



Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

REPORT

relating to the proposed

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT GOLF COURSE ESTATE, PALMERSTON, NT

(Sixteenth Report of 1995)

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
1995

The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

Report relating

to the

**HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT GOLF
COURSE ESTATE,
PALMERSTON, NT**

(Sixteenth Report of 1995)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Members of the 31st Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works	v
Extract from the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of 1 February 1995	vi
	Paragraph
THE REFERENCE	1
THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION	3
BACKGROUND	8
THE NEED	14
The Committee's Conclusion	19
THE PROPOSAL	20
The Site	24
Palmerston	29
Committee's Conclusion	34
Mix of Ranks	35
Housing Concepts	36
Proximity of Houses	39
Committee's Conclusion	41
Committee's Recommendations	42
Landform	44
Land Units, Soils and Drainage	45
Construction	49
DEVELOPMENT DESIGN CRITERIA	
Neighbourhood Structure	51
Community Facilities	53
Road System	54
Public Transport	57

Shopping	58
Education	59
Health	61
Public Open Space and Recreation	62
Committee's Conclusion	64
TENDERING	65
Committee's Recommendation	68
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS	69
Drainage and Insect Problems	69
Assay Laboratory	75
Committee's Recommendation	79
Noise	80
Vegetation	81
Fauna	82
Landscaping	84
Heritage Conservation Act	85
Aboriginal Sites and Native Title Considerations	86
CONSULTATIONS	92
FINANCIAL ASPECTS	94
Committee's Recommendation	95
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	96
APPENDIXES	
Appendix A - List of Witnesses	A1-A2
Appendix B - Project Drawings	B1-B4
Appendix C - Functions, Powers, Organisation and Operations of the Defence Housing Authority	C1-C2
Appendix D - Land Units	D1-D2

MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

(Thirty-First Committee)

Mr Colin Hollis MP (Chair)
Senator Paul Henry Calvert (Vice-Chair)

Senate	House of Representatives
Senator Bryant Robert Burns	Mr John Neil Andrew MP
Senator Shayne Michael Murphy*	Mr Raymond Allen Braithwaite MP
	Mr Russell Neville Gorman MP
	Mr Robert George Halverson OBE MP
	Hon. Benjamin Charles Humphreys MP

* replaced Senator John Devereux on 10 February 1995

SECTIONAL COMMITTEE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT GOLF COURSE ESTATE, PALMERSTON, NT

Mr Colin Hollis MP (Chair)
Mr Robert George Halverson OBE MP (Vice-Chair)
Mr Raymond Allen Braithwaite
Hon. Benjamin Humphreys MP

Committee Secretary:	Peter Roberts
Inquiry Secretary:	Denise Denahy
Secretarial Support:	Mahesh Wijeratne

**EXTRACT FROM THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

No. 116 dated Wednesday, 1 February 1995

**17 PUBLIC WORKS—PARLIAMENTARY STANDING
COMMITTEE—REFERENCE OF WORK—HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT AT GOLF COURSE ESTATE,
PALMERSTON, NT**

Mr Walker (Minister for Administrative Services), 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: *Housing development at Golf Course Estate, Palmerston, NT*

Question - put and passed.

**PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC WORKS**

**GOLF COURSE ESTATE DEVELOPMENT,
PALMERSTON, NT.**

By resolution on 1 February 1995 the House of Representatives referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report to Parliament the Golf Course Estate Development, Palmerston, NT.

THE REFERENCE

1. The Defence Housing Authority (DHA) proposes to develop a 132.9 ha site for residential purposes within the municipality of Palmerston, NT. The joint venture project will integrate Service and private sector housing and yield some 1 400 units of which approximately one-third will be retained for Service families. When referred to the Committee the estimated total cost of the proposal was \$159m. However, DHA's contribution for the project is \$144.02m. Further information may be found at paragraph 94.

2. As part of the negotiation for this site, DHA has undertaken to extend the existing golf course at Palmerston from a nine hole course to an 18 hole course at a cost of \$4.7m.

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

3. On 2 March 1995 the Committee appointed a Sectional Committee comprising Mr C Hollis MP, Mr R Braithwaite MP, Mr R Halverson OBE MP and the Hon B Humphreys MP to undertake this inquiry.

4. The Committee received a written submission from DHA and evidence was taken from its representatives at a public hearing at Palmerston, NT on Tuesday 4 April 1995. Prior to the public hearing the Committee inspected the proposed site.

5. The following organisations also presented submissions and appeared before the Committee at the public hearing:

- . Palmerston Town Council
- . Palmerston Golf and Country Club
- . Community Liaison and Landcare in Cities
- . NT Department of Lands, Housing and Local Government.

6. Submissions were also received from the following:

- . Australian Nature Conservation Agency
- . Territory Construction Association
- . Commonwealth Fire Board
- . National Trust of Australia (NT)
- . Darwin City Council
- . Australian Heritage Commission
- . Childcare at Work
- . Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy
- . Environment Protection Agency

7. A list of witnesses who gave evidence at the public hearing is at Appendix A. The Committee's proceedings will be printed as Minutes of Evidence.

BACKGROUND

8. The Defence Housing Authority was established by the Commonwealth Government as a Statutory Authority to operate from 1 January 1988. Reflecting requirements of the *Defence Housing Authority*

Act (1987), as amended by the *Defence Legislation Amendment Act 1988*, the DHA mission statement is:

"To provide Defence personnel and their families with good housing consistent with community standards and which will contribute positively to their quality of life. In achieving this mission DHA shall meet Defence operational needs, follow sound commercial principles and be a responsive and innovative organisation."

9. An overview of the functions, powers, organisation and operations of DHA is at Appendix C.

10. DHA manages its Northern Territory operations through a Housing Management Centre (HMC) located in Darwin and a District Office within RAAF Base Tindal. The HMC has the responsibility of providing new housing in Darwin for DHA.

