

1971

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

REPORT

relating to the proposed construction of

STAGE 2 DEVELOPMENT WORKS

at

H.M.A.S. Nirimba, Quakers Hill, N.S.W.

(EIGHTEENTH REPORT OF 1971)

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
CANBERRA: 1971

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Paragraph</u>
The Reference	1
The Committee's Investigation	3
H.M.A.S. Nirimba	
Location	4
Previous Reference	6
Functions	8
Existing Facilities	12
Complement	14
Need for the Proposed Facilities	15
The Proposed Work	17
Instructional Complex	18
Senior and Junior Sailors' Galley and Messes	22
Senior Sailors' Sleeping Blocks	23
Junior Sailors' Sleeping Block	24
Apprentices' Galley, Mess and Recreation Centre	25
Apprentices' Sleeping Blocks	26
Civilian Staff Amenities Building	27
Gymnasium and Squash Court	28
Swimming Pool	29
Construction Proposals	
Siting	30
Structural	31
Materials and Finishes	32
Engineering Services	34
Fire Protection	39
Committee's Conclusion	40

	<u>Paragraph</u>
Estimate of Cost	41
Programme	42
Swimming Pool	43
Floor Coverings	47
Recommendations and Conclusions	51

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

STAGE 2 DEVELOPMENT WORKS -
H.M.A.S. NIRIMBA
QUAKERS HILL, N.S.W.

R E P O R T

By resolution on 14 October 1971, the Senate referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report to the Parliament the proposal for construction of the stage 2 development works at H.M.A.S. Nirimba, Quakers Hill, N.S.W.

The Committee have the honour to report as follows:

THE REFERENCE

1. The proposal referred to the Committee is the second stage of a programme for the rebuilding of H.M.A.S. Nirimba in permanent construction. It includes

- an instructional complex;
- a galley, and messes for senior and junior sailors;
- two senior sailors' sleeping blocks;
- a junior sailors' sleeping block;
- an apprentices' galley, mess and recreation centre;
- two apprentices' sleeping blocks;
- a civilian staff amenities building;
- a gymnasium and squash court; and
- a swimming pool.

2. The work is estimated to cost \$6.4 million.

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

3. The Committee received written submissions and drawings from the Departments of the Navy and Works and took evidence from their representatives at a public hearing in Canberra. We inspected the existing facilities at H.M.A.S. Nirimba and the sites for the proposed buildings.

H.M.A.S. NIRIMBA

4. Location H.M.A.S. Nirimba occupies an area of 350 acres at Quakers Hill some 25 miles west of Sydney, between Parramatta and Windsor. The land is part of a larger area of 900 acres originally hired during World War II and subsequently acquired by the Commonwealth in 1951. The area was first used for the construction of Schofields airfield, which comprised runways, hardstandings, hangars and ancillary buildings and services.
5. Schofields was later transferred to Navy to supplement Fleet Air Arm facilities at H.M.A.S. Albatross, Nowra. It was subsequently converted to an apprentices' training school (commissioned as H.M.A.S. Nirimba) in 1956, with an initial entry of 50 naval artificer apprentices. Of the original 900 acres, the Department of Civil Aviation occupies 250 acres on a permissive occupancy basis and about 300 acres have been sold.
6. Previous Reference The Committee reported to the House of Representatives on 12 October 1966 concerning the first stage of a programme for the rebuilding of H.M.A.S. Nirimba in permanent construction.

That work included four three-storey sleeping blocks for apprentices, a marine engineering demonstration building and a wardroom.

7. The rebuilding programme is planned to replace in three stages buildings which no longer provide an appropriate standard of accommodation. The work in this second stage will replace the balance of living accommodation and some training facilities. That proposed for stage 3 will replace administrative and stores buildings, medical and dental facilities and include further instructional buildings, workshops, a sports pavilion and an assembly hall, thus completing the known requirements for the establishment.

8. Functions The prime function of Nirimba is the training of naval artificer apprentices who provide the main source of highly skilled technicians required to maintain the Fleet's propulsion machinery, weapons and communications systems, aircraft, and carry out general ship repair work. Nirimba also trains mechanics, senior shipwrights, high pressure welders, naval engineering cadets during university vacations and conducts advanced soldering courses.

