Options for the use of Defence facilities to house Irregular Maritime Arrivals

Recommendations:

Key Points:
6. Defence has also identified RAAF Schergen as a further option. RAAF Schergen has a 420
bed capacity in older style demountables with double banks per room, separate ablutions and
central kitchen / dining. The base could be activated with a minimum of 48 hours notice but
a longer lead time would be preferred.

7. Background information is at Attachment A.

8. Sensitive:

9. High. The media has been speculating on this issue for several months. Any use of Defence
facilities or awareness that this is being considered will receive significant media attention.

Resources:

10. N/A. DIAC has given in principle agreement to meet any associated costs.

Consultation:

11. DIAC and Air Commander Australia.

Attachments:

A. Background information.

Approved By:
Elizabeth Cosson
Major General
Head Defence Support Operations
Defence Support Group
11 March 2010

Contact Officer Name: MAJGEN Elizabeth Cosson | Phone: 02 6265 6135 / 0407 622 031

JOHN FAULKNER
BACKGROUND INFORMATION – OPTIONS FOR THE USE OF DEFENCE FACILITIES TO HOUSE IRREGULAR MARITIME ARRIVALS
RAAF Scherger

11. RAAF Base Scherger was built between 1993 and 1998 and is located approximately 30 kilometres from Weipa in the Northern Cape York area. It is considered a "bare base" with only limited (four RAAF Personnel) caretaker staff posted to the site. The base is used for exercises and major strategic deployments and can support up to 1200 personnel. The establishment is maintained for Defence through the North Queensland Base Services Contract (Sesco Sedeco Defence Services). The base adjoins the Rio Tinto Aluminium mining lease and the Peppan people traditional lands. Rio Tinto Aluminium are planning to conduct further mining activities within their lease on the adjacent land.

12. The base can be activated with 48 hours notice for air operations and personnel. Accessibility may present some challenges in the wet. A recent lightening strike has impacted on power but this should not be a major concern if accommodating up to capacity. The perimeter security is okay but one side boundary is a creek. The security would need to be enhanced to guarantee the residents will be contained.

13. RAAF Scherger is located within the electorate of Leichhardt. Mr Jim Tumour MP is the Member.
MINISTERIAL SUBMISSION

To: Senator Faulkner

Timing: Urgent

Copies to: Secretary, CDF, CAF, DEPSEC DS, DEPSEC S, HMSC, FASMSFA, RD DS-CW, RD DS-VT, RD DS-QLD.

Defence preferred options for use of its facilities to house Potential Illegal Immigrants

Recommendations:
10. RAAF Scherger has also been investigated but Defence does not support this option. This bare base has a 420 bed capacity in older style demountables. Approximately 12 weeks lead time would be required to activate this bare base. Considerations include:

   a. Security. The base has a suitable and serviceable perimeter fence but there is no internal means by which to effectively separate or isolate those areas P1s may utilise from the remainder of the base. This would have an impact on base operational requirements. Alternatively security fencing would need to be erected around the accommodation.

   b. Accessibility. Access to the base by road is limited during the wet season from November to April. Access can be limited to air and sea from Cairns. A regular barge service operates between Cairns and Weipa throughout the year.

   c. Cost. Other than the four RAAF Caretaker staff and day to day contractor support (infrastructure and garrison services) provided from Weipa there is no permanent support staff tenancy on the base. Defence anticipates significant costs associated with providing the logical, technical services and staff support required to set-up and operate the base effectively to support an IMA population for any length of time.

   d. Maintenance. While sufficient electrical generation capacity exists on the base there is a risk to provision of a constant electricity supply (two of six generators are currently unserviceable). Major repairs would need to be undertaken to accommodation walkways.

Sensitivity:

11. High. The media has been speculating on this issue for several months. Any use of Defence facilities will receive significant media attention.

