

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

REPORT

relating to the proposal for the

PROVISION OF ARMY HOUSING

at

Townsville, Queensland

(Third Report of 1981)

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

1981

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

R E P O R T

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(Third Report of 1981)

MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

(Twenty-sixth Committee)

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House of Representatives

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EXTRACT FROM
THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NO. 9 DATED 26 FEBRUARY 1981

- 16 PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE - REFERENCE OF WORK - ARMY HOUSING, TOWNSVILLE, QLD: Mr. McVeigh (Minister for Housing and Construction), pursuant to notice, moved - That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report:
Provision of Army housing at Townsville, Qld.

Question - put and passed.

WITNESSES

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

PROVISION OF ARMY HOUSING
AT TOWNSVILLE, QUEENSLAND

R E P O R T

By resolution on 26 February 1981, the House of Representatives referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report, the proposal for the provision of Army housing at Townsville, Queensland.

The Committee has the honour to report as follows:

THE REFERENCE

1. The proposal referred to the Committee is for the construction of 120 houses as part of an additional 250 houses required in Townsville to cater for the increase of Army personnel in units of the 3rd Task Force. All these houses will be 3 bedroom in the Warrant Officer to Captain range (housing Group 2) with a maximum floor area of 112m². To avoid problems experienced previously with concentrations of service housing, it is proposed to disperse them throughout existing suburban areas.

2. The Limit of Cost estimate of the proposed 120 houses is \$5.35 million at February 1981 prices.

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

3. The Committee received written submissions and drawings from the Department of Defence and the Department of Housing and Construction and took evidence from their representatives at a public hearing at Townsville on 14 and 15 April 1981. Written submissions and evidence were received from the Housing Industry Association (North Queensland Division) and the Queensland Master Builders' Association (Northern Division).

4. Due to an airline industrial dispute, the hearing on 15 April was adjourned before all witnesses could be heard. At the resumed hearing in Canberra on 25 May 1981 written submissions and evidence were received from the Department of Administrative Services, James Hardie & Coy Pty Ltd, Monier Roof Tiles, the Returned Services' League and the Army Wives' Association. Written submissions were received from the following companies who were not represented at the resumed hearing: Cardiffair Townsville, Scott Brickworks and Pyneboard Pty Ltd.

5. Prior to the public hearing, the Committee inspected existing Queensland Housing Commission areas in the suburbs of Heatley and Vincent, together with sites proposed by the Department of Administrative Services and the Department of Housing and Construction for housing in Kirwan and Condon. The Committee examined one recently completed house provided by the Department of Administrative Services' acquisition method and one partially completed house built by the Department of Housing and Construction. Both of these houses formed part of the pilot study group and were located in Kirwan. Later the Vice-Chairman inspected some of the Housing Commission homes.

6. The Committee's proceedings will be printed as Minutes of Evidence.

BACKGROUND

7. The practice of providing housing for married servicemen arose out of the acute housing shortages following the Second World War. In 1956, the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement was concluded which transferred responsibility for the provision of houses for allocation to servicemen to State Governments in exchange for long-term loans from the Commonwealth covering the provision of welfare housing. All service housing provided under this Agreement was constructed to welfare standards. Since the conclusion of an agreement in 1966, Defence houses have been built to Services Scales and Standards of Accommodation. However, this Agreement did not affect the construction of the original 1000 houses in Heatley

and Vincent. In 1972, the funds provided under the Agreement were divided into two separate parts allocating monies to Defence and welfare housing respectively.

8. The report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure on Accommodation for Married Servicemen presented in May 1977, stated that the existing Defence housing stock has now achieved a fixed set of characteristics (size, location, quality etc) and that satisfying servicemen's housing needs from such stock will be fraught with difficulties and provide a potent source of complaint among service tenants. The Expenditure Committee favoured the abandonment of provision of Defence housing, recommending as a general principle that appropriations for such housing should be discontinued except for programs commenced previously, for on-base houses required because of a Defence need, and for areas where the housing market could not physically cope.

9. The Committee recommended that low-set houses should be examined because of cost savings. It also suggested that villa-style (i.e. medium density) housing should be considered for the Defence housing stock.

EXISTING HOUSING

10. With the 1964 Government decision to locate a task force base in Townsville, it became essential to provide approximately 1000 houses for married personnel at short notice. The solution was to construct this housing in two suburbs, Heatley and Vincent, during 1967. Most of this housing was constructed under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement by the Queensland Housing Commission to welfare housing standards.

11. The total Army housing stock in Townsville is 1313 and this includes 1240 houses classified as Group 1 or below. Of these, 1142 are classified as Group 1A because they are below current Scales and Standards. There are 34 houses classified Group 2, 38 classified Group 3 and 1 classified Group 4. There are an additional 315 Commonwealth houses in Townsville, but these are fully utilised by the Royal Australian Air Force.