11. DHA has 1 034 houses in Darwin located as follows:

- . housing in Darwin suburbs comprises 330 dwellings. In the main these homes are of good quality, located close to community facilities and perceived by Service families as meeting community standards. Some 10 substandard homes will be disposed of over the next year and replaced with good quality leased homes
- . at Larrakeyah Army Barracks, DHA has 131 good quality homes occupied by both Army and Navy personnel and their families
- . DHA has 140 good quality homes at HMAS COONAWARRA occupied by Defence personnel and their families
- . there are 396 homes on RAAF Base Darwin occupied by RAAF personnel and their families. Of these, 360 are categorised by the Services as being below acceptable standards in that they do not meet the minimum size requirements desired by the Services. DHA and the RAAF are planning an upgrade

program. The Committee was assured by DHA that the project will be referred to it in the near future.

housing in the town of Palmerston consists of 20 newly constructed dwellings and 17 spot purchased dwellings. These homes have been allocated to Army and are occupied by 2nd Cavalry Regiment (2 Cav Regt) personnel and their families. Palmerston is located approximately 22 kilometres to the south east of Darwin

12. DHA also has 551 houses in other Northern Territory locations as follows:

. Katherine	281
. Tindal	189
. Alice Springs	60
. Other remote locations	21
Total	551

13. Of the 1 034 Darwin houses, 868 have been constructed either by the Commonwealth or DHA, 158 have been spot purchased and 8 leased.

THE NEED

14. The Government decision to increase the Army Presence in the North (APIN) involved a need to expand infrastructure works at Robertson Barracks and to provide additional housing in the Darwin area to accommodate Army personnel and their families. The APIN Stage 1 and APIN Stage 2 projects have been the subject of recent reports by the Committee (Reports 1992/10 and 1995/9).

15. Provision of the initial works at Robertson Barracks for 2 Cav Regt was also the subject of an earlier reference to the Committee (Report 1989/12). In 1993 the Committee approved the construction of the housing development known as "Fairway Ridge" in the suburb of Driver in Palmerston (Report 1993/1).

16. Headquarters Australian Defence Force required an additional 108 homes in the NT in the financial year 1994/95, as well as the following additional housing projections in support of APIN:

Date	Housing Requirement
1994/95	1 696
1995/96	1 919
1996/97	1 975
1997/98	2 121
1998/99	2 468

17. The Committee was advised that DHA is approximately 86% towards meeting the 1994/95 target. This figure is lower than anticipated, due to the worst wet season the NT has had for 20 years and this has had an effect on the building program. However, DHA believes that it will meet its target by 30 June 1995.

18. In order to eliminate the significant housing shortfall, DHA is proposing to develop two sites, Palmerston Golf Course Estate, to be known as "Fairway Waters" and a neighbouring site known as the Gunn land, which is not part of this reference.

Committee's Conclusion

19. **A need exists to provide suitable accommodation at Palmerston for Defence personnel and their families who are required to move to the Northern Territory as part of the Army Presence in the North program.**

THE PROPOSAL

20. DHA proposes to develop lot 4635 (originally lots 4243 and 4244) at Palmerston NT, an area of 132.9 ha, for residential purposes. DHA is negotiating with the Northern Territory Government (NT Government) to purchase this land. As part of the negotiation for this site, DHA has undertaken to extend the existing golf course at Palmerston, by allocating approximately 40 ha for a golf course extension at a cost of \$4.7m. It is proposed to develop a nine hole golf course which will be integrated with the existing nine hole Palmerston Golf Club Course on the southern side of University Avenue.

21. DHA is also negotiating with the NT Government to purchase an additional site known as the Gunn land. This land parcel comprises 61.8 ha and is valued at approximately \$1.8m. The Gunn site will be known as "Fairway Terrace" in the suburb of Bakewell North and is under consideration for future development. This site is not the subject of the current reference and the development of the Gunn land will require referral to the Committee.

22. The Golf Course Estate site is well located for Army personnel working at Robertson Barracks and is in close proximity to the educational, community, recreational and commercial facilities of Palmerston.

23. The joint venture project at Golf Course Estate will integrate Service and private sector housing and yield some 1 400 units of which approximately one-third will be retained for Service families.

The Site

24. The 132.9 ha site to the north of University Avenue will be known as "Fairway Waters" in the suburb of Durack. It is vacant Crown land, owned by the NT Government. Vegetation is sparse, comprising mainly grasses with Pandanus Palms around drainage paths. DHA has advised that the size of this allotment will vary slightly, following further negotiations between the NT Government and the University. In accordance with the NT Government's policy, Crown land near Palmerston was released for development in November 1994. The proposed development of this land by DHA is in accordance with this policy.

25. Part of the site was subject to a lease to the Palmerston Golf Club. This lease has been rescinded and a joint lease granted over the site to both the golf club and DHA. The final result will be that the golf club will have a lease in perpetuity and DHA will have Torrens title. DHA stressed that the golf club will not be liable for payment of any money to DHA.

26. DHA advised that the cost of the golf course construction is part of the joint venture cost. Half of the cost will therefore be funded by the joint venture partner.

27. DHA stressed that its estate will have significant added value by having an attractive golf course with water features running through it. The

Committee was advised that DHA believes that this will enhance the value of the blocks.

28. The Committee was advised that there will be freehold title on the blocks, apart from any which will be subdivided on a strata title basis.

Palmerston

29. The town of Palmerston was established in 1980 and has a population of approximately 11 800. It has been planned to accommodate a potential population of approximately 50 000 over the next 40 to 50 years.

30. Land use within the town is controlled by the Palmerston Town Plan 1982 which is administered by the Northern Territory Planning Authority (NTPA) under the provisions of the Planning Act. The land is currently zoned FU and S1 under the Town Plan.

31. The FU zone indicates areas where detailed land use plans have not yet been prepared. Therefore, only a few low intensity uses are permitted with the consent of the NTPA.

32. The S1 zone accommodates a range of special public and institutional uses. Predominantly commercial and industrial uses are prohibited. Developments proposed by Aboriginal housing associations are permitted, with the consent of the NTPA.

33. An application to rezone the land to SU (Specific Use) was lodged with the NTPA in December 1994. The SU zone is to cater for specific developments such as that proposed by DHA. Rezoning the land to SU will enable more detailed development plans to be prepared for the site.

Committee's Conclusion

34. The Golf Course Estate site is well located for a housing development for Service families because of its proximity to Robertson Barracks. The site is in close proximity to the educational, community, recreational and commercial facilities at Palmerston.

Mix of Ranks

35. In response to concern expressed over the possibility of a lack of a mix of ranks to be located in Palmerston, Defence advised that it is Army policy that Service personnel who will be housed there, will range from the brigade commander to the private soldier.

Housing Concepts

36. It is proposed to provide a range of housing types to suit the local climate. Features of housing to be provided will include:

- . elevated floors (high set)
- . site orientation to capture maximum ventilation
- . design concepts including louvre windows to permit maximum cross flow ventilation
- . cyclone proof construction
- . metal wall and roof cladding
- . solar hot water
- . ceiling fans
- . part air conditioning (living room and main sleeping area)
- . carports.

