

Review of Environmental Factors Consultation Summary Report



Cessnock Correctional Centre Correctional Centre Increase Program On Behalf of NSW Justice

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Appendices

- A** Stakeholder letter

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1.0 Introduction

This consultation summary report has been prepared by JBA for NSW Justice to outline the key issues received by the local community and stakeholders during the preparation of the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for the proposed expansion of the Cessnock Correctional Centre.

1.1 Consultation overview

A letter was delivered to surrounding properties on 22 July 2016 which provided local residents with information about the proposed expansion, as well as a map of proposed works.

A project specific email address and telephone number were set up to provide local residents and stakeholders with an outlet to ask questions and provide feedback.

Between 22 July and 22 August the project email address post box received 163 emails and letters. The project telephone number received five calls.

2.0 Summary of feedback

The feedback received through the information channels will be considered as part of the REF.

The table below provides a summary of the key issues raised and the responses provided.

Theme / Issue	Comment
Approval Process	
Concern over the approval process and perceived lack of transparency	The works would be undertaken in accordance with the State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007. The REF will be independently reviewed prior to determination by NSW Justice and in accordance with the Infrastructure SEPP.
Questions about how to access documents about proposal	All REF documents will be made available on the NSW Justice Website when completed.
Impact to Residents	
Concern over visual impact of the 400 bed RBP on adjoining neighbours	The location of the 400 bed facility has been informed by a number of considerations including long term future development of the prison. The expansion is largely proposed on land that is already cleared, or where there would be limited impact on existing vegetation (Section 5.9) or water courses (section 5.5). Assessment of visual impacts to neighbouring properties has been undertaken for the proposal (refer to Appendix M Section 5.12). It is proposed to provide screening, including a 450m earth bank and vegetation screen that will reduce any visual amenity concerns on the southern side of the complex for residents close to the RBP (discussed at Section 5.12). It should also be noted that existing vegetation will be retained where possible and additional environmental measures may be carried out in accordance with the recommendations outlined in the REF (Section 7).
Questions of why the RBP is located so close to residents on the southern boundary	
Requests for landscape and vegetation screening of RBP for residents	
Requests for the RBP to be relocated to the northern side of the site, away from residents	
Concern about impact from PA system and lighting on closest neighbours from 400 bed RBP	Corrective Services NSW is considering how noise from the PA system can be reduced. Assessment of noise is provided at Appendix J and is discussed at Section 5.8 . A mitigation measure reflecting to this is provided at Section 7 .
Concern about the lighting impact of the RBP on nearby residents	NSW Justice has confirmed that lighting design will seek to minimise light spill outside prison facilities. A mitigation measure reflecting this is provided at Section 7 .
Traffic	
Concern about potential traffic impact	The Oakey Creek Road access is one option that has been considered for access to the site and has been shown on the map to generate discussion and feedback from the community. Lindsay Street will remain the main entry point for now during operation. An assessment of Traffic and Transport has been prepared for the proposal that considers volumes of traffic using roads that access the prison (refer Section 5.2 and Appendix C). The assessment confirms that due to the existing low traffic volumes through the local area the additional, staff, visitation and operational vehicle movements are not expected to impact on the operation of the local road network.
Questions about the appropriateness of Lindsay Street, Mavis Street and local residential streets as main access point to the centre	While not part of this proposal, NSW Justice is considering alternate access points to the prison in the future (subject to a separate application). NSW Justice are talking to Council about alternative for a new permanent entrance.
Concern about alternative access to the prison from Oakey Creek Road	

