



**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE**

Ref No: MC22-002070

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister
PO Box 5100
MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204

Dear Prime Minister *Anthony*

Thank you for your correspondence of 12 August 2022 in relation to Defence land at 140A Hawthorn Parade Haberfield, New South Wales. I appreciate the time you have taken to bring this matter to my attention.

Defence has been seeking to divest the 1.9 hectare former Army Reserve Depot at Haberfield since the early 2000s when it was determined as surplus to Defence requirements. This would fulfil obligations under the Commonwealth Property Disposal Policy to sell surplus land on the open market, and unlock opportunities for alternative uses such as increased housing and community amenities. Conclusion of the subdivision and sale would also resolve longstanding legal obligations with private contract holders, who have maintained a financial interest in some of the land lots since 2003.

This has been a protracted process, and I recognise that members of the community have raised concerns, particularly in relation to flood risks and community and environmental impacts.

In consultation with the Inner West Council and contracted expert civil engineers, Defence has taken steps to mitigate flood risks related to the development of the site. This includes internal and external storm water drainage and internal maintenance of the site. Defence commenced civil drainage works in February 2022 and expects to complete this work by early 2023. I have also been advised that Defence is working with the Inner West Council and the contractors to protect surrounding private properties and trees during the flood mitigation and development work.

Defence has taken other steps to maintain the site, including the remediation of a previous contamination. This has been certified by an independent auditor in accordance with the *Contaminated Land Management Act 1997*.

Although the current Development Application approved by the Inner West Council would not transfer the entire land to the Council, I am pleased to advise that a part of the subdivision will include land for public open space and community use.

I would like to assure you and affected residents that engagement with the community continues to be a priority. In addition to previous community consultations and door knocks through surrounding areas, I have asked Defence to be available for further engagement. Defence will update the public on key developments through the Defence website <https://defence.gov.au/id/propertydisposals/Haberfield.asp>. Members of the community can also contact the responsible area in Defence at estate.disposals@defence.gov.au.

Thank you for bringing this issue to my attention. I trust this information is of assistance to residents in the Haberfield area.

Yours sincerely



RICHARD MARLES

13/9/22