37. Whilst air conditioning is to be provided to the living room and main sleeping area it is anticipated that due to the tropical design features air conditioning use will only be necessary during the months of November to February.

38. House designs will provide for a range of floor areas from 115m² to 145m² for a three bedroom house, with an additional allowance for four bedroom houses. Dwelling sizes and layouts will be provided to meet Service requirements.

Proximity of Houses

39. Recently the Committee has become concerned that some DHA housing is being built too close together, with resultant lack of privacy for the occupants. The Palmerston Town Council advised that the general impression of the local Palmerston community, is that the houses are too close together for the NT climate and the outdoor-living lifestyle. DHA advised that it offers a variety of housing choices to Defence families in the form of styles and lot sizes. The Committee was advised that DHA's product range would include a majority of what are termed traditional lots, around 700m² or 800m², a percentage of smaller lots around 450m² and a percentage of apartments or medium density dwellings. The Committee was advised that DHA's planning at present is for 60% of the land being the 700m²-800m² traditional blocks, 20% being 450m² and the other 20% being unit or medium density accommodation. DHA advised that the market will decide whether people will accept this size of housing.

40. The Committee, however, disagrees with this view, as it believes that the market will only decide if people have got the choice, and in many cases the people do not have this choice.

Committee's Conclusion

41. At the time of the public hearing the Defence Housing Authority was not able to provide the Committee with definite plans of the types of houses it intends to construct at the Golf Course Estate.

Committee's Recommendations

42. The Committee recommends that the Defence Housing Authority considers increasing the size of its housing blocks, so that more privacy is afforded to occupants of its houses.

43. The Committee recommends that once housing plans are finalised, and before construction commences, the Defence Housing Authority formally briefs the Committee on the types and cost of houses it intends to construct and the size of the blocks intended for the Golf Course Estate.

Landform

44. The land slopes towards the south-west with a slope of about 1%. The contours vary from approximately 20m to 10m Australian Height Datum. The major topographic feature is a drainage line running from the north towards the south west.

Land Units, Soils and Drainage

45. The project plan will address the drainage issues associated with the site.

46. The Committee noted that the NT Government submission expressed concern over drainage of the site, due to the waterlogging nature of the soils and to seasonal flooding. DHA advised the Committee that it has carried out a detailed drainage study on the site which has a natural drainage course running through it. DHA's proposal is to make use of that drainage course as part of the golf course precinct, to excavate the lakes and make use of the fill material for the fairways for the golf course. The Committee was advised that there are some areas of problem soils on the site. These areas consist of soil commonly referred to as "6c" soil ie. soil not suited to urban development because of its poor drainage qualities. However, DHA advised that these soils are mainly in the drainage course which will be excavated to form the artificial lakes and golf course area.

47. DHA believes that it can manage the stormwater system by using the lakes partly as retarding basins or lakes and with a low flow system underground. The NT Government advised that it has given no commitment to the provision of headworks and any contribution is to be by specific negotiation.

48. Further details concerning land units may be found at Appendix D.

Construction

49. The NT experiences a warm tropical climate which is characterised by two distinct seasons, commonly referred to as the wet and dry seasons. The wet season typically extends from November to April. Occasional tropical cyclones may occur at this time. The dry season, from May to September has little rainfall and low humidity.

50. The climate has a significant effect on the timing and costs of construction. All buildings must be constructed to withstand cyclonic wind conditions, and construction times are affected by the extreme wet conditions for part of the year.

DEVELOPMENT DESIGN CRITERIA

Neighbourhood Structure

51. Existing development in Palmerston is structured around a number of parks and open spaces that are linked to the community facilities in each suburb and with the Town Centre.

52. The proposed development will be based on a similar neighbourhood structure.

Community Facilities

53. The community facilities available in Palmerston and in the wider Darwin region are considered by DHA and its planners to be acceptable in meeting the needs of the residents of the development.

Road System

54. The site is separated from the existing development by University Avenue which is a major distributor road that currently defines the edge of the town.

55. The proposed Weddell arterial road forms the western boundary of the site. This road will link into the extension of Tiger Brennan Drive and will ensure access to the Darwin CBD. The site will also have access via both University Avenue and Tiger Brennan Drive to the main arterial road in the Darwin region, the Stuart Highway.

56. The roads will overlay soils of good to very poor characteristics. Consequently the type of construction will vary significantly. Where poor quality soil is encountered, such as type "6c", the soil will generally be excavated and replaced with more suitable material. Special attention to subsoil drainage will also be required.

Public Transport

57. Darwin Bus Service currently operates the public bus service in Darwin and Palmerston. Consultation with Darwin Bus Service to extend the service through the proposed development has commenced.

Shopping

58. Palmerston Town Centre provides major shopping facilities.

Education

59. Education facilities, pre schools and childcare centres exist in Palmerston. DHA has plans for a childcare centre at its development at Fairway Ridge in Palmerston.

60. Land adjoining the site to the east has been set aside by the NT Government for the future development of a University or TAFE College.

Health

61. Palmerston Town Centre has a Community Care Centre which is operated by the NT Department of Health & Community Services. The wider Darwin Region has a major public hospital and a private hospital situated at Tiwi in the northern suburbs of Darwin.

Public Open Space and Recreation

62. The site will have convenient access to the community recreation and sporting facilities and the public open spaces in Palmerston. A bicycle network links many of the open space reserves throughout Palmerston.

63. Marlows Lagoon Recreation Reserve, located south of the site is a landscaped open space with barbecue facilities, children's playground equipment, public conveniences and covered seating.

Committee's Conclusion

64. **The Golf Course Estate Development will provide Defence personnel and their families with good quality housing and services consistent with community standards.**

TENDERING

65. The Committee raised the issue of quality assurance of contractors and the registration of those contractors to either the local authority or the NT Government. DHA advised that it uses the select tender process whereby a group of selected tenderers is established. The group is reviewed, generally after two years. DHA stressed that if it insisted that all contractors had quality assurance, then it would severely inhibit the number of contractors who could be utilised, particularly in the NT. DHA advertises in the local newspapers and calls for expressions of interest for inclusion on the list of selected tenderers. An extensive evaluation then takes place to determine who will be listed.

66. The Committee was advised that DHA's policy is to use project home builders. Superintendents on major works ensure that DHA receives value for money. DHA also relies heavily on the past record of builders and their references. At least six references for previous work are required, as well as the siting of previous work and details of financial performance. Each house which is acquired or built is subject to an evaluation by the tenant. This is carried out by an independent firm of consultants.