THE NEED

12. The raising of the Task Force to Operational Deployment Force (ODF) status with 550 additional soldiers stationed at Townsville has created an urgent need for additional housing. The Army housing stock in Townsville was only sufficient to meet the needs of the Task Force prior to the Government's decision on the ODF. The housing requirement of the additional personnel has been assessed using as a basis the average number of married personnel throughout the Army (52.5%). The Department of Defence calculation was:

Previous requirement + ODF requirement =	(1314 + 288) =	1602
Less 2½%	= (1602 - 40) =	1562
Less current stock of 1313	=	249
	Say	250

In evidence, the Committee was told that this was a standard formula used throughout Australia for assessment of housing requirements by Army personnel. The discount of 2½% on total requirement makes allowance for those persons who by choice do not avail themselves of the opportunity to occupy Defence housing. The discount factor differs from that used at other Army housing areas to take account of special factors applicable to Townsville. Their requirements would be satisfied by purchasing their own house in the area or rental on the private market.

13. Attempts to satisfy the need for 250 houses above the current stock from within the Townsville real estate and building markets have proved unsuccessful. There is an insufficient number of houses available for private rental and the few houses available for sale either do not comply with Defence Force Scales and Standards or were not recommended by the Department of Housing and Construction on technical grounds. A further factor influencing the need for the 120 houses in this proposal is the requirement to have the ODF at the required state of readiness by 30 June 1981. This has resulted in the deliberate alteration of the married/single ratio and early provision of the remaining 200 houses will enable the ratio to be progressively returned to its normal level through posting of married personnel.

14. Committee's Conclusion The Committee accepts the need for an additional 250 houses in Townsville to accommodate the required increase in the Operational Deployment Force.

THE PROPOSED WORKS

15. Pilot Study In order to avoid the problems associated with the original concentration in the suburbs of Heatley and Vincent and overcome the lack of housing on the local market, it was decided that some combination of acquisition by the Department of Administrative Services and construction by the Department of Housing and Construction should be used to supply the need. As it was not possible to estimate accurately which delivery method was the most economical or expedient, the Minister for Defence approved an initial group of 40 to test the market with each of the other Departments providing 20 houses under their respective methods of delivery.

16. The industry response to this move was not as successful as had been thought, particularly in respect of the small builder end of the market. In the hope of achieving this and realising a greater variety of housing design than had been the case, the Minister for Defence agreed that the Department of Housing and Construction should call tenders for a further ten houses. When consideration was given to both methods of delivery, it was decided that there appeared to be little advantage in one method or the other and therefore the remaining two hundred houses should be provided by a mixture of these delivery methods. In consultation with the Ministers for Finance, Housing and Construction and Administrative Services, the Minister for Defence decided that 80 houses should be provided by the acquisition method and the remaining 120 by the Department of Housing and Construction through supervision of construction by private builders on Commonwealth owned land.

17. Delivery Methods The following procedures are used to satisfy housing needs for servicemen:

- purchase of existing dwellings on the private market;
- purchase of new dwellings from developers and builders in land and house package form;
- purchase of vacant sites and the Department of Housing and Construction erecting dwellings thereon;

- provision of dwellings from State Housing Authorities constructed under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (Servicemen) with the Commonwealth meeting the rental bill;
- lease of dwellings on the private market;
- subdivision of larger tracts of Commonwealth land with erection of dwellings arranged by the Department of Housing and Construction;
- provision of on-base housing through the Department of Housing and Construction.

18. Department of Administrative Services The Department of Administrative Services arranges with builders, on a competitive basis, for the construction of houses which when satisfactorily completed are purchased as complete land/house packages. This method is frequently used when there are insufficient houses on the market at any one time that meet Commonwealth standards.

19. Department of Housing and Construction Tenders are invited from the Department of Housing and Construction in various contract packages, modified as necessary, to encourage as many developers, contractors and small builders to tender on a competitive basis. The allotments are acquired by the Department of Administrative Services. Tenderers are free to submit their own designs provided they meet the Scales and Standards of Accommodation and the technical requirements of the specification.

20. Purchase of Existing Dwellings in the Private Market This method is little used in Townsville but the Committee is of the opinion that more flexibility with the application of Scales and Standards would allow greater use of this option. It is suggested that in cases where houses are not quite up to Defence Scales and Standards that some offsets in fittings etc be arranged to compensate for any deficiencies. It is further suggested that the local Services Wives' Association in each major military area be consulted and their agreement to proposals be sought prior to the purchase of existing houses which do not meet the Scales and Standards.

