



# **LATE ITEMS PERFORMANCE & SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING**

## **AGENDA**

**21 OCTOBER 2014**

*Your attendance is required at a meeting of the Performance & Service Committee to be held in the Council Chambers, 232 Bolsover Street, Rockhampton on 21 October 2014 commencing at 9.00am for transaction of the enclosed business.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C. R.", written in a cursive style.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
17 October 2014

Next Meeting Date: 25.11.14

**Please note:**

In accordance with the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, please be advised that all discussion held during the meeting is recorded for the purpose of verifying the minutes. This will include any discussion involving a Councillor, staff member or a member of the public.

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## 8 OFFICERS' REPORTS

### 8.3 DEFENCE WHITE PAPER

**File No:** 10684  
**Attachments:** 1. Draft Submission to Defence White Paper  
**Authorising Officer:** Evan Pardon - Chief Executive Officer  
**Author:** Rick Palmer - Manager Economic Development

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#### SUMMARY

*This report contains a submission regarding the upcoming Defence White Paper.*

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

- 1) The submission be forwarded to Defence for consideration in the preparation of the Defence White Paper which will be released in 2015; and
- 2) A copy be sent to the Department of State Development, Infrastructure & Planning to ensure Council's views are properly considered by the State Government.

#### COMMENTARY

The Federal Government has sought comment from the community on the contents of the Defence White Paper which will be released next year.

The time for submission which can be included in the Defence White Paper expires on Friday 24 November 2014.

A draft submission is attached to this report.

This draft submission contends that in the medium and long term the Rockhampton Region should be further developed and utilised as a geographically, strategic military hub.

In the short term, the following four recommendations need to be achieved as they will help lay the base for the Region to become a strong defence hub and provide increased support for the Shoalwater Bay Training Area (SWBTA):

- Develop a discrete military precinct at the Rockhampton Airport;
- Relocate the Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment (Main Battle Tank) to Parkhurst, North Rockhampton;
- Should the relocation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment not be possible, construct storage in the Rockhampton Region to cater for the Regiment's armoured vehicles, related equipment and stores; and
- Use Port Alma for the importation of bulk explosive ordinance, which could then be stored at the Bajool Explosives Facility.

The possibility of the relocation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment from Darwin was suggested the Premier of Queensland Campbell Newman during the recent North Rockhampton Community Cabinet meeting.

#### BACKGROUND

On 4 April 2014 the Prime Minister and Minister for Defence announced that Defence would produce a White Paper in 2015.

The White Paper will be a whole-of-government product that reflects the Government's overall strategic, fiscal and broader policy priorities.

For some time Council has been discussing with Defence the opportunity of developing a separate Defence precinct at the Rockhampton Airport.

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# **DEFENCE WHITE PAPER**

## **Draft Submission to Defence White Paper**

**Meeting Date: 21 October 2014**

**Attachment No: 1**

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## **Submission by the Rockhampton Regional Council for the 2015 Defence White Paper**

### **Introduction**

The Prime Minister and Minister for Defence announced on 4 April 2014 Defence would produce a White Paper in 2015 to guide Australia's long-term defence capability.

This submission by the Rockhampton Regional Council contends that in the medium and long term the Rockhampton Region should be further developed and utilised as a geographically, strategic military hub.

In the short term, the following four recommendations need to be achieved as they will help lay the base for the Region to become a strong defence hub and provide increased support for the Shoalwater Bay Training Area (SWBTA):

- Develop a discrete military precinct at the Rockhampton Airport;
- Relocate the Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment (Main Battle Tank) to Parkhurst, North Rockhampton;
- Should the relocation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment not be possible, construct storage in the Rockhampton Region to cater for the Regiment's armoured vehicles, related equipment and stores; and
- Use Port Alma for the importation of bulk explosive ordinance, which could then be stored at the Bajool Explosives Facility.

### **Executive Summary**

Rockhampton Regional Council wishes to make the following submission for inclusion in the 2015 Defence White Paper.

In general, Council submits that the Rockhampton Region should be developed as a strategic military hub.

In the immediate term the following projects should be undertaken by Defence in the Rockhampton Region:

#### **Rockhampton Airport Defence Precinct**

For almost 15 years Defence has leased the Optech Building and the nearby military apron at the Rockhampton Airport from Rockhampton Regional Council for military exercises in SWBTA.

Following an incident to a Defence helicopter in 2011, Council has considered how best to progress the continued use of Rockhampton Airport by Defence and other allied forces.

Council would like to provide land for the ADF to build a separate military precinct south of the existing terminal which will permit Defence to conduct uninterrupted operations at the Airport, while allowing current and future day-to-day use of the Airport to be maintained. Council wishes to enter into a long-term lease with Defence for the new precinct.

**Relocation of 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment**

The Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment, which is based at Robertson Barracks, Darwin, is finding it hard to train effectively and store its equipment as a result of the prolonged wet season in the Northern Territory.

