



A Co-operative venture of the municipalities of:
Cockburn, East Fremantle, Fremantle, Kwinana, Melville & Rockingham

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Australian Defence Force Posture Review Secretariat
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Dear Secretariat

**SUBMISSION BY THE SOUTH WEST GROUP ON THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE
FORCE POSTURE REVIEW**

On 22 June 2011 Minister for Defence Stephen Smith announced a Force Posture Review to assess whether the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is correctly geographically positioned to meet Australia's current and future strategic challenges. The review will focus at the strategic level, rather than focusing primarily on individual bases and training areas, to guide subsequent specific decisions that may be taken regarding ADF disposition and the Defence Estate.

The South West Group, formed in November 1983, is a Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC). It comprises the Cities of Cockburn, Fremantle, Melville, and Rockingham, and the Towns of East Fremantle and Kwinana. The South West Group is managed by a Board consisting of the Mayors and CEOs of its member local government authorities.

The South West Group seeks to work with these six local governments and through cooperation with industry, community and the other spheres of government to capture a wide range of opportunities to enhance economic growth as well as supporting a diversity of quality lifestyles whilst servicing and sustaining cohesive, productive communities in an enviable environmental setting.

The South West Group has a significant interest in the geographic disposition of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and these decisions have an impact on locations for home porting, maintenance, skills development and training activities. There are a number of Defence facilities in the South Metropolitan Region including the Leeuwin Barracks, HMAS Stirling and support facilities associated with the Australian Marine Complex (AMC).

The South West Group consider that it is inevitable that there will be a greater ADF presence in Western Australia due to the increasing need for energy security, the increasing global role and importance of India and the development of the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asia Growth Alliance (BIMP-EAGA).

The emergence of home grown terror cells makes defence of some Defence Estate assets more challenging. The Defence Estate should be rationalised to fewer more secure, flexible locations that can be secured against opportunistic attack. The Leeuwin Barracks is one of these bases that has outdated infrastructure, is overlooked from the East and whose role has changed significantly over time.

A number of key issues relevant to the Defence Posture Review that the South West Group have been involved with are listed below, together with recommendations for consideration within the terms of reference.

Climate change

The Western Australian Coast is also vulnerable to Climate Change and the increase in severe weather and sea level rise needs to be taken into account in assessing the future role of Defence assets. For example, the causeway linking Stirling Naval Base to the mainland is low lying and at risk of rising sea levels. Damage to the causeway would restrict access to the base and reduce Defence capability. Opportunities to upgrade the causeway should also consider lengthening the free waterway sections to facilitate increased flushing and water quality improvement for Cockburn Sound as well as reducing the inundation of Rockingham from wave set up.

Relevance - point c in the terms of reference.

Stirling Naval Base – access and causeway modification

The access to the Stirling Naval Base has resulted in social and environmental impacts requiring resolution. From a social perspective, the increase in traffic movements associated with the base has created congestion in nearby residential suburbs, particularly during peak periods. A more efficient and controlled route for staff and contractors entering and leaving the base is required to ensure impacts on residential areas are minimised. There are opportunities to address this issue as part of the proposed Mangles Bay redevelopment which is currently subject to environmental impact assessment.

The physical structure of the causeway itself has restricted the flow of water between Garden Island and the mainland, resulting in reduced flushing of Cockburn Sound and associated water quality problems. This could be resolved by increasing the width of the waterway, which requires longer bridge span lengths, particularly on the southern part of the causeway. The redesign of the causeway needs to also take into account rising sea levels associated with climate change.

Relevance - point c in the terms of reference.

Leeuwin Barracks

It is understood that the review of Leeuwin Barracks is on hold whilst awaiting the outcomes of the Posture Review. The rationalisation of the Leeuwin Barracks site and the opportunities to develop parts of the site for community, cultural and residential purposes is a high priority for the enhanced use of the locality and should continue to be progressed at the same time as the Posture Review. There is an expectation that

the Leeuwin Barracks review would be completed toward the end of this year, however awaiting the outcomes of the Posture Review will add significant delays and stall the momentum for this important initiative.

Relevance - point g in the terms of reference.

Defence Materiel Organisation

The Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) is essential in acquiring and sustaining equipment for the ADF. The South Metropolitan Region is strategically positioned to take advantage the ADF DMO requirements and the Australian Maritime Complex (AMC) at Henderson has well established businesses currently providing equipment and support services to the ADF.

The availability and extent of suitably positioned land for a DMO facility at the AMC is becoming limited, particularly a site that takes advantage of the synergies with the ANZAC SPO and ASC as well as better access by industry. The establishment of a DMO facility at AMC is considered an important strategic issue for the Defence Posture Review.

Relevance - point g in the terms of reference.

Henderson Floating Dock – increased capacity

The floating dock at Henderson is currently capable of lifting 12,000 tonnes and can transfer vessels and modules such as the Collins Class Submarines to land. In order to service the ADF next generation of vessels such as the Air Warfare Destroyer (AWD) and Landing Helicopter Deck (LHD) vessels the floating dock would need to be upgraded to lift 25,000 tonnes. The implementation of the second phase of the floating dock and providing increased lift capability to support Fleet Base West is considered an important strategic issue for the Defence Posture Review.

Relevance – point's f and g in the terms of reference.

Defence Precinct for Defence Support

Getting access to Defence specific skills and training is an essential requirement to maintain ADF capability and human resources. A Defence Precinct for education and training covering technical, undergraduate and graduate courses would significantly enhance access to, and availability of, suitably qualified people to fill critical ADF roles.

The existing Rockingham campus includes Challenger TAFE, Murdoch and Curtin Universities offering courses in relevant disciplines such as engineering (marine/civil/structural/mechanical), shipwright, skipper (Master Class 5), IT systems, human resources management and administration. The establishment of a Defence Precinct at the Rockingham campus would be of great benefit to the ADF and enable the establishment of a centre of excellence for the Defence industry.

Relevance - point f in the terms of reference.

Based on the issues above, the South West Group submission provides a number of recommendations below for consideration in the Australian Defence Force Posture Review.

Recommendations

- 1) The Defence Posture Review includes consideration of the impacts of climate change on key Defence infrastructure assets.
- 2) The causeway to Stirling Naval Base be assessed for its long term capability for access given the potential expansion of the base and the need to increase flushing of Cockburn Sound.
- 3) The current review of the Leeuwin Barracks continue as a separate activity to the Defence Posture Review due to encroaching urban development and the changing role of the facility.
- 4) The Defence Materiel Organisation be relocated to the Australian Marine Complex at Henderson before it is too late to secure an appropriate site to take advantage of the synergies with the ANZAC SPO and ASC as well as better access by industry.
- 5) The second phase of the floating dock at Henderson is completed so that AWD and LHD vessels can be lifted in WA.
- 6) The feasibility of establishing a defence precinct for defence support within the City of Rockingham be commenced.

Yours sincerely



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Chair South West Group