21. Low vs High-Set Housing During the course of both the site inspections and the hearings, the Committee was made aware of the community preference for high-set as opposed to low-set housing. Despite this, there exists, particularly in the newer brick covenant areas, a growing number of low-set houses built on the concrete slab principle. The major objection to low-set housing among service families in Townsville is the loss of the amenity of the under floor area for family living and entertaining. At present, this space is enclosed but not sealed and is provided with concrete to the outer walls. Moreover, the resulting area is not included when calculating space entitlements under the present Scales and Standards formula for tropical area housing. Loss of this under floor area would bring the laundry, which is presently located in the under floor area, into the calculation of the overall living area entitlement and could involve the Commonwealth in providing additional space in a low-set house not required in the standard high-set house design.

22. In its Report on Accommodation for Married Servicemen, the House of Representatives Expenditure Committee recommended that where provision of service housing was to be continued, the then Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development should examine the building of low-set houses by State authorities. This recommendation arose from evidence given to that Committee which claims cost savings of \$3000 to \$4000 per house could be achieved by building low-set in preference to high-set houses. During the present inquiry, the Committee found that low-set brick veneer housing in Townsville was approximately equal to or slightly above that applying to the same floor area high-set house and the cost increase was only of marginal significance.

23. Villa Housing In answer to a request for a costing of 3 bedroom villa-type medium density housing, the Department of Housing and Construction advised an approximate price,

excluding land, comparable to the upper limit of a free-standing 3 bedroom house/land package. This costing did not confirm expectations but subsequent advice from the Department of Administrative Services indicated that considerable savings could be effected in providing some 2 bedroom villa-type housing units.

24. The Committee feels that a small number of villa-type units could be economically provided within the terms of this proposal. Such housing would be available in, for example, 2 bedroom units for occupation by couples without children.

25. The Committee was informed that a villa-type housing group is being constructed by the Department of Defence in Leichhardt, N.S.W. and that a program for the conversion of 'on-base' cottage housing to medium density is under consideration for the Enoggera Military Area at Brisbane. Detailed consideration should be given to the provision of medium density housing in numbers equal to that set down for low-set housing to provide flexibility in the allocation of houses to meet family needs.

26. The House of Representatives Expenditure Committee Report on Accommodation for Married Servicemen suggested in 1977 "... Defence might be able to significantly extend its acquisition program by accepting such housing ..." In the intervening period, no general study of the use of villa-type medium density housing has taken place. The Committee recommends that such a study be undertaken, particularly in the major Defence areas to determine the viability of the concept and the level of user acceptance.

27. Committee's Conclusion Full consideration should be given to the provision of some villa type medium density housing.

28. Building Materials The majority of houses will be high-set dwellings, with concrete block enclosure to the perimeter of the paved under floor space. The upper house level will be of framed construction with exterior wall surfaces clad with painted sheeting. Roof cladding will be either sheet materials or tiles. The low-set houses will be constructed on a concrete floor slab at ground level. They will be of brick veneer, or timber-framed and clad with painted sheeting. Roofs will be clad with either tiles or sheet material.

29. James Hardie & Coy Pty Ltd, Monier Roof Tiles, Scott Brickworks and Pyneboard Pty Ltd provided evidence and made recommendations concerning their products.

30. Energy Conservation The Committee was given evidence that the houses would be supplied with hot water from solar water heating systems. Further evidence was given that natural cross-ventilation, insulating material, projecting roof overhangs and careful orientation of buildings on individual blocks would be used in combination to achieve thermal comfort and efficiency. While these measures to reduce energy dependence deserve to be commended, the Committee believes that more attention should be given to this aspect of housing in tropical areas. Additional expense that may be involved, such as providing opening rather than sliding windows, would be offset by less expense due to improved cooling by natural cross-ventilation.

31. Moreover, the evidence for use of the energy-saving systems mentioned above was not specific and left some doubts whether the completed houses would actually be as thermally comfortable as the Committee was led to believe. The Department of Housing and Construction has not investigated in depth other methods of climatic control such as the Cardiffair totally enclosed above-ceiling fan-operated air circulation system or extending the use of wall louvres to all exterior walls, thus taking advantage of prevailing winds at all times of the year. Alternative forms of passive and air circulation cooling systems are available and their inclusion in a major project of this nature would not be inconsistent with the aim of providing housing

to the best combination of Defence Force Scales and Standards and prevailing community standards in Townsville.

32. Consequently, the Committee recommends that construction methods and on-block siting should be reviewed to take greater advantage of passive cooling techniques. The economics of installing a total air circulation system for each house involving above-ceiling fans should be investigated.

33. Committee's Recommendations Defence Force Scales and Standards do not take adequate notice of the need for thermal comfort in tropical areas. The current review of Scales and Standards should provide for a separate tropical area entitlement specifying levels of thermal comfort and the most efficient passive means by which they can be achieved.

