



**Townsville City Council
Townsville Enterprise Limited
Townsville Chamber of Commerce**

**Submission to
Australian Defence Force Posture Review**

September 2011

Introduction

Townsville City Council, Townsville Enterprise Limited and the Townsville Chamber of Commerce welcome the opportunity to provide a combined submission to the Australian Defence Force Posture Review.

This submission affirms the strong local commitment in Townsville to the Australian Defence Force and to developing the city as a key location for defence facilities and operations.

Townsville has a long-established role as a base of ADF operations, backed by strong community acceptance and support.

It also has significant potential to host an expanded defence presence, given the city's infrastructure strengths, strategic location and proven capacity to integrate ADF personnel and their families.

Specifically, this submission addresses points G and H within the Posture Review's Terms of Reference. These being:

- G. assess the impact on the ADF's Force Posture of a range of domestic, demographic and economic issues
- H. make recommendations in relation to the basing options for Force 2030 across Australia

1. Townsville's Defence Establishments and Strategic Role

Townsville is currently a key location for defence operations, particularly with regard to the ADF's ready deployment capabilities. The city's major defence establishments are Lavarack Barracks, RAAF Base Townsville and the Townsville High Range Training Area.

Squadrons stationed at RAAF Base Townsville include No 323 Combat Support Squadron and the Army's No 5 Aviation Regiment.

Stationed at Lavarack Barracks is 3rd Brigade - the largest ready organisation in the ADF. As part of the Enhanced Land Force (ELF) initiative, the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment will relocate to Lavarack Barracks in December 2011. The relocation will help improve the ADF's ability to prepare and deploy high readiness forces. It will add 700-800 personnel to the ADF's presence in Townsville, which in total constitutes approximately 15,000 personnel and dependents.

The *2009 Defence White Paper* (Chapter 15.21) identifies that the Port of Townsville will remain critical for 'operations in the defence of Australia and in our immediate neighbourhood'. Recent developments in the Port of Townsville's defence role include the construction of a multi-user, military vessel and cruise ship facility at Berth 10A - enabled through a June 2011 tri-partite Deed between the Commonwealth, Queensland Government and Port of Townsville Ltd (POTL). The upgraded Berth 10A will accommodate Canberra Class (Landing Helicopter Dock) vessels scheduled for commissioning in 2014, with a minimum 45 days per annum berthing allocation prescribed under the Deed.

In addition, POTL has constructed a bulk fuel line to Berth 9 to provide a high flow rate supply of diesel fuel to defence and other vessels. This line will be further extended to Berth 10A. A dedicated marine aviation fuel facility is also planned for construction on POTL land to service the Landing Helicopter Dock vessels.

Under the terms of the Deed, arrangements at Berth 10A will be reviewed to assess their ongoing adequacy and the requirement for additional development at the proposed Berth 10B.

Notwithstanding the magnitude of this current role and contribution, Townsville has significant scope and potential to support greater defence operations and basing capability over the next two decades.

Townsville is the largest city in Queensland outside of the state's south east corner and lies at the centre of one of Australia's most rapidly growing and significant economic zones.

Industry diversity, government investment and major infrastructure all underpin Townsville's role as the commercial and services hub for North Queensland's mining, agriculture, tourism and tropical sciences sectors.

Since 2005, Townsville's economy has grown at an average of 10 percent per annum - which is roughly two per cent more than Queensland's average performance. The city's current population of almost 192,000 is forecast to grow to between 248,000 and 302,000 by 2031.

Townsville's economy and forecast growth will continue to expand its capacity to accommodate ADF activity. Moreover, the city's ongoing suitability for defence operations is affirmed by its compatibility with the core strategic requirements identified for locating major defence bases and establishments. This compatibility is outlined in further detail below.

2. Townsville's Basing Strengths

The *2009 Defence White Paper* (Chapter 15.16) prescribes a number of strategic basing principles designed to secure the 'future needs of Defence'. These principles cover location, consolidation, infrastructure, family services and a balanced urban and regional disposition.

1. Defence base locations should be aligned with strategic requirements and ensure critical capabilities are suitably dispersed for security reason

Townsville is the largest city in Northern Australia, with its strategic significance generating from proximity to Australia's key maritime approaches, communication lines and areas of interest within South East Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region. It is a location that supports the undertaking of several of the 'principle tasks' for the ADF including: 'detering and defeating attacks on Australia; 'contributing to stability and security in the South Pacific and East Timor; and 'contributing to military contingencies in the Asia-Pacific region'.