Resources:

12. DIAC has given in principle agreement to meet any associated costs.

Consultation:

13. Strategic Policy and Military Strategic Commitments.

Attachments:

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<td>Contact Officer Name:</td>
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Options for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship’s use of Defence facilities to house irregular maritime arrivals

Recommendations:

vi. agree that RAAF Scherger can be used on a contingency option for emergency surges only.
AGREED / NOT AGREED

vii. note DIAC is now seeking the ongoing use of RAAF Scherger. Defence does not support this option at this stage but will undertake further discussions with DIAC.
AGREED / NOT AGREED
6. RAAF Scherger can be used to house single adult male IMAs in response to emergency surges. There is barrack style accommodation for up to 420 on site that is considered suitable for short term emergency requirements. There is a limitation on messing and sewerage facilities. DIAC is visiting the site next week with Defence to assess the investment required to upgrade existing facilities. In general, the erection of security fencing is needed around accommodation. The security fencing would also be required to ensure that on base operational requirements are not impacted. Access by road is limited during the wet season and Defence anticipates significant costs associated with the logistical, technical services and staff support required to set-up and operate the base effectively for any length of time. DIAC is now seeking ongoing use of RAAF Scherger. The actual proposal, period of time and numbers have not been provided. Defence does not consider this option feasible due to issues with accessibility and the significant infrastructure required to achieve a sustainable operation but will discuss further with DIAC.
7. Over the next two years, there are no major exercises planned that require activation of RAAF Scherger. However, it is used regularly several times a year for smaller training activities by Air Force and Army. Ongoing use by DIAC for IMAs would require this training to be moved to a different location. This would have a minor impact on capability.

Sensitivity:

12. Medium. Any use of Defence facilities to house IMAs is likely to attract media attention. Defence will continue to work with DIAC and assist with contingency accommodation arrangements as requested; however, will ensure that any use will not adversely impact on Defence activities.

Resource:

13. DIAC is responsible for meeting any associated costs.

Consultation:

14. DIAC, Army and Air Force.

Attachments:

A. Background information.
RAAF Scherger

5. RAAF Scherger is another bare base, located approximately 30 km from Weipa in the Northern Cape York area. The base is used for exercises and major strategic deployments. It is serviced by an airfield and it is maintained through the North Queensland Base Services Contract. There are four Air Force caretaker staff on site. The base can support up to 1200 personnel in tent accommodation, with 420 in older style demountables with double bunks per room, separate ablutions and central kitchen/dining. There is a risk to provision of constant electricity supply (two of six generators are unserviceable) plus major repairs would need to be undertaken to accommodation walkways. Defence expects it will take 12 weeks to activate.
Options for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship’s use of Defence facilities to house irregular maritime arrivals

Recommendations:

That you:

1. Note the previous Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon John Faulkner agreed to the following use of Defence facilities to accommodate irregular maritime arrivals (IMAs) HDSO/OUT/2010/AF5322293 (Attachment A):

   a. Use RAAF Schiller, Queensland on a contingency option for emergency surges only.
Sensitivity:

11. Medium. Any use of Defence facilities to house IMAs is likely to attract media attention. Defence will continue to work with DIAC and assist with contingency accommodation arrangements as required, however will ensure that any use will not adversely impact on Defence activities.

Resources:

12. DIAC is responsible for meeting any associated costs.

Consultation:

13. DIAC.

Attachments:

A. HDSO/OUT/2010/AF5322293 dated 6 July 2010
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Contact Officer Name: MAJGEN Elizabeth Cossen | Phone: (02) 6265 6135 (M) 0407 622 031
RAAF Base Scherger and its use by Department of Immigration and Citizenship

Recommendation:
That you:

i. note the legal advice received from the Australian Government Solicitor advises

NOTED / PLEASE DISCUSS

ii. note that in the interest of being good neighbours and respectful of the Traditional Owners, Defence has commenced engagement with the Nappanum Aboriginal Council and the Cape York Land Council with a view to engage the Traditional Owners.

