

DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE
PAPER NO. 4212
DATE 17 AUG 1972
PRESENTED
<i>J.R. Odgers</i>
Clerk of the Senate

1972

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

REPORT

relating to the proposed construction of a

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARMY SERVICE CORPS CENTRE

at

Puckapunyal, Victoria

(FOURTEENTH REPORT OF 1972)

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARMY SERVICE CORPS CENTRE
PUCKAPUNYAL, VICTORIA

R E P O R T

On 30 June 1972 His Excellency the Administrator in Council referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report to the Parliament the proposal for construction of a Royal Australian Army Service Corps Centre at Puckapunyal, Victoria.

The Committee have the honour to report as follows:

THE REFERENCE

1. The proposal referred to the Committee is for the construction of permanent accommodation and facilities for the Royal Australian Army Service Corps (R.A.A.S.C.) at Puckapunyal. It comprises:

- an instructional block;
- administrative and technical accommodation for 109 Supply Depot Platoon, 8 Supply Platoon, 55 Field Bakery Platoon, 26 Company R.A.A.S.C., the Air Despatch Wing and 9 Petroleum Platoon;
- an accommodation block for 100 student officers and/or senior N.C.O.s;
- extensions to messes and sleeping quarters;
- extensions and alterations to administrative buildings, gymnasium and instructional buildings;
- external engineering services and recreational facilities.

2. The work is estimated to cost \$8.4M.

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

3. The Committee received written submissions and drawings from the Departments of the Army and Works and took evidence from their representatives and those of the Seymour Shire Council at a public hearing at Puckapunyal. A written submission was also received from a private person. We inspected the existing facilities at the Puckapunyal military area and the sites for the proposed buildings.

4. The proceedings of the Committee's hearing are being published in printed form as Minutes of Evidence.

THE PUCKAPUNYAL MILITARY AREA

5. The Puckapunyal military area occupies some 43,000 acres of Commonwealth land near Seymour 60 miles north of Melbourne. It is the home of the R.A.A.S.C. Centre and also that of Headquarters Puckapunyal area, 1 Armoured Regiment and its affiliated Light Aid Detachment, 21 Construction Squadron, Puckapunyal Area Workshop, 3 Camp Hospital, a proof and experimental establishment, the Armoured Centre and 2 Recruit Training Battalion. In addition Puckapunyal has a camp site for C.M.F. and school cadet units.

6. Background of the proposal In 1964 the Government approved construction of accommodation for a new infantry battalion at Puckapunyal following the introduction of National Service. These facilities were planned as the first stage in rehousing a major training establishment. Before construction was completed, the battalion which had been accommodated in temporary hutments, was posted to South Vietnam.

7. The facilities were subsequently occupied by some elements of the R.A.A.S.C. Centre previously housed inadequately at Puckapunyal and at Bonegilla which is 140 miles away. The remaining elements continued to occupy substandard quarters at these two places

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and are still there. It was then decided that the facilities should be fully developed as the permanent home of the R.A.A.S.C. complex. This work included the facilities needed to provide the Centre with an appropriate form of accommodation of a proper standard.

8. In 1972 the Government endorsed a conclusion of the Army Review Committee 1970 that the principle logistic tasks be re-allocated and carried out by three functional corps concerned with transport, supply and repair. The Committee were told that although changes in corps responsibilities may occur, the type of training performed in the R.A.A.S.C. Centre will continue to be necessary in the future and should be undertaken at Puckapunyal.

ROLE AND ORGANISATION OF R.A.A.S.C. UNITS

9. The R.A.A.S.C. Centre has a staff of approximately 320 and a student population of some 650. It is responsible for:

- basic and advanced training of supply and transport personnel, advanced training of transport and clerical personnel of other corps and the supply and transport training of overseas students;
- fostering the Australian Army Catering Corps School as wing of the Centre; and
- the local administration of other R.A.A.S.C. units.

10. To perform this role the Centre comprises a headquarters, an operations wing, a regimental wing, an air despatch wing, a clerical wing, a transport wing and a catering wing.

11. 26 Company R.A.A.S.C. This company comprises some 250 all ranks and provides the various types of road transport needed in the logistic support war area. During peacetime, when not engaged in exercises, the unit supplements local area transport.

12. 26 Company R.A.A.S.C. Workshop This field force unit of 29 all ranks undertakes vehicle repair and maintenance work.

13. 9 Petroleum Platoon This field force unit numbering 60, stores and distributes bulk petroleum products. In peacetime, it

supports combat units and the R.A.A.F. during field exercises and trains basic petroleum operators.

14. 8 Supply Platoon 8 Supply Platoon, comprising 34 all ranks is responsible for rations, supplies, packaged petroleum and petroleum products in war areas and trains for this role by assisting 109 Supply Depot.