Rockhampton Regional Council suggests Defence relocate the Armoured Regiment to Parkhurst, North Rockhampton, which has convenient access to the Bruce Highway and to SWBTA.

The Parkhurst site also has effective access to the Bruce Highway which can be used by flat-bed transporters.

The site boasts excellent transport links to other Australian cities and regions as well to other destinations in the Asia-Pacific Region.

**Military Storage Facilities**

The construction of storage facilities in Rockhampton, similar to the facilities constructed at the Rockhampton Airport by the Singapore Armed Force, would make great financial sense for Defence.

Should the relocation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment from Darwin not be possible, such facilities could be used to cater for the Regiment's armoured vehicles and related equipment.

This facility, which could also be located at Parkhurst, would have good access to SWBTA as well as to Australia's road, rail and sea transport networks.

This facility could also be of considerable assistance to other nations, such as the United States and Japan, which may use SWBTA for training.

**Port Alma and Bajool Explosives Facility**

Council suggests Defence should use Port Alma for the importation of bulk explosive ordinance rather than remediate Port Wilson in Victoria and expand the storage of ordinance at the nearby Bajool Explosive Facility.

Council is committed to advancing the Region's capabilities through its investment in road and rail networks, airport capital works and further development of the Bajool Explosive Facility.

**General Strengths**

The Rockhampton Region contains a reliable pool of qualified and skilled labour, able to respond to the seasonal nature of Defence, with demonstrable expertise in supporting equipment storage, maintenance and logistics.

Council invites Defence to meet with Council to discuss the proposed projects contained in this submission to understand the commitment and investment the Region offers the White Paper.

**Detailed Submission****Rockhampton Airport Defence Precinct**

Rockhampton Airport, which has a 2628m high strength (ACN72/C/1400mpa) main runway, taxiway and aprons, is regularly used by the ADF and the Republic of Singapore Air Force, and each two years by United States Defence as part of Exercise Talisman Saber. The Optech Building, which is leased to Defence, and associated aprons are located to the north of the Rockhampton Airport passenger terminal.

In future Council wants to use the facilities leased to Defence to cater for increased civilian aircraft and passenger movements. These will be used to grow FIFO and charter operations, as well as for site maintenance, hangar facilities and freight distribution centres.

An incident to a helicopter in 2011 during Exercise Talisman Saber highlighted the vulnerability of military aircraft parked at the Rockhampton Airport to sabotage. This prompted Rockhampton Regional Council, which owns and operates the Airport, to look for a more secure solution for parking military aircraft at its Airport.

The proposed defence precinct, which resulted from this strategic re-consideration, is located 500m south of the existing Rockhampton Airport passenger terminal.

It notionally has space for four fast jet and transport aircraft, eight fighter aircraft and 24 helicopters. Vehicular access will have an improved degree of flood immunity with Hunter Street and the access road both being significantly upgraded.

Concept design plans and costings have been prepared by Rehbein Airport Consulting. These plans, copies of which have been provided to Defence, have taken into account the requirements Defence outlined to Council.

Council seeks to lease the new stand-alone defence precinct to Defence under a long term lease. Once the precinct is covered by a Defence lease, it is exempt from the requirements of the Aviation Transport Security Act and Defence can design and build the facility to suit its requirements, including security and safety standards.

Council proposes that the capital cost of constructing the defence precinct be offset by reduced rental and exercise establishment costs.

Council has consulted with Defence through Head of Infrastructure John Owens who agreed in principle to the development of the new military precinct and stated it was time Defence had a more mature, long-term arrangement at Rockhampton Airport due to the importance of SWBTA.

### **Relocation of 1st Armoured Regiment**

In the Australian Government's *Australian Defence Force Posture Review* (30 March 2012), under Army 'Plan Beersheba', pps. 37-38, Section 6.45 states: "If the movement of heavy vehicles between Enoggera and 7 Brigade's main training area becomes a problem, Defence should consider maintaining an establishment of armoured vehicles and related equipment and stores near Shoalwater Bay Training Area. This pre-positioning approach would be similar to the Singapore Armed Forces' equipment storage arrangements in Rockhampton that facilitate its use of Shoalwater Bay Training Area."

The prolonged Northern Territory wet season has posed difficult problems for 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment, which is currently based at Robertson Barracks in Darwin.

As a consequence, Defence has been looking at the possibility of relocating the Regiment to other parts of northern Australia which would enable the Regiment, to function more effectively, particularly in regard to training.

Enoggera Barracks in Brisbane's northern suburbs has been one possibility which has been considered. However, the Barracks are now ringed by suburbia and it is particularly difficult to transport the Regiment's tanks and associated equipment along Brisbane's road system.

A base for the Regiment in Parkhurst, Rockhampton's most northerly suburb, is a realistic possibility, which would have numerous advantages. Such a base could contain extensive, covered hard-stand for storage and maintenance.

SWBTA is one of the world's only military training areas which can accommodate air, sea and land forces, at the same time and is used regularly by the ADF and the Singaporean Armed Forces, and biannually by United States Defence Forces. The changing geo-political environment of Australasia will see its strategic value, location and multi-use capabilities become more important, not less.