34. Scales and Standards vs Community Standards During the course of the hearings many witnesses alluded to both of these standards but little acknowledgement of the determination and implementation problems attached to each was made. Since the Defence Force Scales and Standards are set out in clear terminology, their application to the present proposal should be a matter of routine administration. However, the Scales and Standards have been under investigation for some time with a view to their revision and as yet the Committee within the Department of Defence charged with this revision has not finalised its report. Consequently, there exists a body of opinion that the current Scales and Standards are below those prevailing in the general community since their last significant revision in 1972. As part of the design brief used by both the Departments of Administrative Services and Housing and Construction is that all houses should conform to Scales and Standards, it is difficult to see that this can be achieved without running the risk of the final product being, within one or two years of completion, significantly or partially below the new Scales and Standards, thus perpetuating the current user complaints on inadequate housing being provided to service families.

35. An alternative solution favoured by the Department of Administrative Services is to construct housing which conforms to community standards. Regrettably, these were not further defined as being Australian, Queensland, Townsville, or tropical area community standards and therefore seem a vague concept calling for value judgments by persons who will not have to live and raise families in the finished product. The question even of who should be charged with the determination of community standards is a value loaded one not easily answered to the satisfaction of a majority of people. The Committee finds it extremely difficult to endorse the use of either concept for a design brief in this proposal.

36. While the Committee acknowledges the problems inherent in reviewing Scales and Standards of Service Accommodation, the current review appears to have proceeded at an appallingly slow rate. The situation whereby this present proposal is attempting to anticipate the new Scales and Standards prior to their determination is untenable. Urgent efforts should be made to ensure none of the houses in this proposal ends up below the minimum level of the new Scales and Standards.

37. Safety The Army Wives' Association pointed out several design problems with houses included in the pilot scheme which constitute physical dangers to both adults and children. One particular problem was gaps left between external stairs and the supporting walls which presented a danger to children. Many of these problems are being rectified. The fact that houses could be constructed and subsequently supplied to families without these safety omissions being identified is cause for concern, particularly as no statistics are maintained on household accidents attributable to housing design faults.

38. Another matter of particular concern was the use of low ceiling fans in conjunction with standard height ceilings. The concept of these is to provide an air circulation within rooms but with the blade height being approximately 200cm (6ft 7in)

above the floor they present a hazard to adults and a dangerous temptation for children. Although the Committee was advised these fans set at such a height are standard in the Townsville community there were equally stories to hand of serious injuries resulting from accidents with them.

39. A most serious matter was the physical security provided by exterior doors for wives left alone with children while the ODF is on exercises. Evidence was given that during such periods there is an increase in callers within military suburbs and that reports of prowlers rise in numbers. As the height of dividing fences between properties does not constitute a security aid, consideration should be given to the provision of at least one security fly screen door at the front of each house.

40. The Committee was not satisfied with the overall safety aspects of the housing proposals, including physical security for wives while the ODF is on exercises. The total concepts of security and safety should be reviewed in close consultation with the Combined Army Wives' Association and other Defence Service wives' associations in the Townsville area prior to the advertising of further tenders.

41. Consultations with Users The Committee was disturbed to learn of the token nature of past consultations with users particularly wives of Army personnel. Generally these have taken the form of attitude surveys within specific locations and have been limited in their applications and scope. No provisions appear to exist for regular consultations between users and either those responsible for the provision of Army housing or those concerned with its administration as to the design of future housing or the determination of Scales and Standards. The Committee was told in evidence that the public hearing in Canberra on 25 May was the first time that the Chairman of the Defence Forces Scales and Standards Committee had met with representatives of the Army Wives' Associations and had an opportunity for some discussions. Such a statement underlines a dangerous potential for those given responsibility for administration of programs to replace the aims of those programs

with other objectives which can lead to unnecessary dissatisfaction among client groups. The Committee found in this case that the user group did not "ask for the world" but consideration of reasonable standards of accommodation such as they would reasonably provide for themselves under normal suburban conditions.

42. Committee's Conclusions Provision should be made for full and regular consultations between service families and the Departments of Defence, Administrative Services and Housing and Construction on the needs and problems of the occupants of service housing. The Committee believes there is merit in these consultations being channelled through a Residents' Consultative Committee in each major Defence area. On a national level, these committees should be represented in consultations on the determination of future Defence Force Scales and Standards.

PLANNING AND DESIGN

43. Proposed Designs - Department of Housing and Construction The designs proposed by the Department were standard rectangular buildings with little variety. During the course of the hearing, the Committee was informed that this lack of variety resulted from the tendering procedures utilised in the pilot study. Despite this, these designs were shown to the Committee as being indicative of the types of housing to be constructed following approval of this proposal by the Parliament. The Committee finds it difficult to accept that it was not possible for a greater variety of designs to be assembled and presented in evidence. This point is further validated by the Department's statement that the defects in the tender invitations issued for the pilot study had been overcome and some plans are now available from the Department to allow the smaller builder to tender.