9. Apprentices on entry are in the 15 to 17 years age group and undergo a 3½ year course followed by further specialised training at other naval establishments or at sea. They complete, in all, five years training which is recognised by the New South Wales Apprenticeship Commission.

10. Mechanics are selected for two years training at Nirimba from leading seaman and petty officer rank in the semi-skilled categories of the marine and air engineering branches. They are then employed as tradesmen in these branches and on completion of naval service, their qualifications are accepted as tradesman's status in industry.

11. In addition to R.A.N. personnel, mechanics and apprentices from the Royal Malaysian Navy and apprentices from Papua/New Guinea are also trained.

12. Existing Facilities The four apprentices' sleeping blocks and the wardroom included in stage 1 of the rebuilding programme have been completed and occupied and the marine engineering demonstration building is under construction.

13. Other facilities include four Bellman hangars used as training workshops, a steel framed hangar erected in 1954 and now used for weapons electrical training and a mixture of wooden and transportable buildings built in recent years for classrooms. The numerous remaining buildings which comprise the balance of living accommodation, messes, ablution and toilet facilities, miscellaneous classrooms and workshops are single-storey timber framed hutments erected during World War II. These latter buildings generally fall well short of a minimum accommodation standard.

14. Complement The ship's company at H.M.A.S. Nirimba comprises 59 officers, 79 senior sailors and 150 junior sailors. In addition, there are about 160 civilian staff, 65 senior sailors under training and 600 apprentices, totalling about 1,100 persons. By 1974, this figure is expected to increase to 1,264.

NEED FOR THE PROPOSED FACILITIES

15. Generally, the buildings to be replaced by the work now proposed are timber framed structures clad with asbestos cement or black iron and were designed during World War II for a short life only. In each case, they are obsolete, no longer economic to maintain, do not provide reasonable accommodation and can only be described as substandard.

They certainly do not comply with "Services Scales and Standards of Accommodation". In addition, there is no gymnasium, squash court and swimming pool and these facilities are required to bring H.M.A.S. Nirimba into line with "Services Scales and Standards of Accommodation".

16. The Committee concluded therefore that there is a need for the work in this reference.

THE PROPOSED WORK

17. The buildings proposed to be constructed are described below. In each case, the accommodation facilities comply with "Services Scales and Standards of Accommodation" at a level appropriate to the complement of H.M.A.S. Nirimba, except that the civilian staff amenities building has been designed in accordance with the N.S.W. Factories and Shops Act.

18. Instructional Complex This complex will extend over a site area of some 350 ft by 250 ft and will provide facilities for academic, weapons electrical and technical training. In addition, it will contain two lecture theatres/cinemas, a library and offices for chaplains, psychologists and administrative officers. Generally, the building consists of a two-storey central spine housing administrative and office facilities with four wings for the library, teaching and lecture facilities and planned so as to group associated training in self-contained sections.

19. The academic wing will be three storeys and contain laboratories, classrooms and toilets. The physics and chemistry laboratories will be 45 ft by 27 ft and classrooms will be 30 ft by 24 ft or 30 ft by 27 ft.

20. The three-storey weapons electrical training wing will house a plant and boiler room, electrical laboratories, laboratory classrooms 35 ft by 24 ft and classrooms 30 ft by 24 ft.

21. The technical training wing will be two storeys and will accommodate a plant room, a display room and classrooms 30 ft by 21 ft.

22. Senior and Junior Sailors' Galley and Messes The messes will have a central galley initially equipped to cater for up to 400 and serving separate dining rooms for 120 junior sailors, 104 petty officers and 35 chief petty officers. Separate recreational facilities for each rank will be provided, scaled to these numbers. Apart from the dining rooms, they include in each case a bar, a games room and male and female toilets. Separate entrances will be provided and each mess area will have a partly enclosed landscaped courtyard. The galley and the messes will be connected to sleeping blocks by covered ways.

23. Senior Sailors' Sleeping Blocks Two buildings, one partly three-storey and the other two-storey will provide sleeping accommodation in single cabins for 126 senior sailors together with toilets, laundry facilities and box rooms. Study rooms for sailors under training, and change rooms for those who live out will also be included.

24. Junior Sailors' Sleeping Block This two-storey building will provide sleeping accommodation for 112 junior sailors in four berth cabins. Laundry and ironing facilities and a change room for those who live out will be located on the ground floor whilst toilets and box rooms will be on both floors.