Such a base would permit the Regiment to be located 60km from the extensive SWBTA and their tanks and associated equipment could easily be carried in by flat-bed transporters into the training area without causing undue problems to traffic in North Rockhampton, or on the Bruce Highway. The public roads and bridges between Rockhampton and SWBTA are part of the Bruce Highway and have carried a great deal of sophisticated military and civilian traffic for the past 50 years.

Queensland Rail's North Line transverses through Parkhurst. Aurizon plans to masterplan its Parkhurst site next year to determine how it can best be used. It may well be a convenient time in the near future to construct loading facilities on the Northern Line which would enable the Regiment's tanks and associated equipment to be carried by rail.

Good transport links are one of the Rockhampton Region's particular strengths. The Region is particularly well connected to the rest of Australia as well as to the wider Asia-Pacific region. The Bruce, Capricorn, Burnett and Leichhardt Highways all run through Rockhampton, as does the main North Coast rail line providing access north and south by rail.

Rockhampton Airport is capable of catering for the world's largest military and civilian cargo planes and nearby Port of Gladstone has regularly catered for the United States and Singaporean seaborne cargo requirements.

In addition, the Region is well positioned to provide the specialist maintenance skills to maintain tanks and associated equipment. Similar maintenance is currently provided by Rockhampton-based businesses, Hastings Deering, Aurizon, Joy Mining, SMW, MEM, Mastermyne etc, to the resources and transport sectors.

The Region has a well-qualified workforce, which can handle the seasonal nature of Defence, which has demonstrable expertise in equipment storage, maintenance and logistics.

Singapore Armed Forces stores significant amounts of military equipment at its Rockhampton Airport base. The location of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment in Parkhurst would develop a critical collection of tanks, and other military equipment which would facilitate the development of support facilities and skills to maintain tank armaments, other weapons, electro-optics, radio communications, and tank engines and transmissions.

The Rockhampton Region and the adjoining Livingstone Shire Council boast numerous housing developments in which Defence members and their families could live. As in Townsville, there is a wide choice of housing types in the Rockhampton Region, which would enable Defence families to be spread throughout the Region and avoid the development of military housing precincts.

The Rockhampton Region has a well diversified economy with particular strengths in retail (workforce size 2 per cent above the Queensland average), education (2 per cent above the Queensland average), health (3 per cent above the Queensland average), professional services, power generation and beef processing. This diversity will provide spouses and partners of defence personnel with a wide choice job opportunities.

By way of comparison, Rockhampton's current unemployment rate stands at 3 per cent while in Townsville the current unemployment rate is 10 per cent.

As the major service centre for Central Queensland, the Rockhampton Region has an excellent selection of schools, retail and medical services. This is reflected in the service strengths of the Rockhampton economy.

### **Military Storage Facilities**

One of the key facets of the change in Australia's geo-political environment is Japan's move from a defensive-only military capability, imposed on it as part of its defeat in the Pacific theatre in World War II, to an offensive capability. That is, Japan will only continue to re-arm and build its offensive capabilities.

A large part of Japan's military strength lies with its strong Marine Corps, based on the US model. As such, its amphibious forces and beach landing capabilities are perfectly suited to the unique training area SWBTA provides. This submission argues that Japan may well join the US and Singapore to extensively use SWBTA in the future, either individually or in joint exercises.

As such, it is envisaged the ADF's use of SWBTA will also increase and therefore it is financially responsible for the ADF to consider establishing large scale military storage facilities, or a logistic support facility, in Rockhampton, as the Singaporean Armed Forces have done, to avoid the large costs associated with transporting the equipment, technology and personnel to Rockhampton on a 'as needs' basis for every exercise.

While SWBTA will be used primarily by the ADF and its coalition partners, there is a possibility it could also be used by the defence forces of other nations. In the past it's been used by the French Defence Forces from New Caledonia and there is a possibility it could in the future be used by the People's Republic of China.

### **Port Alma and Bajool Explosives Facility**

Port Alma is located 62km east of Rockhampton on the southern tip of the Fitzroy River delta. It is a natural deep water harbour offering security and shelter that can accommodate vessels up to 180m in length.

This port has a Class 1 explosives working limit of up to 1500 tonnes which can be handled over its berths 1 and 2, with the prior approval of Gladstone Ports Corporation.

This explosives capacity is amongst the highest in Australia and is an appropriate corridor for the import of these cargos for Defence and the resources sector. The remoteness and unique nature of

Port Alma together with the development restrictions maintain the necessary exclusion zones for continued explosive use.

The Queensland Government Explosives Reserve and magazine is located at Bajool, 26km by road from Port Alma. This facility has been used by Defence for explosive import operations.

Port Wilson in Victoria continues to be in need of remediation and Council suggests it is a better financial value for Defence to import and export explosives through Port Alma and store the explosives at the Bajool magazine. This benefit is reinforced by the trend to base larger sections of the ADF in northern Australia.