44. Proposed Designs - Department of Administrative Services These designs showed a few variations but still, in essence, were rectangular buildings which would be recognised as some form of Government housing in spite of dispersal throughout the civilian community. Only two indicative plans for 'typical' 3 bedroom high-set houses were presented and it is difficult for the Committee to be confident on this basis that this Department's acquisition method has any better results. While it was

strongly suggested that Administrative Services delivered a better quality product, the Committee inspected one of their houses twenty-four hours prior to formal handover by the builder. We were then asked to compare this with a Housing and Construction supervised house barely completed to the lock-up stage. On this basis the comparison was unfair, open to misinterpretation and the Committee feels unable to agree totally with the assertion.

45. Alternative Designs - Remote Tropical Area Housing
Prior to the public hearings, the Committee obtained some information on the construction of energy efficient remote tropical area housing by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service within the Kakadu National Park. The design concepts were a departure from standard suburban housing and represented a compromise between the standard urban dwelling, traditional Northern Territory houses and energy efficiency.

46. Although they were constructed at ground level to enable use by both Aboriginal and white staff and were not compacted by land subdivision limitations, their environmental adaptation combined with reasonable standards of comfort make them an attractive alternative to the standard Townsville house. Their main influence may be on the low-set housing, yet certain features such as roof ventilation would be desirable in most tropical area housing. Due to reliance on passive cooling techniques to achieve thermal comfort, no air conditioning or mechanical cooling is required.

47. Committee's Conclusions The Committee agrees that of the total need for 250 houses, the 120 in this reference should be provided by the Department of Housing and Construction. The designs proposed by the Department of Housing and Construction and the Department of Administrative Services appear satisfactory in the main but more emphasis should be placed on safety, comfort and variety.

SITES

48. Acquisition At the present time, land has not been acquired for all the houses required under this proposal. The Department of Administrative Services has acquired, or is in the process of acquiring fifty blocks and although there may be some difficulty in obtaining the last few, they are confident that the full complement can be provided at times that will suit the program for the letting of contracts.

49. The Committee was advised that the only Commonwealth land which might be available is at Kissing Point Defence Establishment, some 12 kms from Lavarack Barracks. Much of this land is earmarked for future Defence requirements.

50. Site acquisition will, in many cases, be proceeding concurrently with tenders, therefore builders will be asked to quote for houses on unspecified blocks of land. To compensate for variations between blocks, certain quantities (such as paving, water service, etc) are provisional, with the final contract sum being adjusted to match the site actually handed to the builder. The Housing Industry Association stated that some members placed in the situation of tendering on unspecified land tend to load their prices to compensate for the uncertainty. Where possible, tenders should only be invited for either house/land packages or construction on publicly specified blocks.

51. Dispersal Throughout the Community One major aim of this proposal is to avoid the multitude of problems created by the construction of two exclusively military suburbs, Heatley and Vincent, during the late 1960s. The solution of dispersal throughout the civilian community has proved to be far more satisfactory, particularly in developing harmonious relationships between soldiers and townspeople. In addition, group pressure may promote a better standard of user maintenance, particularly of gardens, than has been the case in the past. There are also the additional safety factors for wives and children of the close proximity of neighbours during any absences by servicemen.

52. Committee's Conclusion The areas proposed for housing development appear satisfactory.

TENDERS

53. In evidence from both the Housing Industry Association and the Queensland Master Builders' Association, the Committee was informed that the size of the housing packages put to tender is vital.

54. The Committee feels that tenders should be invited in a range of packages attractive to both large or small building firms to maintain active competition within the local industry, provide a variety of designs and keep costs under control by subjecting them to market forces.

LIMIT OF COST

55. The limit of cost of the proposal when referred to the Committee was \$5.35 million at February 1981 prices.

LACK OF MAINTENANCE ON EXISTING HOUSES

56. During the hearing, the Committee became aware of the apparent lack of general maintenance on existing houses by the Queensland State Housing Commission. As mentioned elsewhere, under the existing Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement funds were provided by the Commonwealth to build these houses which are now rented back to the Commonwealth by the State at rentals ranging from \$72 to \$104 per fortnight. Of this amount, an average of \$64 (Group 1) per fortnight is collected by the Department of Defence as the Service tenants' rental contribution. Whilst evidence was given that urgent repairs were undertaken, the general upkeep of the houses is at such a level that the majority have now been classified as significantly below Scales and Standards (Group 1A housing). As a result, they attract a lower rate of rental contribution (\$57 per fortnight). Although the Department of Defence is financing an improvement program to correct some of the major deficiencies, the houses will still be less in area than Defence Scales and Standards requirements and may have to be returned to the State Housing Commission. Details of housing groups and rentals are shown in the table at Appendix 1 of this report.