Theme / Issue	Comment
Support for alternative access to prison, preferably from a State Road.	To mitigate impacts on residents to the south, it is proposed that all Construction traffic will be directed into the centre via Kerlew Street. This is subject to separate approval process. A mitigation measure has been made to reflect this (Section 7).
Concern over the way staff and visitors drive on local roads	Staff at Cessnock Correctional Centre have been warned by management not to speed when approaching or departing from the centre, and there has been some police action to monitor traffic speed.
Concern about expansion impact to condition of local roads	An assessment of Traffic and Transport (see Appendix C) considers volumes of traffic using roads that access the prison. The assessment concludes the proposal would not result have an adverse impact on the operation of the surrounding street network.
Noise	
Existing prison PA system is audible from residents. Concern that the expansion will increase impacts.	As part of the assessment noise monitoring has been undertaken to understand the emission of noise from the existing prison (refer to Appendix J). The noise assessment has established noise criteria and includes design recommendations to ensure the proposal minimises noise impact on the local community (see Section 7). Refer to Section 5.8 of the REF for further discussion of noise impacts. NSW Justice is considering how noise from the PA system can be reduced. A mitigation measure reflecting this is included at Section 7 .
Social	
Concern over ability for Cessnock Hospital to cope with increased pressures	A bigger prison will have some impact on services, and NSW Justice are consulting with Cessnock City Council and agencies such as police, the hospital, ambulances, the fire brigade and schools. Cessnock Correctional Centre has expanded successfully before, and NSW Justice believe this can happen again. A Social Impact Assessment has been prepared as part of the Review of Environmental Factors and addresses social and economic impacts of the expansion on Cessnock (refer to Appendix O). The REF includes an assessment of key impacts to the community including employment, inmate families moving to the area, crime rates, education and child services, drug and alcohol services and property values (Section 5.17 of the REF).
Concern about anti-social behaviour from relatives and friends visiting the centre and the impact that will have on the local community	
Concern about the lack of supporting infrastructure for the expansion	
Concern about safety and the current lack of policing in and around the prison	
Questions raised to the cost-benefit of the proposal on Cessnock as a town and reputation	
Concern that inmate's families will relocate to Cessnock	
	There is concern that inmates' families will move to Cessnock, or that inmates originally from other areas will remain in town after their release. The evidence suggests this is rare. A review of Cessnock Correctional Centre in 2009 found "the key community housing provider in Cessnock is not aware of any applicants or tenants who had relocated to Cessnock because of the Correctional Centre". A review of the Mid-North Coast Correctional Centre found "There is very little evidence of families of inmates moving to the area or of inmates not previously from the area choosing to remain in Kempsey". In studies of Lithgow Correctional Centre, families of inmates were found to comprise about 1 per cent of Department of Housing stock in the area, and many of these were originally from the area. They also found that in 15 years of operation, only one inmate who was not from the area had chosen to remain there upon release. The review of the Mid-North Coast Correctional Centre found that in three years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ crime rates had remained stable or declined in most areas; ▪ police did not express a concern that crime in the area was connected with the Centre; incidences of anti-social behaviour in relation to visitors to the Centre had been minimal, and largely confined to the Centre car-park.

Theme / Issue	Comment
	Refer to the Social Impact Assessment at Appendix O .
Questions raised over the procedure for release of prisoners - Concern raised by ex-prisoners in residential streets.	The means of release have varied in recent years and the present arrangements will be reviewed by the Community Consultative Committee. Refer to the Social Impact Assessment at Appendix O .
Economic	
Questions about what employment and training opportunities will be available to the local community	The expansion of the Correctional Centre represents part of a \$3.8 billion investment by the NSW Government in prisons across the state. As such there will be economic multiplies as a result of more jobs and therefore spending in the local economy. The proposal will meet the government's targets for the employment during construction of apprentices and Aboriginal workers. While sub-contractors may come from other areas, where possible they will use local tradesman. The proposal will generate approximately 450 construction jobs at its peak and 430 permanent operational jobs once the new facilities open. We will conduct a local recruitment campaign and provide local training.
Concern about the decrease in property values as a result of the expansion	
Concern about the impact to tourism industry	
	Refer to the Social Impact Assessment at Section 5.17 of the REF and Appendix O .
Environmental	
Concern about the impact to Aboriginal Archaeology	A review of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System has been undertaken in support of the REF which confirms that there is no recorded item of Aboriginal heritage on site. Refer to Section 5.13 for discussion about Aboriginal Heritage.
Concern about the impact to local Flora and Fauna	Refer to Section 5.9 and Appendix K for discussion about Flora and Fauna.
Concern about flooding impacts	The proposal will be designed to manage and limit post development flows to pre-development levels. Stormwater management design will be in accordance with Council Requirements and the Blue Book (Landcom 2004). Refer to Section 5.5 and the Stormwater Management Plan at Appendix H . Mitigation measures are provided at Section 7 .
Concern about stormwater capacity and impacts	
Consultation	
The consultation period is too short	The consultation period is 4 weeks. The community and key stakeholders affected by the proposal have been consulted for their comments on the proposal. A four-week consultation period is industry standard and each submission has been considered.
Consultation is not genuine as works are planned to start in August.	Preparatory construction is no longer planned for August due to the extended consultation and ongoing assessment of the REF. Construction would commence following determination of the REF.
What will the Correctional Centre be doing to continue to liaise and work with the local business and residential community and to be an effective community citizen	Corrective Services NSW is reforming the Community Consultative Committee for the Cessnock Correctional Centre. The Committee will play an important liaison role on a range of issues including construction activities and community projects. The committee will be as representative as possible of the local community, including residents, local government, state government agencies, businesses and NGOs. It will have up to 12 members.

3.0 Conclusion

Consultation has been undertaken with the public, community organisations, local stakeholders and government agencies to inform the development of the proposal. The feedback received, as well as the outcomes of NSW Justice own consultation process, has been considered and incorporated where possible into the REF.

As a result of a high level of community interest, NSW Justice will place the REF online, to enable the community to view the completed REF.

NSW Justice will continue to consult with the local community and stakeholders throughout the delivery of the project to manage and mitigate impacts where possible.