25. Apprentices' Galley, Mess and Recreation Centre This single storey complex will consist of a galley equipped to cater for 800, a dining room to seat 720 and separate wet and dry canteen areas. It will also include a games room, a visitors' room, a T.V. room, cloak cupboards, male and female toilets and a partly covered courtyard area.

26. Apprentices' Sleeping Blocks These two buildings will be of three storeys and will each house 120 apprentices in four berth cabins. Study rooms, laundry and toilet facilities will be included. Essentially these buildings will be the same as those erected under the stage 1 rebuilding programme.
27. Civilian Staff Amenities Building This two-storey building will provide dining, ablution and changing facilities for some 160 civilian staff. The ground floor will house locker rooms, toilets and the senior staff dining room, whilst the first floor will contain the junior staff dining area, a dining area for female staff, a rest room and locker areas.
28. Gymnasium and Squash Court This single-storey building will have a gymnasium 61 ft by 46 ft and a squash court with a gallery, and toilet and changing facilities. The latter facilities will be arranged so that joint use will be possible with the proposed adjacent swimming pool.
29. Swimming Pool The proposal submitted to the Committee also included a 6-lane 33½ metre swimming pool built of reinforced concrete.

CONSTRUCTION PROPOSALS

30. Siting The Committee noted that the sites proposed for the individual components of the reference are consistent with the master plan agreed jointly by the Departments of the Navy and Works. They will not prejudice other redevelopment proposals and are generally convenient to working and recreation areas. The Committee consider the sites selected for the individual buildings to be suitable.

31. Structural Site investigations have revealed clay overlaying shale occurring between 5 ft and 23 ft below the surface. The accommodation buildings will therefore have deep strip footings and other buildings will be supported on beams and piers standing on the shale. All buildings will have concrete floors and where possible load bearing brick walls. Large spans in messes and galleys will be constructed with steel framing. The school complex will have concrete floors, reinforced concrete framing and a metal deck roof.

32. Materials and Finishes External walls at ground level will be face brick selected to match existing buildings, whilst those of upper floors will be of an off-white concrete textured finish. Windows and door frames will be anodised aluminium.

33. Internally, finishes will be selected to give durability and low maintenance costs and will generally be similar to those in buildings recently constructed. Typical of these are face brickwork in corridors, stair halls and mess buildings, tiled walls and floors to toilets and ablution areas and floors covered with either vinyl, linoleum or carpet in selected areas. Built-in beds and wardrobes will be provided in the cabins.

34. Engineering Services Mechanical services will include a heating and ventilating ducted system for the instructional complex, heating of dining and recreational areas, strip heaters in sleeping quarters, hot water services, food services equipment, cool room plant, refrigerated drinking water fountains and washing machines. Gas will be reticulated by underground mains.

35. Two electricity substations will be constructed and an existing substation will be uprated. They will supply individual buildings by underground cable. Lighting will be mainly fluorescent. The existing public address system will be extended and provision will be made for the future installation of closed circuit T.V. in the instructional complex. Road and area lighting will be provided.

36. Water, sewerage and stormwater drainage will be connected to the existing systems. The water reticulation system will, however, be augmented by an elevated tank and a ground level storage with booster pumps.

37. The road system is to be modified and extended and car parks will be constructed to serve the new buildings. Roads will be bituminous surfaced and concrete kerbs and gutters will discharge to the underground stormwater system.

38. Landscaping will include lawns, shrubs and tree planting integrated with paths and terraces. As many of the existing trees as possible will be preserved.

39. Fire Protection All buildings will be fitted with thermal fire detectors, and hose reels, fire hydrants and extinguishers will be provided as appropriate.

40. Committee's Conclusion Subject to the recommendations which follow, the Committee recommend the construction of the work in this reference.

ESTIMATE OF COST

41. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was \$6.4 million made up as follows:

	\$
Building work	5,250,000
Engineering services	1,150,000
	<u>6,400,000</u>

PROGRAMME

42. As many of the existing buildings cannot be removed until the facilities they provide have been constructed elsewhere, it is proposed to spread the preparation of contract documents and invitation of tenders over some 3 years from the time an approval to proceed is given. For the same reasons, the construction of buildings will be spread over 4 to 5 years after the first contract is let.