67. The Committee queried whether DHA had a policy which protected subcontractors. DHA advised that the role of the superintendent is to ensure that subcontractors are being paid. DHA advised that it has various processes of monitoring to ensure that, on a day-to-day basis, the contractor is paying his subcontractors. When a builder receives progress claims, he is required to sign a statement to say that costs associated with the previous payment which would relate back to subcontractors have been paid.

Committee's Recommendation

68. **The Committee recommends that the Defence Housing Authority includes in its contract documents a clause stating that subcontractors must be paid before progress payments are made to contractors.**

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Drainage and Insect Problems

69. DHA advised that site drainage will be the most significant environmental consideration in the design and development of the site. The drainage of the site has been the subject of a separate engineering survey.

70. While the site does not suffer unduly from mosquito problems, as it is sufficiently distant from major breeding areas, investigation shows it to be badly affected by biting midges. However, these biting midges - which most Darwin people know as sandflies - are an annoyance rather than a health problem. The representative of the Palmerston Golf and Country Club advised that the prevalence of midges is limited to a particular period of the dry season.

71. However, the NT Government advised that it is mosquitoes which cause health problems and these are not a problem at the site.

72. The Committee was advised that the NT Government intends to remove part of the breeding area of the midges. Another part of the breeding area, in private ownership, is also to be removed. DHA advised that ongoing negotiations with the NT Government have advised that a buffer zone between the mangrove breeding and harbouring areas and the residential development should overcome this problem.

73. DHA has advised the Committee that a special task force established by the NT Government met in May and confirmed that the problem will be overcome through a program executed by them. It will, however, be a condition in the contract with the NT Government, that the matter either be remedied or land of equal size and value be injected into the joint venture to compensate for any land loss due to the need to create a buffer zone.

74. In relation to controlling the mosquito breeding areas, particularly in the artificial lakes, DHA advised that it will use a bore during the dry season to top up the system and there will be a turnover of water in the lakes that will be sufficient to attenuate mosquito breeding. As it is important to avoid ponding, DHA proposes to use a system similar to that used in other parts of Palmerston. This will involve using wide open swales or drains which are

grassed, but with the short-term storm flows being taken through low flow underground drainage pipes. Normal short-term storm water will therefore be taken away. In heavy storms the water will discharge into the lakes.

Assay Laboratory

75. The NT Government advised the Committee that a site on Marjorie Street, approximately one kilometre to the north of the proposed estate was used for many years as a Commonwealth and later private, analytical laboratory. That site has elevated levels of lead, zinc, arsenic and cadmium. The Committee was advised that preliminary investigations of this now vacant land, indicate that there is a potential for the elevated levels to have extended along the drainage line onto the proposed site. However, the precise extent is unknown at this stage. The NT Government stressed that whilst the magnitude of this particular issue may not be great, it is necessary to ensure that the site does not pose an environmental or health risk.

76. The Committee was advised that the Conservation Commission of the NT has undertaken to provide a survey framework to assess the extent of the issue and to determine remediation measures if necessary. DHA advised the Committee that it is continuing negotiations with the NT Government to determine the extent of any such impact and associated environmental or health risks.

77. The NT Government advised that the Conservation Commission of the NT has confirmed that any substances found would be treatable within the usual subdivision processes. DHA advised the Committee that it would only build on the site if any contamination had been remediated to the satisfaction of its expert advisers.

78. DHA advised that the NT Government is currently completing its investigation in this matter and will report shortly. The Committee was advised that any costs associated with remediation of the site would be borne by DHA and deducted from the overall price paid for the land to the NT Government.

Committee's Recommendation

79. The Committee recommends that the Defence Housing Authority ensures that its sites have been examined and cleared of any possibility of contamination prior to referral of projects to the Committee.

Noise

80. The site is bounded by the proposed Weddell arterial and the extension of Tiger Brennan Drive to the west and University Avenue to the south. The NT Government advised that both of these roads will generate considerable traffic noise within the proposed development. It will therefore be necessary for DHA to consider noise attenuation. DHA advised that it is holding discussions with the special task force established by the NT Government on this issue.

Vegetation

81. The Conservation Commission of the NT has advised that there are no obvious indicators which would suggest that the area has strong botanical significance.

Fauna

82. The site's proximity to urban development and history of works associated with the University site, mean that there is little likelihood of habitats or species of conservation significance associated with the land.

83. DHA advised the Committee that the land on and around the proposed estate is largely regeneration area from successive years of burn-off. Preliminary investigations indicate that there are no endangered species or rare or exotic flora or fauna.

Landscaping

84. DHA advised that it intends to bring in substantial amounts of fill for the areas. As the floodway areas of the golf course require to be relatively clear so that flood flows do not back up, the buffers between fairways are proposed to be areas of wetland and lakes instead of the traditional trees and bush.

Heritage Conservation Act

85. There are no declared heritage places under the *Heritage Conservation Act* 1991. However, the Conservation Commission has advised that there may be evidence on the site of remains associated with activities during the Second World War and recommends further investigation of the site prior to development to record any such features for posterity. DHA has advised that it is very conscious of the need to protect any remains of historical value and is committed to undertake studies recommended by the Commission.

Aboriginal Sites and Native Title Considerations

86. The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) has advised that there are no sites of significance to Aboriginal people recorded or registered on the land under the *Northern Territory Sacred Sites Act* 1989.

88. This does not necessarily mean that there are no sacred sites located in this area, but rather reflects the situation that the Aboriginal custodians for this area have not sought protection for sacred sites under NT law and that no other information on the location of sites is available to DHA.

87. A certificate issued by the AAPA indemnifies the holder against prosecution under any of the offence provisions of the Act (provided they comply with the conditions set out in the certificate).

88. DHA advised the Committee that it is committed to complying with all procedures in relation to determination of native title.

89. Before a development agreement is finalised, it will be necessary to determine if any Native Title Claims exist over the site. To do this, it is necessary to seek a Non-Claimant Native Title Determination over the land. This can only occur once the proposed site has been clearly identified by survey.

90. Applications for a Non-Claimant Determination are made with the Darwin Registry of the National Native Title Tribunal. DHA will seek the Non-Claimant Native Title Determination prior to development of the land. However, DHA advised that it could not guarantee how long this process would take, as it is necessary for meetings with tribal elders and this can sometimes be a rather protracted process. DHA stressed that it would

respect any sacred sites if found.

