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Barracks becomes an election issue

Jim Campbell | 10th August 2010

THE future of the Borneo Barracks became an election issue yesterday when Member for Groom Ian Macfarlane said a Coalition Government would retain the barracks at Cabarlah.

Mr Macfarlane and Opposition spokesman on Defence Stuart Robert made a joint commitment to the base's future.

"The Coalition recognises the important contribution the Borneo Barracks makes to both Australia's Defence Force and to the local community," Mr Macfarlane said.

"An Abbott Government would be committed to keeping it here on the Darling Downs."

The Department of Defence announced in 2006 it was considering relocating the Cabarlah barracks to Adelaide, a move expected to cost the local economy about \$92.6 million.

As yet no decision has been made on the fate of the site, home of the 7th Signal Regiment.

Labor candidate for Groom Chris Meibusch said the Labor Government had made it clear no bases were identified for closure and said any uncertainty surrounding the future of Borneo Barracks had come from the Howard Government and the then Defence Minister Brendan Nelson.

"It was their policy that came up with the super base model," he said.

"The Labor Government have taken the proper course of sending this back to the Defence Department for them to consider local social and economic impacts when considering base closures across Australia."

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