57. The crux of the problem is that the houses provided by the State under this Agreement can only be maintained by the Queensland Housing Commission. The situation is at its worst where Commonwealth owned housing is located beside Commission housing and the ability of the Commonwealth to maintain its standards contrasts sharply with the decreasing quality of the State houses.

58. The Committee draws the attention of Parliament to the fact that the Queensland Housing Commission could accept the grant of funds for this housing, charge rental and neglect to maintain the properties in a reasonable state satisfactory to both the Commonwealth and the service tenants. The Committee asks the Government to review the service housing aspect of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and investigate the long term savings involved in providing its own housing.

PROGRAM

59. Using the method of procurement outlined above and calling the first tenders in June 1981, it is anticipated that the requirement for the completion of 120 out of the 250 houses by June 1982 will be achieved. Houses will be made available to the Department of Defence progressively, with the first houses of those proposed in this reference being available from November 1981 at an average rate of four houses per week.

60. Committee's Conclusion The Committee recommends the construction of the houses in this reference subject to the reservations expressed in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

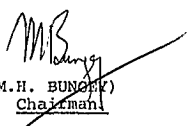
61. The summary of recommendations and conclusions of the Committee is set out below. Alongside each is shown the paragraph in the report to which it refers.

Paragraph

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 1. | THE COMMITTEE ACCEPTS THE NEED FOR AN ADDITIONAL 250 HOUSES IN TOWNSVILLE TO ACCOMMODATE THE REQUIRED INCREASE IN THE OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENT FORCE. | 14 |
| 2. | FULL CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE PROVISION OF SOME VILLA-TYPE MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING. | 27 |
| 3. | DEFENCE FORCE SCALES AND STANDARDS DO NOT TAKE ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THE NEED FOR THERMAL COMFORT IN TROPICAL AREAS. | 33 |
| 4. | THE CURRENT REVIEW OF SCALES AND STANDARDS SHOULD PROVIDE FOR A SEPARATE TROPICAL AREA ENTITLEMENT SPECIFYING LEVELS OF THERMAL COMFORT AND THE MOST EFFICIENT PASSIVE MEANS BY WHICH THEY CAN BE ACHIEVED. | 33 |
| 5. | PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR FULL AND REGULAR CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN SERVICE FAMILIES AND THE DEPARTMENTS OF DEFENCE, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION ON THE NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF THE OCCUPANTS OF SERVICE HOUSING. | 42 |
| 6. | THE COMMITTEE BELIEVES THERE IS MERIT IN THESE CONSULTATIONS BEING CHANNELLED THROUGH A RESIDENTS' CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE IN EACH MAJOR DEFENCE AREA. ON A NATIONAL LEVEL, THESE COMMITTEES SHOULD BE REPRESENTED IN CONSULTATIONS ON THE DETERMINATION OF FUTURE DEFENCE FORCE SCALES AND STANDARDS. | 42 |

Paragraph

7. THE COMMITTEE AGREES THAT OF THE TOTAL
NEED FOR 250 HOUSES THE 120 IN THIS
REFERENCE SHOULD BE PROVIDED BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION. 47
8. THE DESIGNS PROPOSED BY THE DEPARTMENT
OF HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION AND THE
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
APPEAR SATISFACTORY IN THE MAIN BUT
MORE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON SAFETY,
COMFORT AND VARIETY. 47
9. THE AREAS PROPOSED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
APPEAR SATISFACTORY. 52
10. THE LIMIT OF COST OF THE PROPOSAL WHEN
REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE WAS \$5.35 MILLION
AT FEBRUARY 1981 PRICES. 55
11. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THE CONSTRUCTION
OF THE HOUSES IN THIS REFERENCE SUBJECT
TO THE RESERVATIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS
REPORT. 60


(M.H. BUNGEY)
Chairman

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

2 June 1981.

APPENDIX 1

ARMY HOUSING AT TOWNSVILLE

<u>Group</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Maximum House Size</u>	<u>Rental Contribution</u> (per fortnight)	<u>Numbers Available</u>
1	Private - Staff Sergeant	107m ²	\$64	98
1A	Below standards	-	\$57	1142
2	Warrant Officer - Captain	112m ²	\$75	34
3	Major and Lieutenant Colonel	120m ²	\$85	38
4	Colonel and Brigadier	130m ²	\$96	1