SWIMMING POOL

43. The proposals submitted to the Committee included a 6-lane 33½ metre swimming pool as allowed in Services Scales and Standards for an establishment of between 1,000 and 2,000 persons in a temperate climate. A standard pool for an establishment of over 2,000 persons is 9 lanes wide and 50 metres long. The cost of the standard 33½ metre pool for H.M.A.S. Nirimba is estimated to cost \$155,000.

44. Besides being required for recreational purposes, a swimming pool at H.M.A.S. Nirimba is required to instruct trainees, who are not competent, how to swim and for testing them in the basic survival skills. Because of this training requirement and as there is a high proportion of young trainees at the establishment, the Committee examined closely the suitability of a 33½ metre pool in the particular circumstances.

45. The result of the Committee's consideration of the matter is reflected in the following extract from the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December.

" It was moved Senator Cant, seconded Mr. James

That the Committee recommend that in lieu of a 6-lane 33½ metre swimming pool as proposed, a 9-lane 50 metre pool be provided.

Debate ensued during which it was noted that the extra cost involved is estimated to be \$95,000.

An amendment was moved by Mr. Corbett, seconded Mr. Johnson

That the Committee recommend that in lieu of a 6-lane 33½ metre pool, a 6-lane 50 metre pool be provided, at an extra cost of \$35,000.

Debate ensued.

The Committee divided on the amendment.

<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Noes</u>
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Corbett	Mr. Fulton
Mr. James	Mr. Whittorn
Senator Cant	Senator Webster
Senator Jessop	

and so it was resolved in the affirmative.

The motion as amended was put.

The Committee divided.

<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Noes</u>
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Corbett	Mr. Fulton
Mr. James	Mr. Whittorn
Senator Cant	Senator Webster
Senator Jessop	

and so it was resolved in the affirmative. "

46. The Committee therefore recommend that a 6-lane 50 metre pool be provided, noting that an extra cost of \$35,000 is involved.

FLOOR COVERINGS

47. In a report presented to Parliament on 25 September 1970 on domestic accommodation for petty officers and chief petty officers at H.M.A.S. Cerberus, the Committee concluded " ... that if it is economically feasible, carpet should be used as a floor covering in the sleeping blocks for senior sailors at H.M.A.S. Cerberus".

48. We noted in a report presented on 7 September 1971 on rebuilding proposals at H.M.A.S. Albatross that although a decision had been taken to change the standards to permit the use of carpet in corridors, a decision had not been made about its use on the floors of cabins in sleeping blocks. The Committee urged " ... that steps be taken to expedite a decision on this matter".

49. During the present enquiry, we found that consideration of the outstanding part of the Committee's original recommendation had still not been finalised. From our viewpoint, it seems that an unreasonable time is being taken to consider what we believe to be a straightforward matter on which a good deal of background information is already available.

50. We again urge the Government to accelerate its consideration of this matter, at the same time pointing out that we believe that if it is economically feasible, carpet should be used as a floor covering in cabins in the sleeping accommodation at H.M.A.S. Nirimba.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

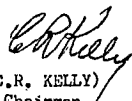
51. The summary of recommendations and conclusions of the Committee is set out below. Alongside each is shown the paragraph in the report to which it refers.

Paragraph

1. THERE IS A NEED FOR THE WORK IN THIS REFERENCE.

Paragraph

- | | | |
|----|--|----|
| 2. | THE SITES SELECTED FOR THE INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS ARE SUITABLE. | 30 |
| 3. | SUBJECT TO RECOMMENDATION NO. 5, THE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORK IN THIS REFERENCE. | 40 |
| 4. | THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE WORK WHEN REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE WAS \$6,400,000. | 41 |
| 5. | IN LIEU OF A 6-LANE 33½ METRE SWIMMING POOL, A 6-LANE 50 METRE POOL SHOULD BE PROVIDED, AT AN ADDITIONAL COST OF \$35,000. | 46 |
| 6. | THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACCELERATE CONSIDERATION OF THE USE OF CARPETS ON THE FLOORS OF CABINS IN SLEEPING BLOCKS. | 50 |
| 7. | IF IT IS ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE, CARPET SHOULD BE USED AS A FLOOR COVERING IN CABINS IN THE SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION AT H.M.A.S. NIRIMBA. | 50 |


 (C.R. KELLY)
Chairman

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,
 Parliament House,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

7 December 1971.