NOTED / PLEASE DISCUSS

Key Points:

1. Defence and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) have been negotiating the use of Defence establishments on mainland Australia to accommodate irregular maritime arrivals (IMAs).

4. You agreed to the use of RAAF Base Scherger as an immediate short term accommodation solution to accommodate up to 300 single adult men until the extended facilities at RAAF Base Curtin are available. The proposed site for this short term accommodation facility is within the Southern core of RAAF Base Scherger, utilising barrack style accommodation and amenities. The site will require some minor works including the construction of a fence to enhance security. The proposed area is on wholly-owned Commonwealth land and shown on the attached maps at Attachment A.
5. **RAAF Base Scherger comprises four sectors:**
   a. Southern sector – the Commonwealth compulsorily acquired all rights and interest in 1992 'for the public purpose of defence'.
   b. Southern buffer – the Commonwealth entered into a licence agreement Comalco (now Rio Tinto Australia) in July 1993 with a $1.00 pa lease fee if demanded. The Commonwealth also contributes towards road maintenance at approx $8,000 pa.
   c. The Northern core and the Northern buffer – the Commonwealth entered into a lease with the Peppan Land Trust in November 1992 @ $0.100m per annum.

6. There is also an agreement with the Napranum Aboriginal Council for the Traditional Owners and other indigenous families to access a significant site. I understand that there have not been any access requests in recent years.

7. **On 21 September 2010 the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) provided legal advice that:**
   
   Additional detail regarding AGS's advice on this matter is at *Attachment B*.

8. The Cape York Land Council (CYLC) wrote to the Minister for Immigration on 21 September 2010 asking that all works on the site be suspended until further notice. This letter is at *Attachment C*. The CYLC is the nominated representative of the Peppan family who are the recognised Traditional Owners of the land and Defence and DIAC have agreed to meet with the Peppan elders to discuss the proposed use of RAAF Base Scherger as soon as a meeting can be arranged.

9. Although Defence does not have a legal obligation to consult with the Traditional Owners or to obtain consent, as a good neighbour and being respectful of the history and heritage Defence has already engaged in discussions with local Aboriginal Councils, including:
   a. Defence has met with Cr Chevathan from the Napranum Land Council
   b. Defence has met with the Chair of the CYLC, Mr Richie AhMat and I have also asked Mr AhMat to contact me to arrange further meetings and consultation.

10. Defence will now coordinate a joint DIAC/Defence meeting through CYLC with the Peppan family and the Napranum Land Council. One of the key challenges of this meeting will be coordinating discussions with all parties in a timely manner. All meetings with the indigenous community will be held jointly with DIAC. Pending this meeting, no work has commenced at RAAF Base Scherger to provide the immediate short term accommodation for IMAs. Fencing material has been procured and is expected to be delivered on site by 30 September.

11. The Peppan family and the broader indigenous community are also seeking assurance that any additional use of the RAAF Base Scherger site will offer employment opportunities and positive business outcomes for the communities.

12. Defence will continue to provide updates to you regarding these meetings.

**Sensitivity:**

13. High – there has been widespread media coverage on these issues.

**Resources:**

14. N/A.
Consultation:


Attachments:

A. Map of RAAF Base Scherger.

B. Summary of the legal advice received from the Australia Government Solicitor.

C. Letter from the Cape York Land Council to the Minister for Immigration.

Approved By:
Elizabeth Cosson
Major General
Head Defence Support Operations
Defence Support Group

28 September 2010
Contact Officer Name: Elizabeth Cosson

Phone: 02 6265 6135

STEPHEN SMITH
UNCLASSIFIED

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – LEGAL ADVICE FROM AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SOLICITOR

Section 42

UNCLASSIFIED
To: The Honourable Chris Brown, MP
From: Shiloh Villaflor
Date: 21 September 2010

Dear Mr. Bowen MP,

Re: Peppan People - Sheller RAAF Base - Proposed Establishment of Immigration Detention Centre

Please find attached correspondence sent on behalf of our Chairman Mr Richie Ah Mat.