91. The NT Government advised the Committee that it has carried out tenure searches on the land and does not believe that it or DHA will have to make an application to the Native Title Tribunal. The NT Government advised that it believes that under both the Mabo principles and the *Native Title Act*, native title over the land has been extinguished, because freehold title previously existed on the Golf Course Estate site.

CONSULTATIONS

92. DHA advised that consultations have taken place with State and local authorities who are in agreement with the proposed development. Wider consultation is continuing particularly with the community, the Services and tenant consultative groups to ensure that their concerns, if any, are met. Tenant consultation occurs between DHA and Service spouses at monthly meetings, where DHA informs spouses of housing developments in the Darwin area.

93. The Palmerston Town Council advised the Committee that it has had extensive contact with DHA in its planning and development of housing activities.

FINANCIAL ASPECTS

94. When referred to the Committee the estimated total cost of the proposal was \$159m. This represented the cost of the project to DHA and the joint venture partner excluding the cost of 470 blocks of land payable by DHA to the joint venture. The revised cost of \$144.02m represents DHA's cost of 470 houses and land and its 50% share of the joint venture costs for the development of the estate, construction of the nine hole golf course and cash contribution for the acquisition of the site.

Committee's Recommendation

95. The Committee recommends the development of the Golf Course Estate at Palmerston NT at an estimated cost of \$144.02m to the Defence Housing Authority, subject to confirmation that the Defence Housing Authority would only build on the site if any contamination has been remediated to the satisfaction of its expert advisers. The recommendation is also subject to the briefing of the Committee by the Defence Housing Authority on the types and costs of houses it intends to construct and the size of the blocks intended for the Golf Course Estate.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

96. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee and the paragraph in the report to which each refers are set out below:

	Paragraph
1. A need exists to provide suitable accommodation at Palmerston for Defence personnel and their families who are required to move to the Northern Territory as part of the Army Presence in the North program.	19
2. The Golf Course Estate site is well located for a housing development for Service families because of its proximity to Robertson Barracks. The site is in close proximity to the educational, community, recreational and commercial facilities at Palmerston.	34
3. At the time of the public hearing the Defence Housing Authority was not able to provide the Committee with definite plans of the types of houses it intends to construct at the Golf Course Estate.	41
4. The Committee recommends that the Defence Housing Authority considers increasing the size of its housing blocks, so that more privacy is afforded to occupants of its houses.	42
5. The Committee recommends that once housing plans are finalised, and before construction commences, the Defence Housing Authority formally briefs the Committee on the types and cost of houses it intends to construct and the size of the blocks intended for the Golf Course Estate.	43

6. The Golf Course Estate Development will provide Defence personnel and their families with good quality housing and services consistent with community standards.	64
7. The Committee recommends that the Defence Housing Authority includes in its contract documents a clause stating that subcontractors must be paid before progress payments are made to contractors.	68
8. The Committee recommends that the Defence Housing Authority ensures that its sites have been examined and cleared of any possibility of contamination prior to referral of projects to the Committee.	79
9. The Committee recommends the development of the Golf Course Estate at Palmerston NT at an estimated cost of \$144.02m to the Defence Housing Authority, subject to confirmation that the Defence Housing Authority would only build on the site if any contamination has been remediated to the satisfaction of its expert advisers. The recommendation is also subject to the briefing of the Committee by the Defence Housing Authority on the types and costs of houses it intends to construct and the size of the blocks intended for the Golf Course Estate.	95



Colin Hollis MP
Chair

26 June 1995

WITNESSES

BENNETT, Mr Stephen Charles, Town Clerk, Palmerston Town Council,
2 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston, Northern Territory

BUTLER, Mr Michael Laurence, Regional Manager, Defence Housing
Authority, 37 Gregory Street, Parap, Northern Territory 0820

BUTTERWORTH, Mr Graham, President, Palmerston Golf and Country
Club, Dwyer Circuit, Darwin, Northern Territory 0830

DAVID, Mr Edwin Joel Sherring, General Manager, Operations,
Defence Housing Authority, 2 Brisbane Avenue, Barton, Australian
Capital Territory 2600

DIFLO, Mr Kevin Patrick, Elected Member-Mayor, Palmerston Town
Council, 2 Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston, Northern Territory

EMERY, Ms Julie, Spokesperson, Community Liaison and Landcare in
Cities, 10 Armidale Street, Stuart Park, Darwin, Northern Territory

GIBBONS, Colonel Peter Douglas, COFS HQ NORCOM, Australian
Defence Force, Larrakeyah Barracks, Larrakeyah, Northern
Territory 0821

GRAHAM, Mr John Edward, Chairman, Defence Housing Authority, 44
Hampden Road, Artarmon, New South Wales 2064

GRONOW, Mr John Richard, Director, Planning Branch, Department of
Lands, Housing and Local Government, Northern Territory
Government, 8th Floor, AMP Building, cnr Cavenagh and Knuckey
Streets, Darwin, Northern Territory 0800

KEELER, Mr David John, Capital Projects Manager, Darwin, Defence
Housing Authority, 37 Gregory Street, Parap, Northern Territory
0820

MOELLER, Mr David James, Project Manager, Delfin Property Group,
Level 7, 10 Market Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4000

O'NEILL, Mr Terence, Director, Colless and O'Neill Pty Ltd, 84 Woods
Street, Darwin, Northern Territory 0800

PINNEY, Mr John Maurice, Assistant Secretary, Land Management,
Department of Lands, Housing and Local Government, Northern
Territory Government, 2nd Floor, AMP Building, cnr Cavenagh
and Knuckey Streets, Darwin, Northern Territory 0800