CONSTRUCTION

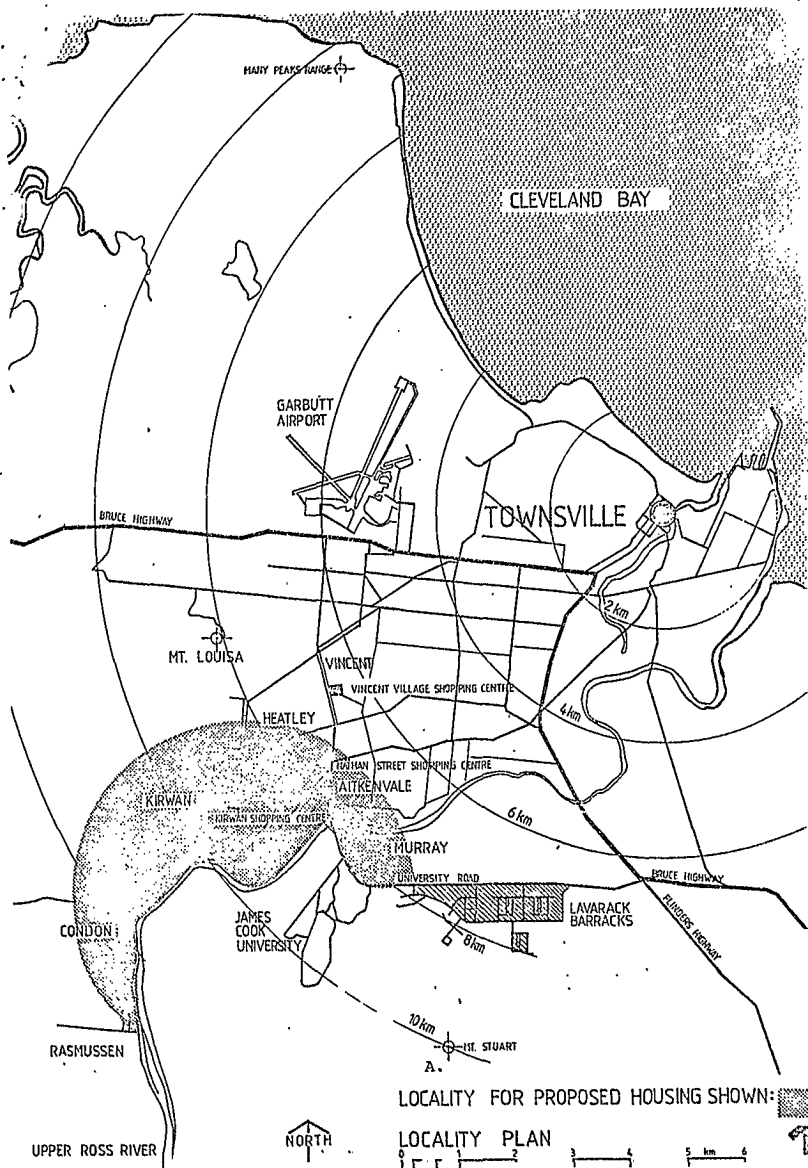
62. Designs The design factor for the provision of the 3-bedroom houses was primarily governed by the standard of space areas determined by the Department of Defence. Finishes and equipment are laid down in the Defence Force Scales and Standards of Accommodation. The minimum floor areas required by the standards are 103.7 square metres for high-set 3 bedroom (upper areas) and 3.3 square metres for laundry area on the low-level, 112 square metres for low-set brick veneer and 107 square metres for low-set framed and sheeted houses. The low-set houses have car port areas and lock-up storage areas. During the hearing we were told that the fundamental precept was that the houses be provided by the most economic means. Whilst the area requirements were tight, the scale provides for houses of 107 square metres plus or minus 2 per cent.

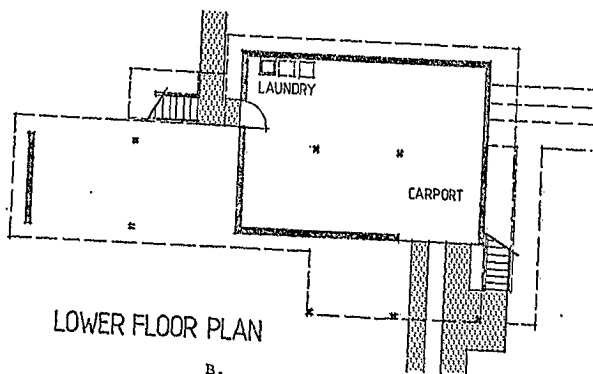
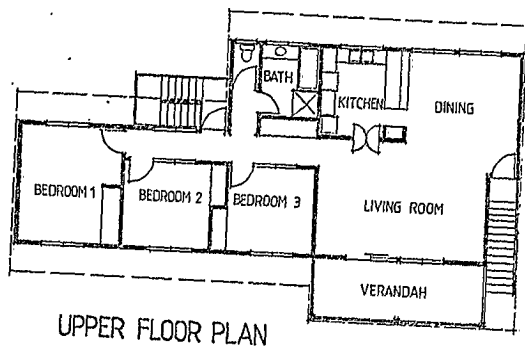
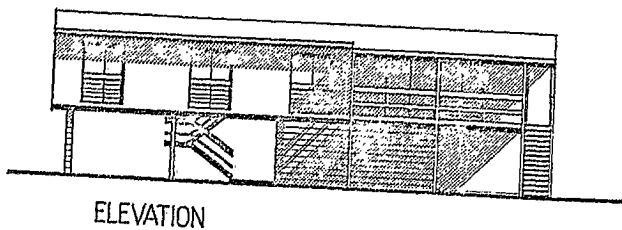
63. The Department of Housing and Construction informed the Committee that a survey conducted with 200 Army families found that, broadly speaking, most were satisfied with the houses provided but some interesting refinements had been revealed and were being examined. Some features not deemed satisfactory, although classed as being within community standards, were design faults in a technical sense.