Yours faithfully,

CAPE YORK LAND COUNCIL

Shiloh Villaflor
Project Support Officer

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Fax: (07) 4053 9207

Facsimile
21 September 2010

The Honourable Chris Bowen, MP
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship
PO Box 802
FAIRFIELD NSW 2165

BY FACSIMILE: (02) 9724 6115

Dear Mr Bowen MP,

I attended a meeting with the Peppan People in Weipa, yesterday. I am informed that the Peppan People oppose the establishment of detention infrastructure on their lands. You will be aware that the existing infrastructure of the RAAF Base was established after a lengthy and detailed process of consultation, informed engagement and granting of traditional owner consent for the specific purpose of establishment of an Air Base. Traditional Owner Consent was not granted for any other purpose and not for the establishment of detention infrastructure.

The Traditional Owners have sought the assistance of CYLC to oppose your proposal to house asylum seekers within the area of the Scherger RAAF Base without their consent.

I write on behalf of the Peppan People who we recognise as the Traditional Owners for the whole of Area of the Scherger RAAF Base outside of the Weipa Township, Cape York Queensland.
The Traditional Owners request that you engage with them and seek their consent for your proposal before progressing further.

The Traditional Owners have indicated that they have great concerns that you will proceed with your proposal without engaging with them and seeking their prior informed consent. I have been asked to communicate a request from the Traditional Owners that you immediately cease all proposed construction and that you urgently speak with us about a proper process of engagement with the Traditional Owners for the Area.

It will be essential for us to understand your proposal so that we can communicate same to the Traditional Owners in a structured way. It is our view that communicating your plans for this area via the media is both inappropriate and unconstructive. The Traditional Owners were greatly offended when they first heard of your proposal by Radio News on Friday evening.

I would appreciate it if you would urgently respond in writing:

1. Providing your assurance that you will cease your plan to construct infrastructure on the Area of the Air Base and engage with the Traditional Owners in a structured way to seek their informed consent for your proposal before you progress further with it;

2. Providing detailed plans of your proposal to us, specifically:

   a) A map of the area at the Air Base and plan for any infrastructure incidental to the establishment of a deterring centre i.e. upgrades to water, sewerage and electricity infrastructure, fencing and lighting; and
   b) A detailed plan, map and or drawing of any work done to date which relates to your proposal.

Should you wish to discuss this matter by phone, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0413 294 678.

Yours faithfully,

Cape York and Tiwi Council

Chairman

Richie Ah Mat

I have sought to make it clear that we wish to address the serious concerns of the Traditional Owners in a structured way to seek their informed consent for your proposal before you proceed further with it.
Subject: DIAC's request to extend the use of RAAF Scherger to June 2012

Purpose:
The purpose of this submission is to provide advice on Defence's position regarding Department of Immigration and Citizenship's (DIAC) informal proposal to extend use of RAAF Scherger to accommodate irregular maritime arrivals (IMA) till June 2012.

Key Points:
1. Your office sought advice as to whether the proposed extended duration of DIAC's use of RAAF Scherger to accommodate IMAs until June 2012 would cause undue problems.
2. Air Force have advised that there are no planned major activities for RAAF Scherger for the period DIAC proposes to utilise the facility. Army is expected to conduct a training course this year using base facilities. This activity will be well away from the DIAC footprint and is not expected to create any disruption to DIAC.
3. Therefore, Defence foresees no impediment to the proposed extension to DIAC tenure on Scherger. Arrangements will be put in place to ensure appropriate remediation by DIAC of facilities used to accommodate IMAs.
4. DIAC is yet to formally approach Defence to extend its tenure at RAAF Scherger.