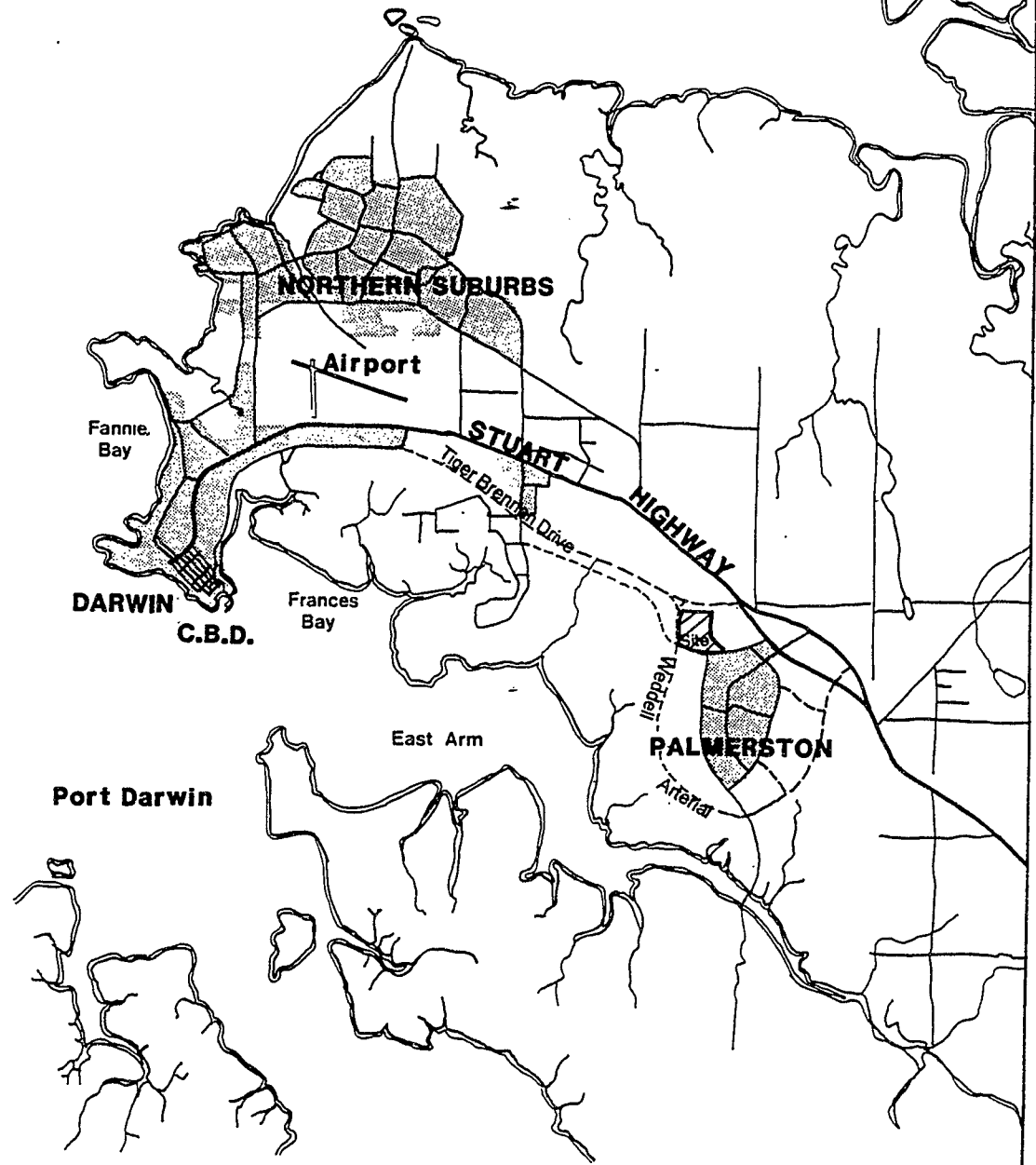
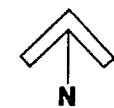
REID, Major Stephen Frank, Army, Service Housing Authority, Darwin
Logistic Battalion, Larrakeyah Barracks, Darwin, Northern
Territory 0820

SWANSON, Mr Gary John Linde, Director, Land Sales and Management
Branch, Northern Territory Department of Lands, Housing and
Local Government, 2nd Floor, AMP Building, Cavenagh Street,
Darwin, Northern Territory 0801

APPENDIX B

PROJECT DRAWINGS

	Page
Regional Locality Plan	B-1
Site Plan	B-2
Major Community Facilities - Darwin Region	B-3
Locality Plan - Town of Palmerston	B-4