15. 55 Field Bakery Platoon This is a field force unit of 21 all ranks. When not on exercises it operates a bakery for the Puckapunyal military area.

16. 109 Supply Depot Platoon The platoon of 30 all ranks is an Australian support area unit responsible for receiving, holding and issuing rations, supplies and petroleum products for Regular Army, C.M.F. and cadet units in the Puckapunyal area. It also holds part of the Southern Command reserve bulk stocks.

17. 398 Transport Platoon This unit of 45 all ranks is also an Australian support area force and provides transport for non field force units in the Puckapunyal area. It operates a variety of vehicles ranging from cars to semi trailers and buses.

THE NEED

18. R.A.A.S.C. units are currently split between Puckapunyal and Bonegilla, some 140 miles apart. Within the Puckapunyal area itself facilities are also widely dispersed.

19. Accommodation varies from recent permanent construction to that of World War II timber and galvanised iron clad huts. The latter are obsolete, have become uneconomic to maintain, are not suitable for present needs and only provide a low standard of accommodation and amenity.

20. The comparatively new permanent buildings occupied by the R.A.A.S.C. Centre accommodate only part of the personnel and

facilities involved and expansion of the limited administrative, training and living accommodation is required to replace and supplement substandard and inadequate accommodation.

21. Lecture rooms are too small and are therefore not conducive to efficient training. In some cases proper training facilities do not exist. The catering wing of the school, split between Puckapunyal and Bonegilla, because of the shortage of facilities at Puckapunyal, is forced to use extremely crowded classrooms which are unhygienic and generally unsuitable for such use.

22. 109 Supply Depot platoon has a variety of storage facilities of temporary construction 8,500 square feet of which is covered accommodation. Supplies cannot be palletised as loading ramps and floors are structurally unsound for fork lift operations, and due to lack of space Southern Command reserve supplies have to be stored in leased accommodation in Melbourne.

23. The 55 Field Bakery Platoon occupies widely dispersed accommodation which is now quite inadequate in size and which contains obsolescent equipment. These facilities clearly warrant replacement.

24. The administrative and training accommodation of 9 Petroleum Platoon, 8 Supply Platoon, 26 Transport Company and its associated workshop and, 398 Transport Platoon are all housed in substandard accommodation which was only temporary when built 30 years ago. Vehicles of 26 Transport Company are spread between separate transport compounds creating additional security problems.

25. Committee's Conclusion After an inspection of the present facilities the Committee found that there is clearly a need for the work in this reference.

THE BUILDING PROPOSALS

26. The Committee noted that the "Services Scales and Standards of Accommodation" have been followed where applicable.

27. Instructional Block This 3 storey building will contain classrooms, lecture theatres, syndicate rooms, instructional kitchens, instructional support facilities, offices and administrative areas for R.A.A.S.C. Centre staff. The block will have outdoor discussion areas and a resource centre which will form the library and teaching materials facility for all instructional units of the R.A.A.S.C. complex.

28. Driver training demonstration rooms, which are basically workshops set up for student participation, will be provided with a drive-through facility to permit easy access to the training road system.

29. 109 Supply Depot, 8 Supply Platoon and 55 Field Bakery
The buildings proposed for these units are an administrative block 160 feet by 40 feet containing offices, stores, lockers and change rooms, an industrial bulk store 160 feet square including a butchers shop and cool room and a bakery 104 feet by 50 feet. In addition, a flammable goods store 120 feet by 40 feet, a petrol point with associated services, a gate control and weighbridge, and a transport compound containing an administrative office, covered parking for 16 vehicles, open parking for 24 vehicles, and a store are also planned.

30. 26 Company R.A.A.S.C. Compound This compound and the others listed below will be located west of Malaya Road and will contain a two storey office block, a single storey workshop 200 feet by 80 feet for vehicle maintenance and war stores, covered parking for 64 vehicles, open parking for 73 vehicles and 22 tank transporters, and a single storey picquet and "Q" store 80 feet by 30 feet.

31. Driver Training Compound Planned for this area are a services building and transport office 150 feet by 30 feet housing four servicing bays, toilets, stores, lockers and change rooms. A driver training circuit, covered parking for 102 vehicles and a car wash will also be constructed.

32. Air Despatch Compound An air despatch training building 130 feet by 120 feet will be constructed in this area. One section of the building will be 60 feet high for drying cargo parachutes. Other facilities will include mock-up aircraft fuselages for training in packing major equipment for air drops.

33. 9 Petroleum Platoon Compound An administrative building 148 feet by 40 feet and a small vehicle shelter and workshop will be provided in this compound.

