

Lauder Pty. Ltd.

First Floor
Old Post Office Building
138 Margaret St
Toowoomba
Queensland 4350

PO Box 764
Toowoomba
Queensland 4350

ABN 20 084 277 574

Ph/Fax: (07) 46 388504
Email: lauder@icr.com.au

11th May 2009

FILE COPY

Hon. Dr. Mike Kelly AM MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mike

RE: Possible Closure of Borneo Barracks

Thank you for your letter of 3rd April 2009 (copy enclosed) in reply to our letter to Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP and to the Prime Minister concerning the possible closure of Borneo Barracks. (BB)

We note in your reply that the process of review of the Defence bases is ongoing to ensure that they meet developing strategies and that because the White Paper for Defence (Defending Australia In The Asia Pacific Century: **Force 2030**) was not released at that time, that it would be inappropriate for the Government to comment on the future of Borneo Barracks or any other base.

Now that the White Paper has been released we note that there is no direct comment with regard to the future of Borneo Barracks but we do note the following:

- **Under Chapter 9:** Capability Priorities for Force 2030, **Section 9.92 Electronic Warfare**, that Defence will establish a joint EW (Electronic Warfare) Centre which ... **“Subject to further evaluation, the new centre will probably be located in Adelaide”** (p 84) Seeing that BB currently has a EW component we assume that this is a significant statement?
- **Under Chapter 15:** Supporting The ADF, **Section 15.6 The Defence Estate**. The Government has established a 5 dot point **“strategic basing principals to meet the future needs of Defence”** (p121) We assume that the future of bases such as Borneo Barracks will be assessed against these 5 criteria?

We and our community still remain VERY concerned with the possible future closure of the Borneo Barracks base and the resultant 845 job losses, \$105m ripped from the Toowoomba regions economy (2% of the economy) and over 200 houses being sold or not rented to Defence or allied personnel. (2 years housing supply in Toowoomba). (Ref. SGS Report)

If we apply the above criteria to BB then with at least some of them, a strong argument could be mounted for the retention of Defence activities at BB?


The Highfields and effected Toowoomba community have put together a petition objecting to the possible closure of Borneo Barracks with over 2000 signatures which has been provided to the Government through the Highfields Better Business Group via the local member Ian Macfarlane MP. Furthermore there has been strong local support to oppose any closure of Borneo Barracks from the broader community through public meetings, the RSL, elected QLD state government members, the Local Authority - Mayor and Councillors, Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce and many others.

While we remain opposed to any moves to close Borneo Barracks our concern also relates to Defence's timing of any intended closure and the actual date proposed for the bases closure? Our own research by Urban Economics Pty. Ltd. (who have conducted detail Market Research for Lauder Pty. Ltd. in the Highfields area for over a decade), tells us that if the current rate of community growth was maintained (approx 6%) in the area, then an announcement circa 2015 with actual closure by circa 2020 would result in a seamless transition between the current Defence activities and the other- then- Defence uses for Borneo Barracks.(please see our web site www.highfieldsvillage.com.au and click on Borneo Barracks and then go to Urban Economics assessment) **Any other date proposed prior to this time frame would result in serious economic losses and social disruption for the Toowoomba region.**

Uncertainty as to the bases future is causing community concern and economic instability for the region by where business owners and indeed financiers are asking what the bases future is before investing into the region.

We therefore seek the immediate clarification of the Government's and Defences position with respect to the future of Borneo Barracks?

Yours sincerely



Mac Stirling
Managing Director
Lauder Pty. Ltd.

Cc. Dep. Mayor Toowoomba Regional Council Cr. Paul Antonio
Member for Toowoomba North Kerry Shine MP.