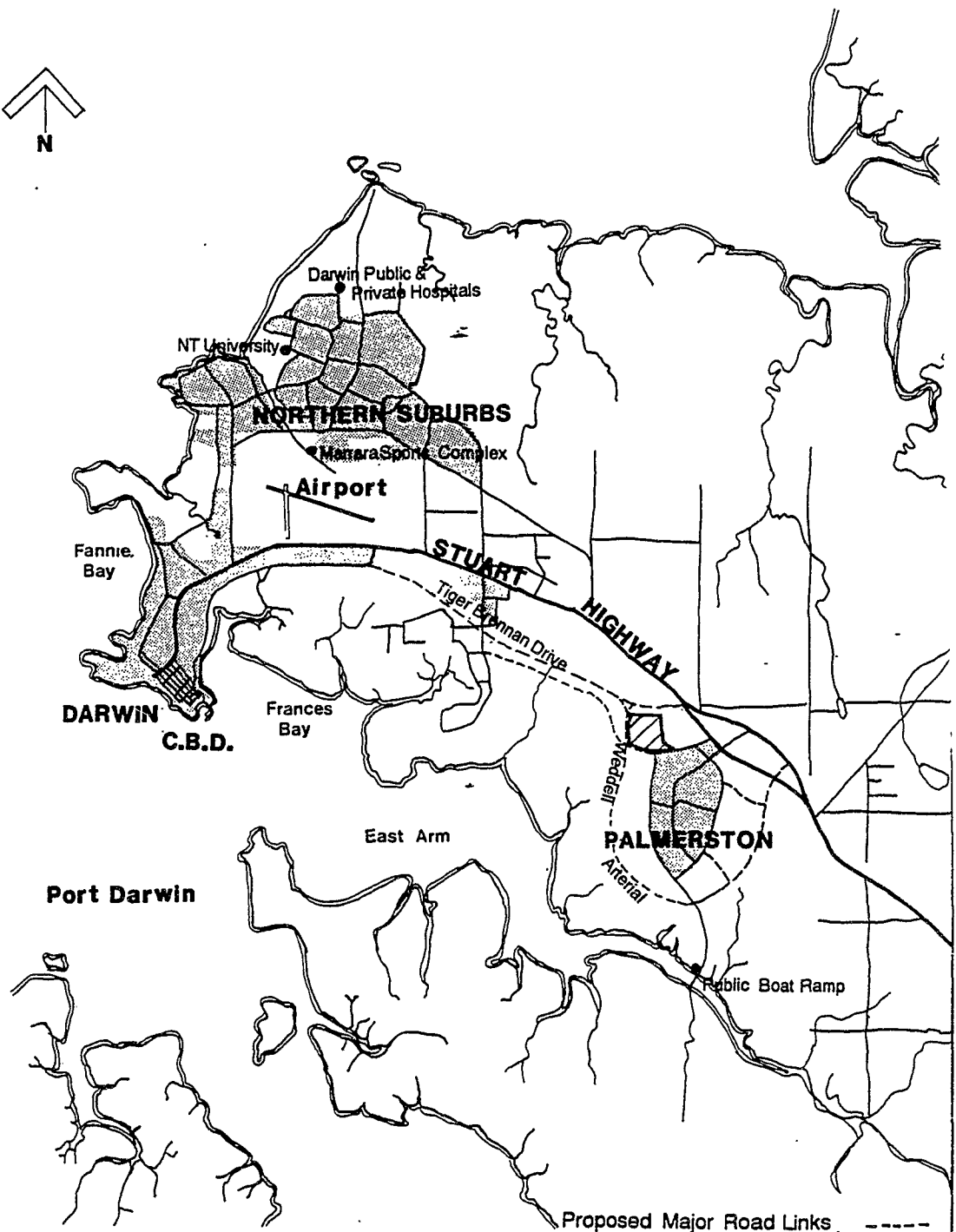
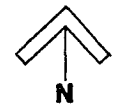
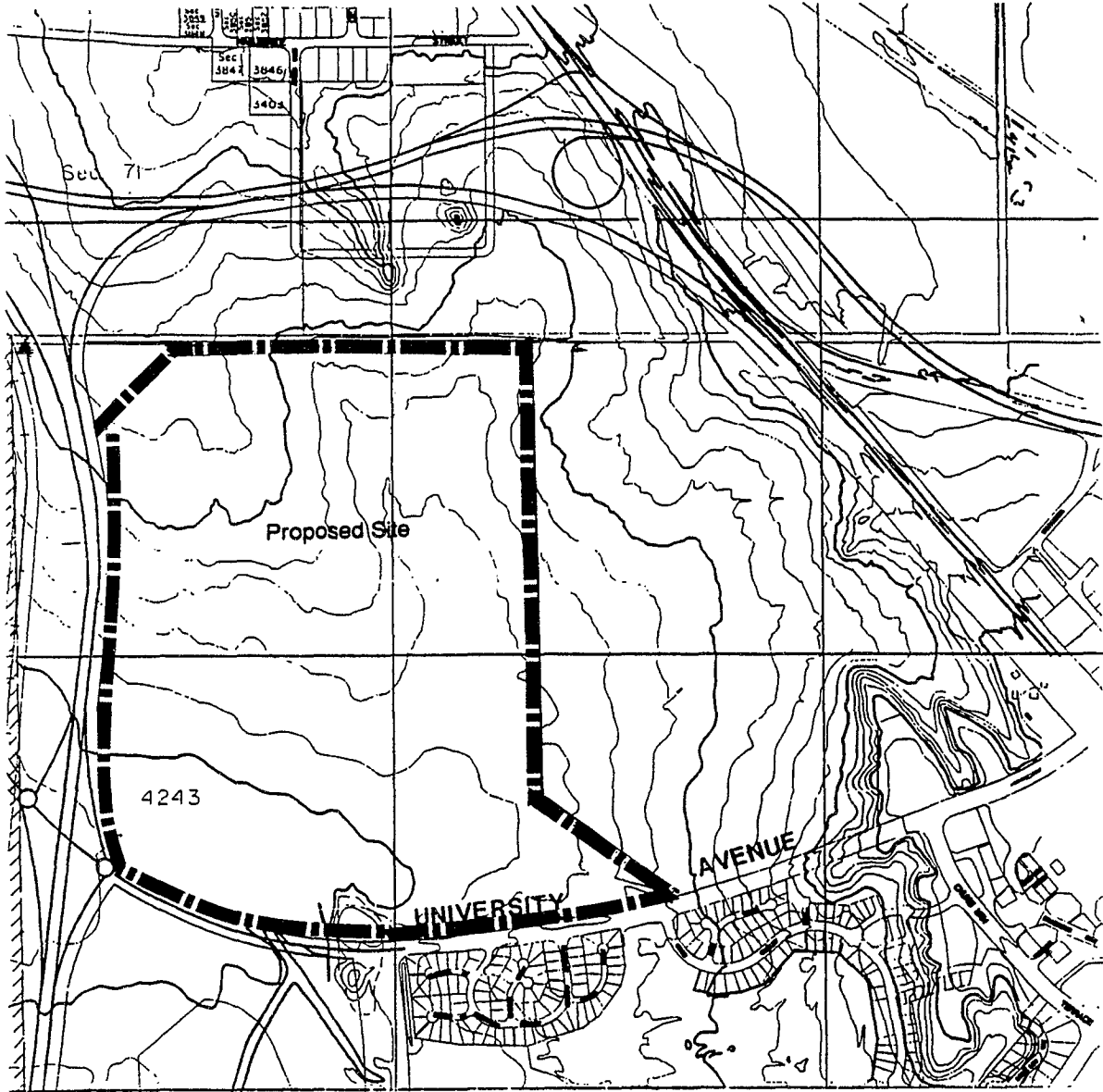