Recommendation:
That you:
1. Note Defence foresees no impediment to the proposed extension to DIAC tenure on RAAF Scherger to June 2012.
   Noted / Please Discuss

Approved By

Mark Jenkin
Head Defence Support Operations

Date 11 February 2011

Contact Officer: Geoff Hay

Section 4AF
Resources
2. N/A

Consultation
3. Air Commodore Neil Hart, Director General Capability Planning – Air Force and Army have cleared this response.
Subject: Potential DIAC request to extend the use of RAAF Scherger to June 2013

Purpose:
The purpose of this submission is to provide advice on Defence's position should the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) propose to extend its use of RAAF Scherger to accommodate irregular maritime arrivals (IMA) until June 2013 and also increase numbers two or threefold.

Key Points:
1. Your office sought advice as to whether the proposed extended duration of DIAC's use of RAAF Scherger to accommodate IMAs until June 2012 would cause undue problems. You were provided advice on this on 11 Feb 2011. DIAC is yet to make any formal approach to Defence to change the existing arrangement for occupancy to June 2011.

2. Defence has considered the implications should DIAC propose to extend further to June 2013 and/or increase numbers located on the base two or three fold.

3. The current planned operational capacity of RAAF Scherger from the DIAC perspective is 300. Currently 314 IMAs are accommodated on site. Maps showing the location of the precinct utilised by DIAC (Attachment A) and an aerial picture of the precinct marked up to indicate perimeter fencing and use of facilities (Attachment B) are included for your reference.

4. Air Force has confirmed that should DIAC wish to extend its occupancy until June 2013, this would not have a major impact on Air Force activities. Army has no issues with potential DIAC extension to June 2013.

5. RAAF Base Scherger is subject to several infrastructure and maintenance works in the coming years, which will potentially impact DIAC operations. These will need to be discussed with DIAC before any Defence commitment to extended use occurs.

6. The long term sustainability of the current sewage and water treatment facilities would need further investigation in considering an extension of tenure beyond June 2012.

7. Therefore, in principle, Defence sees no impediment to an extension of DIAC's tenure at RAAF Scherger to June 2012. However, any agreement beyond June 2012 would be dependent on working through issues around planned infrastructure and maintenance works and a detailed assessment of the sustainability of the infrastructure to identify any works required.
8. The current Living-In Accommodation/Cyclone Shelters are at capacity and additional facilities would be required should the number of IMAs increase. Should DIAC wish to increase the number of occupants at the base, there is a concern as to the sustainability of base facilities. Therefore, any significant increase of the number of IMAs accommodated at Scherger is not feasible at this point.

9. Noting the degree of concern expressed by local residents, local authorities and the traditional owners of the land and the resultant media attention when RAAF Scherger was first announced as a potential site for accommodating IMAs, it would be prudent to allow sufficient time for face-to-face consultation before any public announcement about changed arrangements for DIAC’s tenure is made.

Recommendation:

That you:

i. Note that subject to a detailed assessment of the sustainability of current infrastructure Defence believes an extension of DIAC’s tenure on RAAF Scherger to June 2012 is achievable.

   Noted / Please Discuss

ii. Note that extension of DIAC’s tenure on RAAF Scherger beyond June 2012 requires further consideration.

   Noted / Please Discuss

iii. Note that it is not feasible for an increase in the number of IMAs to the current facilities occupied by DIAC on RAAF Scherger.

   Noted / Please Discuss

Approved By

Mark Jenkin
Head Defence Support Operations
17 February 2011

Contact Officer: Brigadier Peter Short

Primary Addressee

Stephen Smith

Information Addressee

Warren Snowdon

David Feeney
Resources
2. N/A

Consultation
3. Air Force Headquarters and Army Headquarters have contributed to this submission.

Attachment
A. Map of RAAF Scherger which shows DIAC footprint
B. Aerial photo marked up to indicate DIAC's use of the current facilities.
Subject: Extension of DIAC Tenure on RAAF Scherger to June 2013

Purpose:
The purpose of this submission is to advise you that Defence can accommodate an extension of Department of Immigration and Citizenship’s (DIAC) tenure at RAAF Scherger to accommodate irregular maritime arrivals (IMA) at current levels until June 2013.