2. *Defence should consolidate units into fewer, larger and sustainable multi-user bases aimed at increasing the alignment of functions at Joint and Service level and their capacity to support operations*

Townsville has the capacity to continue developing as a key mounting base and point for rapid force deployment, encompassing major port, rail and airport facilities, and the ADF's largest army base at Lavarack Barracks.

The city is proud of its historical and contemporary military role and there is strong support through the community to sustain and expand Townsville's capability as a base for ADF operations and personnel.

Townsville City Council's Community Plan recognises the city's role as a 'major defence force base'; while there is zoned land available to support a future population of 420,000 residents. The *2011-2036 Townsville Land Use Proposal* estimates a capacity within the city's allocated land to accommodate up to 65,000 new houses, well in excess of the 45,000 new houses required to accommodate the city's forecast population growth to 2031.

3. *Defence should aim to group bases near strategic infrastructure and industry to promote knowledge sharing, innovation, and to maximise the effectiveness of industry support to the ADF*

Townsville is a locus of major rail, highway, port and airport infrastructure. Significant infrastructure work underway includes the current construction of the Port Access Road through the Townsville State Development Area, which has the potential to develop as a major warehousing and inter-modal logistics hub.

Townsville Airport's Northern Australian Aerospace Centre for Excellence (NAACEX) supports state-of-the-art aviation services and maintenance facilities. The Townsville Airport's draft Master Plan sets out the planned development of NAACEX as a major cluster of aerospace and support industries, servicing both commercial and defence purposes.

The city is also a major hub for tropical science and applied research, including James Cook University.

In broader terms, Townsville's economy is based on industry diversity and the city's strengths as a major service centre for health, education and research. A large range of services is currently procured locally by ADF establishments. These include vehicle maintenance and repair, fuel, medical support, food and hospitality, office supplies, laundry, cleaning, pest control, removals and storage.

4. *Where possible, Defence should locate bases in 'family friendly' areas which provide better employment, specialist medical and educational opportunities for families, and with the potential to reduce posting turbulence in order to improve retention*

The attractiveness of Townsville's lifestyle – including its appeal to young families – has been a key contributor of growing migration to the city and its high rate of population growth. Townsville's population is relatively young when compared to other parts of Queensland, reflecting the city's family strengths. The city's average age is 34.8 years, while the Queensland average is 37 years.

Townsville's family amenity is founded upon strong investment in urban and social infrastructure. This includes the Flinders Street shopping precinct in the CBD, the Riverway recreation precinct along the banks of Ross River and the Strand foreshore beach front in North Ward.

Townsville has an extensive network of quality public and privately funded primary and secondary schools, and tertiary education is available through the Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE and James Cook University. Townsville Hospital is the region's largest and Queensland's only tertiary training hospital outside of the south east corner.

The city has a strong sporting and events identity, with extensive facilities for junior sports, national sporting teams such as the North Queensland Cowboys and an annual V8 Supercars race.

Driven by a strong services base and community support, Townsville has continued to emerge as an increasingly popular posting for defence personnel. As noted by Commander 3Rd Brigade, Brigadier Stuart Smith, for instance, the soldiers and families of 3RAR could be assured that their move north from Sydney 'is welcomed by the people and civil institutions of Townsville'.

5. *Defence should maintain an urban and regional disposition to enable the continued provision of part-time capability into the future*

As noted previously, Townsville is the fastest growing regional city in Northern Australia. The city's reserve capability currently includes No 27 City of Townsville Squadron, Head Quarters 11th Brigade, and elements of 11th Brigade including 35 Field Squadron, 11th Combat Services Support Battalion and 31st/42nd Royal Queensland Regiment.

Townsville is one of the key development hubs targeted under the Queensland Government's Regionalisation Strategy, with planning underway to realise its potential as the future second capital city of the state.

Conclusion

Townsville has an established capability to welcome and integrate defence personnel and their families within the local community.

The city is overwhelmingly supportive of its role as a major defence location. Key infrastructure strengths, including Townsville's Port and Airport, combined with strong industry diversity and economic growth mean that the city has substantial capacity to support increased ADF activity and establishments. This capacity is reinforced by a high degree of lifestyle and family amenity.

Townsville City Council, the Townsville Chamber of Commerce and Townsville Enterprise Limited acknowledge the major contribution made by ADF to the Townsville community and look forward to strengthening this vital relationship in accord with Australia's current and future strategic challenges.

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