICC flooding related issues were only an "occasional" problem.³⁰

Consultation

- 3.33 DHA submits that as part of its consultation process, it issued approximately 600 letters in January 2006 to residents of the area advising of the proposed development. A public information session was also held in March 2006.³¹ The Committee requested more information regarding the public response.
- 3.34 DHA assured the Committee that the vast majority of responses it had received with regard to the Fairview Rise development had been positive. Some concerns raised have been in relation to vegetation and stormwater and were addressed at the time.³²

29 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 9

30 *ibid*, page 11

31 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, paragraph 18.2

32 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 10

Traffic Considerations

Sound Attenuation

3.35 As part of the site inspection, the Committee travelled along the Cunningham Highway which forms part of the southern boundary of Fairview Rise. Given the highway's close proximity to the site, the Committee enquired as to how DHA is addressing the issue of sound.

3.36 DHA informed the Committee that it proposes

...an earth mound on the southern boundary, a timber sound fence, and a top earth mound. The total height of the earthen fence will be 4.5 to five metres and the actual fence height will be 1.5 to two metres.³³

Sound attenuation measures will be approved by the Department of Main Roads for Queensland and the ICC.

Unformed Whitehill Road

3.37 Site Plans included attached to DHA's main submission show the unformed Whitehill Road that runs along the western boundary of the site.³⁴ The Committee asked DHA to provide more information on the status of Whitehill Road and whether there were any plans for the road in the future.

3.38 DHA responded that Whitehill Road is currently in its natural state and on a steep embankment. The land would require a lot of work to form a road. Whitehill Road is under the control of the Department of Main Roads, and while it is reserved for future road construction it

...will remain unformed until the Department of Main Roads decide they want to do something with it.³⁵

33 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 13

34 Appendix C, Submission No. 1, Items 2-4

35 Appendix D, Official Transcript of Evidence, page 13

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the proposed construction of housing for Defence at Fairview Rise, Ipswich, Queensland, proceed at the estimated cost of \$50.7 million.

Hon Judi Moylan MP

Chair

14 June 2006