Key Points:
1. On 11 February 2011 Defence advised that a proposed extended duration of DIAC’s use of RAAF Scherger to accommodate IMAs until June 2012 would not cause undue problems (Attachment A). Defence subsequently provided advice regarding the implications should DIAC propose to extend further to June 2013 and/or increase numbers located on the base two or three fold. (Attachment B)
2. Defence is confident that the facilities at RAAF Scherger can sustain current DIAC usage to June 2013.
3. Defence will develop an agreement with DIAC to ensure that water, sewerage and power infrastructure are maintained at appropriate levels during DIAC’s tenure with incremental costs to be borne by DIAC.
4. Whilst there are no current plans for Defence use of RAAF Scherger, it will remain available to the Services for minor operational contingencies, provided DIAC’s use of Scherger remains at current levels. In the unlikely event that a substantial ADF requirement to use RAAF Scherger occurs, arrangements for suitable alternative temporary accommodation for IMAs would be negotiated.

Recommendation:
That you:

i. Note that Defence can accommodate an extension of DIAC’s tenure on RAAF Scherger to June 2013.
   Noted / Please Discuss

ii. Note that extension of DIAC’s tenure on RAAF Scherger beyond June 2013 or a significant increase in the number of IMAs accommodated requires further consideration.
   Noted / Please Discuss
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<td>A.</td>
<td>Map of RAAF Scherger which shows DIAC footprint</td>
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<td>B.</td>
<td>Aerial photo marked up to indicate DIAC's use of the current facilities.</td>
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Subject: Immediate Expansion of Detainee Accommodation at RAAF Base Scherger

Purpose:
To advise you of action underway by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to expand its use of RAAF Base Scherger and of any implications for Defence.

Key Points:
1. On 14 March 2011, Government agreed in-principle, to the expanded use of RAAF Scherger, to the maximum extent possible, to accommodate additional Illegal Maritime Arrivals (IMA) currently from Christmas Island.

2. RAAF Scherger currently accommodates 300 single male IMAs. A further 250 IMAs can be accommodated utilising Defence tentage and bedding available on site and reconfiguration of the administration facilities.

3. The proposed tent sites are within the security fence and have power connections but not air conditioning. Current infrastructure (water, sewerage and power) can support this increased number of detainees for the planned period up to July 2011.

4. DIAC is arranging labour to establish the accommodation under Defence supervision.

5. Defence understands that DIAC is planning to move 170 IMAs to RAAF Scherger as early as 16-17 March. Defence has conducted planning and scoping in preparation to assist with this task and is in a position to quickly make available equipment and support when formal direction is given.

6. DIAC has advised that this situation is a temporary measure anticipated to last for some months. Additional information on the expanded use of Scherger is provided at Attachment A.

Recommendation:
That you:

i. Note that Defence is assisting DIAC to plan and implement the expanded use of RAAF Scherger to accommodate IMAs from Christmas Island.

Noted / Please Discuss
ii. Note that Defence is able to provide space and equipment at RAAF Scherger to accommodate a further 250 IMAs with labour provided by DIAC.

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Resources:
8. DIAC will meet all of its costs associated with its operation of facilities on the Defence estate and any enhancements made. This includes payments to its contractors for services provided. Where agreed, DIAC will pay to Defence costs associated with consumption of utilities, maintenance of occupied Defence facilities and alterations and installation of additional equipment and infrastructure. These arrangements are included in a completed MOU for Curtin and will be reflected in the one for Scherger which is under development.

Consultation
9. DIAC has been consulted regarding this proposal. Air Force has been consulted and has agreed to the expanded use of the facility and use of the equipment.

Attachment:
A. Background information.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ADDITIONAL USE OF RAAF BASE CURTIN AND SCHERGER BY DIAC

RAAF Scherger

7. 300 detainees are currently at Scherger. Capacity is 314. Additionally up to 100 DIAC and contracted staff work at Scherger and are accommodated in Weipa.