64. External Finishes The high-set dwellings will consist of a concrete block enclosure containing a laundry, space for a car and general storage. The upper house level will be of framed construction with exterior walls clad with painted sheeting and the roof either sheet material or tiles. The low-set houses will be of brick veneer or framed construction clad with painted sheeting.

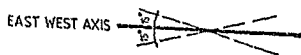
65. Internal Finishes Insulating material will be provided in walls and roofs to assist in the achievement of thermal comfort and efficiency. Internal features will conform with the general guidelines of Defence Scales and Standards.

66. Cyclone Precautions All houses will be designed and constructed in accordance with the cyclone standard adopted in AS 1170 Pt. 2 based on a 50-year cyclone return period, the wind forces catered for being 41m/sec (92 mph) (terrain category 3).
67. Water Supply Water will be supplied from normal town mains with hot water being provided by a solar water heating system on each house. All waste water and sewerage systems will comply with the relevant regulations of the Queensland Building Act 1975 and the requirements of local authorities.
68. Electricity Supply Electricity connections will be to the normal supply provided by the North Queensland Regional Electricity Board. The requirements of the Queensland Building Act and the Electricity Board will be met.
69. Additional Internal Features As the houses are to be prepared for immediate occupancy by tenants, certain additional items are required. Ceiling fans or some more preferable method of mechanical ventilation, a tumble clothes dryer, curtain rails without pelmets, a vanity basin in the bathroom and a double bowl kitchen sink will be provided in each house.
70. Environmental Aspects The houses are to be constructed on subdivisions which have been approved by the local authorities and therefore the requirements of the Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974 will be satisfied. Any existing trees on sites acquired for construction will be preserved wherever possible.
71. Liaison with Authorities The proposal has been developed through consultations between the Departments of Finance, Defence, Administrative Services and Housing and Construction. All buildings and services will comply with the relevant regulations of the Queensland Building Act 1975 and full consultations are being held with relevant State and local authorities as required.

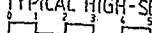




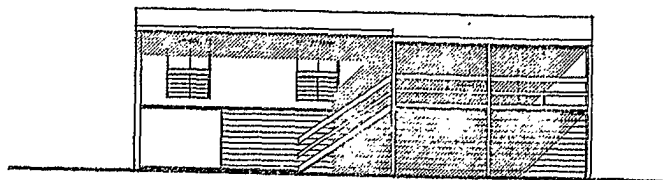
B.



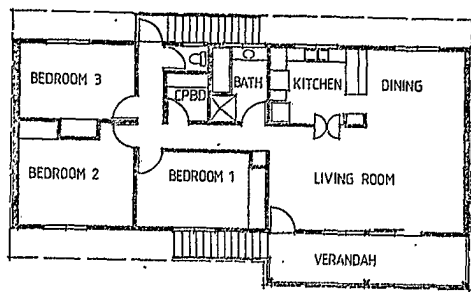
TYPICAL HIGH-SET HOUSE. EXAMPLE A.



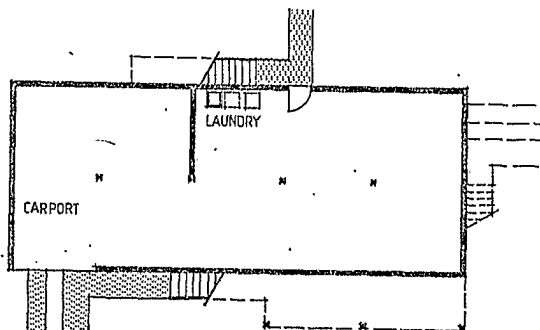
10 METRES 12



ELEVATION



UPPER FLOOR PLAN



LOWER FLOOR PLAN

C.



TYPICAL HIGH-SET HOUSE, EXAMPLE B.