FIGURE

REGIONAL LOCALITY PLAN

R.-1





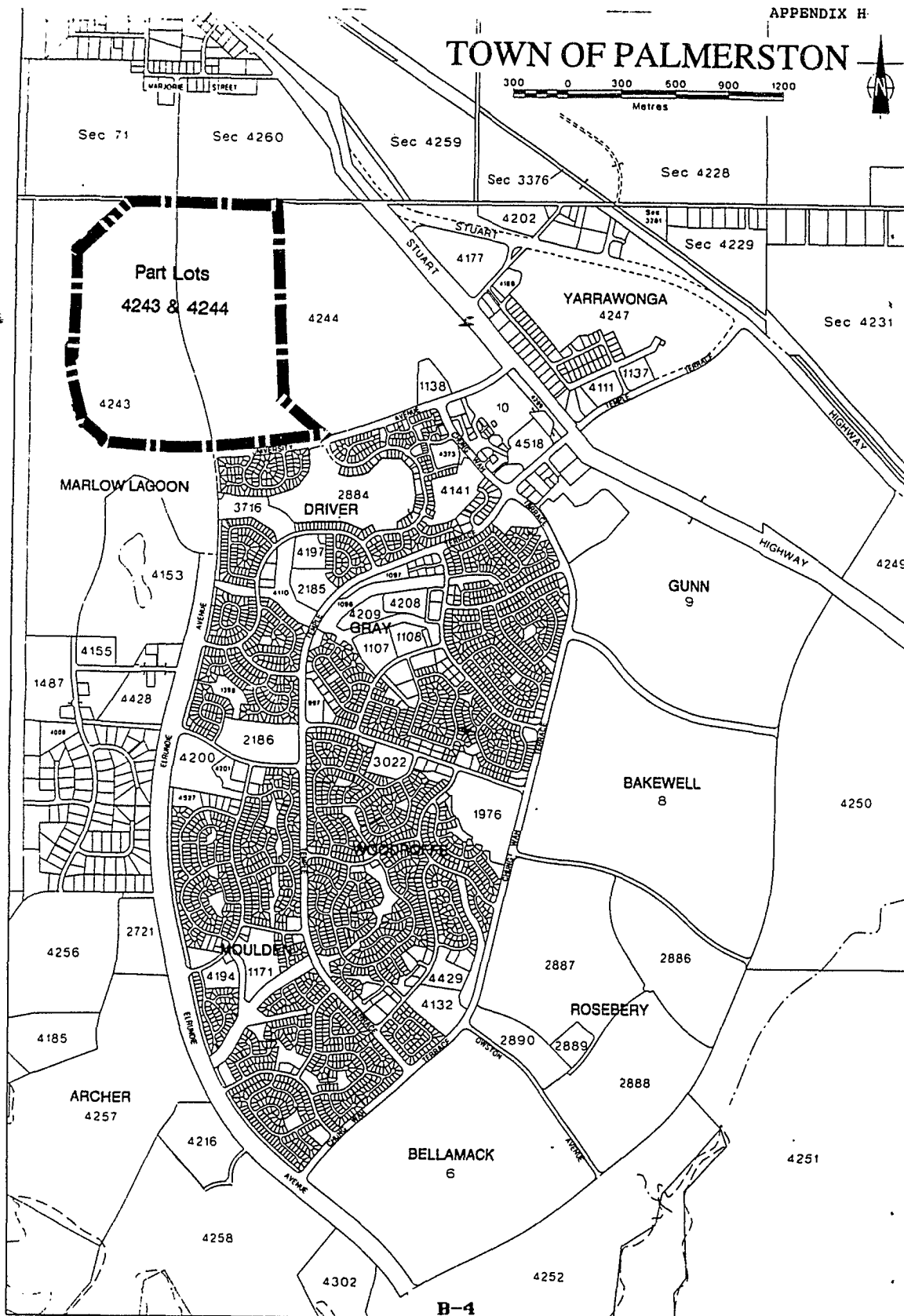
FIGURE

MAJOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES -
DARWIN REGION



TOWN OF PALMERSTON

300 0 300 600 900 1200
Metres



B-4

APPENDIX C

FUNCTIONS, POWERS, ORGANISATION AND OPERATIONS
OF THE
DEFENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Functions and Powers

The functions and powers of DHA include:

- purchasing, developing and disposing of land and houses;
- renting, managing and controlling land and houses; and
- determining and collecting market rents for housing from the Department of Defence.

DHA is required to act in a commercial manner and relies substantially on the services of the private sector for project design, management and construction.

Organisation

DHA has a small Head Office in Canberra and has established a nationwide network of 20 Housing Management Centres (HMC) and 9 District Offices, through which DHA conducts its day-to-day business. The HMCs deal directly with tenants and contractors with the aim of improving the quality and cost effectiveness of repair and maintenance programs.

Furthermore, local Service command elements, as well as tenant representatives, are actively consulted regarding levels of performance of DHA and its contractors and in the planning of its capital works projects.

Operations

DHA has a portfolio of about 24,000 houses. At the time of DHA's establishment, about half of the stock required either substantial improvements and repair, or replacement.

The initial emphasis of DHA's operations was to remedy the most serious deficiencies in the amenities of the housing; to hand back to the States a considerable number of houses under the terms of renegotiation of the

Commonwealth State Housing Agreements (Services Personnel); and to dispose of the poorest housing stock owned.

DHA has adopted a range of options to acquire the housing it needs. It has spot purchased existing houses; built architect designed homes; leased houses from individuals and developers; refurbished homes where this was economically viable; and entered into joint ventures with leading residential property developers for the development of estates and then selecting a quantity of lots to meet its own need.

Close consultation with the Service command structure; Service tenants and spouses; and the wider community is a key strategy of DHA. Consultation with the Services has allowed DHA to keep them advised of its plans and to learn of priorities, preferences and concerns at the earliest possible time. Consultation with tenants and others has enabled DHA to receive suggestions, to learn of mistakes made, and to remove irritants where possible. All HMCs liaise with Tenant Consultative Groups comprised of cross sections of Service spouses who occupy DHA housing. With major developments and redevelopments of well established areas, there is consultation with the local community on design and environmental aspects and, where applicable, on community facilities to be provided.

LAND UNITS

Landform is the basis for classification of the terrain into land units because it has a controlling influence over soils, drainage and vegetation. Land unit descriptions contain elements on landform, their occurrence within the survey area, site drainage, soils, vegetation and an evaluation of the suitability of the land for urban development.

The site is comprised principally of two land units (described as land units 3c and 6c), with some small pockets of land units 3a and 6b.

Land Unit 3c -

- . rolling hills and gentle sideslopes (slopes 2-5%)
- . relief to 15 m. common surface stone and gravel minor outcrop
- . well drained
- . moderately limited for urban development by (soil depth, stone and slope)

Land Unit 3a - minor occurrence

- . well drained, extensive surface gravels
- . gently undulating slopes - less than 3%.
- . moderately limited for urban development by soil depth.

Soils on the hill slopes associated with these land units are described as being excessively drained. This refers to the rapid drainage of the soils profile, and is usually associated with a low moisture storage capacity.

These soils are mainly lithosols, which are characterised by a very high gravel and stone content (40-70% gravel). These are often underlain by uniform sandy loam, grading to sandy clay loam at depth; with minor moderately deep yellow earths.

Land Unit 6c -

- . drainage floors
- . seasonal waterlogging and inundation
- . slopes less than 1%, very minor relief

Land unit 6c is not suited to urban development because of its poor drainage qualities.

Land Unit 6b - minor occurrence

- . sandy margins to streams and more poorly drained areas associated with unit 6c
- . slopes less than 0.5%, relief less than 2 metres
- . subject to flooding and waterlogging in the wet season
- . severely limited for urban development by site drainage

The soils in the drainage floor are Gleyed Podzolic soils, which show a distinct contrast between the surface soil and the sub soil. The surface sets hard upon drying out, but breaks down into dust when disturbed. When wet it has low coherence and low bearing strength. These soils have poor drainage as they are often underlain by clay, which impedes infiltration.