8. DIAC intends that Scherger will accommodate a significant proportion of the up to 600 detainees from Christmas Island, to the extent that Scherger can sustain this population in addition to the 300 already there. Current planning indicates an additional 250 detainees could be accommodated at Scherger under tentage in the immediate term.

9. A tented solution brings with it additional stores and equipment requirements in the form of lighting, air conditioning, flooring, dry walkways etc. Over time, DIAC would replace tents with demountable buildings. The current wet season limits use of road transport for this purpose. Tentage would accommodate upwards of 250 people inside the current security fence. Additional space outside the security fence could be utilised but would require increased security fencing to be put in place.

10. Additionally, staff accommodation in Weipa is limited once the wet season concludes and may require solutions to be considered on Scherger which will exacerbate overall issues. Relocation...
of staff from the current administrative building in order to house detainees might require some communication enhancements to the base and relevant buildings.

11. RAAF Base Scherger infrastructure (power, water and sewerage) is assessed as having potential limitations in its ability to support additional personnel. Current assessments indicate that an additional 200-250 people are probably sustainable but further and ongoing analysis is necessary. The risks associated with this will need to be carefully considered by DIAC and Defence as part of the planning for expanded activation. Power generators are planned to be replaced by the end of 2011. Construction of new water bores is planned at the commencement of the dry season. Sewage treatment facilities have to date never been used to their capacity, a surge such as that intended by DIAC may compromise this infrastructure.

12. Water is provided by a single bore. There are plans to construct two more bores in time. Should the single bore fail, water could be trucked in.
Subject: Immediate Expansion of Detainee Accommodation at RAAF Base Curtin and RAAF Base Scherger

Purpose:
To advise you of action underway by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), assisted by Defence, to expand the use of RAAF Base Curtin and RAAF Base Scherger to accommodate additional detainees.

Key Points:
1. Government has agreed in-principle to the expanded use of RAAF Base Curtin and RAAF Base Scherger, to the maximum extent possible, to accommodate additional illegal Maritime Arrivals (IMAs).

2. As at 18 March 2011 RAAF Base Scherger was accommodating 300 single male IMAs. Since then an additional 72 detainees have been airlifted from Christmas Island and housed in a combination of marquee tents and accommodation blocks within the existing security fence line.

3. DIAC is planning to transport additional marquees, with bedding and other equipment, to house additional detainees at Scherger by the end of this week. This would take the total number of detainees at Scherger to around 600.

4. Additionally, Defence is working with DIAC to enable use of powered tent pads, currently just outside the fence perimeter, to house a further 270 detainees within the next two to three weeks. This will require contractor support to move the security fence line, erect tentage and transport bedding and other stores not currently available on site.

5. The monitoring of current infrastructure (water, sewerage and power) and emergency management procedures at Scherger to support this increased number of detainees will be undertaken by Defence.
Recommendation:

That you:

i. Note that Defence is assisting DIAC to plan and implement the expanded use of RAAF Base Scherger and RAAF Base Curtin to accommodate IMA's relocated from Christmas Island.

Noted / Please Discuss

Approved By

S. Lewis
DEPSEC DS
21 March 2011

Contact Officer: BRIG Pete Short

Primary Addressee

Sec-tion 47F
Stephen Smith

Information Addressee

Noted / Please Discuss

Warren Snowdon

David Feeney

Resources:

9. DIAC will meet all of its costs associated with its operation of facilities on the Defence estate and any enhancements made. This includes payments to its contractors for services provided. Where agreed, DIAC will pay to Defence costs associated with consumption of utilities, maintenance of occupied Defence facilities and alterations and installation of additional equipment and infrastructure. These arrangements are included in a completed MOU for Curtin and will be reflected in the one for Scherger which is under development.

Consultation

10. DIAC, Air Force, Army and JOC have been engaged in planning for and executing this expanded use of Defence facilities by DIAC.