34. Magazine A four bay magazine 40 feet by 15 feet will be constructed adjacent to existing facilities on the range access road.

35. Officers and Senior N.C.O.'s sleeping block This three storey building will house 100 officers and/or senior N.C.O.s in rooms grouped around a central services core containing toilets and ablutions, laundries, drying rooms and box rooms. It will be centrally placed between the officers' and senior N.C.O.s' messes.

36. Rank and File accommodation block The three storey building proposed is similar to the standard quarters being constructed elsewhere at Services establishments and will provide accommodation for 144 soldiers.

37. Extensions and alterations to existing buildings Extensions and alterations are also proposed for several permanent buildings including kitchens, messes, instructional and office buildings and the gymnasium.

38. Recreation facilities Additional recreation facilities to be provided include two ovals, a sports pavilion with changing facilities and two tennis courts.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED BUILDINGS

39. Siting A master plan for the Puckapunyal military area has been agreed jointly by the Departments of the Army and Works.

40. The Committee noted that the siting of the individual buildings and facilities in this reference accord with the master plan and are compatible with likely future development. They adjoin buildings with similar functions and are convenient to working and recreation areas. The Committee consider that the sites selected are suitable.

41. Construction Generally accommodation and administrative buildings will be of load bearing brick construction with concrete floors and will match existing buildings. Stores and similar buildings will be steel framed with metal cladding above brick dado walls and have metal roofs. Floors will be concrete.

42. The instructional block will be of concrete construction with off-form concrete walls and a metal deck roof. Corridors will be glazed but classrooms will generally be windowless.

43. Finishes and fittings Internal finishes will be durable and have low maintenance costs. Typically they will comprise face bricks in corridors, stair wells and entrance foyers and ceramic tiled walls and floors in toilets, ablution areas and kitchens. The floors of offices and like areas will be covered with linoleum or vinyl, and approval is being sought to use carpet in the officers' and senior N.C.O.s' sleeping block, classrooms and other similar areas in the instructional building.

44. Engineering services Mechanical services will include ventilation and heating systems, domestic hot water supply, food services, laundry and cool room equipment, compressed air, a weighbridge and vehicle servicing equipment.

45. Additional electrical services will include increased transformer capacity for the two existing substations, construction of a new substation adjacent to the air despatch wing, street and security lighting, general purpose power outlets, provision for future closed circuit T.V. in the instructional building and a small

goods hoist for the demonstration kitchens.

46. An automatic fire detection system will be installed and hose reels, fire hydrants and portable fire extinguishers will be located at appropriate points. The 109 Supply Depot bulk store and the Air Despatch building will be fitted with automatic sprinkler systems.

47. Water and sewerage services will be extended from the existing systems and the sewerage treatment plant will be increased to cater for the additional load.

48. Road connections to the new buildings, kerbs, gutters, concrete footpaths and drainage systems will be provided as necessary. Simulated hazards will be built into the driver training circuit.

49. Areas in the vicinity of the new buildings will be grassed and landscaped.

50. Committee's Conclusion The Committee recommend the construction of the work in this reference.

ESTIMATE OF COST

51. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was \$8.4M made up as follows:

	\$
Building work	4,469,000
Electrical services	523,000
Mechanical services	723,000
Civil works	2,685,000
	<hr/>
	8,400,000

PROGRAMME

52. Documentation and calling of tenders is expected to take eight months after an approval to proceed is given. The buildings will be programmed for construction progressively commencing with the

instructional block, sleeping accommodation and extensions to messes which will be completed 18 months after a contract is let.

REPRESENTATIONS BY SEYMOUR SHIRE COUNCIL

53. Representations by the Seymour Shire Council were made to the Committee concerning the Seymour/Tooborac and the Ford roads leading from the Hume Highway to the Puckapunyal area.

54. The Council pointed to the unsafe nature of sections of these roads caused principally by the heavy traffic to which they are subjected. A large portion of this traffic is generated by the Puckapunyal military area and generally the Council does not receive any special funds for road maintenance and new works beyond that which might be expected for normal country roads.

55. The Committee noted the undertaking by the Department of the Army that it would support an application by the Council for a special allocation of Commonwealth money for major improvement works on roads serving the military area.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

56. 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.

	<u>Paragraph</u>
1. THERE IS A NEED FOR THE WORK IN THIS REFERENCE.	25
2. THE SITES SELECTED FOR INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS ARE SUITABLE.	40
3. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORK IN THIS REFERENCE.	50

Paragraph

4. THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE WORK
WHEN REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE
WAS \$8.4 MILLION.

51



C. R. Kelly
Chairman

Parliamentary Standing Committee
on Public Works,
Parliament House,
Canberra.

26 July 1972