



Transcript: Community Information Presentation

Centre for National Resilience Brisbane

December 2021

Hew: Welcome and thank you for watching this presentation on the Centre for National Resilience Brisbane.

My name is Hew Atkin, and I'm an Assistant Secretary at the Commonwealth Department of Finance.

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land where we meet today, and pay my respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

In the current environment an online presentation was the best way that we could make sure that we provide you with details on the Centre for National Resilience Brisbane.

Ahead of the presentation, we sought questions from the local Pinkenba community to address as part of the presentation today.

We'll share information about the centre's location and why the centre is being built. We'll also take you through the design and construction process and also share information about traffic management in the area around the site.

I'm joined by Kylie Dennis, who's the project director from the Australian Department of Finance. Kylie has significant experience in managing large construction projects in the Commonwealth.

We also have Glenn Robinson from Multiplex with me, the Commonwealth's managing contractor for construction of the centre.

Firstly I'll give you an initial overview of the project and the process we went through to identify the location, and then we'll move into the construction process and I'll hand over to Kylie and Glenn.

The Australian Government is working in partnership with the Queensland Government to deliver the Centre for National Resilience Brisbane, a purpose-built quarantine facility.

The Australian Government and the Queensland Government signed a memorandum of understanding on 16 August this year for the delivery of the centre.

The Australian Government will build the centre and retain ownership of it, and the construction is being managed by the Commonwealth Department of Finance.

It is expected that the construction of 500 beds will be complete by March 2022.

During the COVID-19 pandemic period, the Queensland Government will be responsible for the centre's operation and running as a quarantine facility. This is a key principle that was established under the MOU [Memorandum of Understanding].

To determine the best place for the centre to be built, there were a number of factors that needed to be considered.

The Australian Government has a set of key assessment criteria that need to be met when selecting a site for a purpose built quarantine centre.

Any centre being proposed had to meet a number of important requirements against this criteria.

A purpose built centre needs to be close to a hospital, and there are three hospitals – the Prince Charles Hospital, the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital and the Princess Alexandra Hospital – within 10km of the site at Pinkenba.

Any site also needs to be close to an airport that has international flights, and at the Pinkenba site, we are only a very short distance from the Brisbane Airport.

The location also has to be able to maintain a sufficient workforce, particularly a health workforce, without significantly impacting on existing COVID-19 response efforts.

We also needed to have a level of existing infrastructure onsite.

Having Commonwealth land, in this case land occupied by Defence, meant that we could establish the site very quickly.

The Commonwealth undertook an independent feasibility study to consider the site’s suitability, and precisely where onsite was the best location for the centre.

The feasibility study covered a range of important issues including: planning, environmental considerations, cultural heritage, traffic management, waste management and contamination.

The study’s findings confirmed that the site at Pinkenba was safe and suitable for the purpose-built quarantine centre.

During the feasibility study and detailed design process there were a number of options developed for the location of buildings at the centre.

The site layout and the detailed design was developed in close cooperation with the Queensland Government officials and endorsed by the Queensland Chief Health Officer.

As part of this collaborative process, the design team worked to optimise the efficiency of the site, allow for accommodation zones to operate independently of each other, and to provide a design and layout that will meet appropriate National Construction Code and Australian building standards.

As you’ll hear shortly, this is a significant build that we are working to complete in a very short period of time.

We have embarked on a purpose-built facility of very high quality with a specific design that will ensure that the centre complies with stringent infection prevention and control measures.

From this perspective, this centre will be significantly more enhanced than a typical mining camp.

Now I will hand over to my colleague, Kylie, who will talk in more detail on the design and the construction of the centre.

Kylie: Thanks Hew, I’m Kylie from the Commonwealth Department of Finance and I’m the project director.

As Hew mentioned, the Australian Government is taking the lead on the design and delivery of the Centre for National Resilience in Brisbane.

We are working closely with the Queensland government on the centre's design.

Once the build is finished, the Queensland Government will manage the quarantine centre for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Commonwealth Government will own the centre and will look at options for use when the centre is no longer needed for the COVID response, and I will talk a little more on that later.

Today we also have Glenn from Multiplex with us.

Multiplex has been appointed as the managing contractor for this build, and as you may be aware, they are a global construction company with significant experience delivering large-scale projects.

Glenn is our onsite project manager and will be able to talk in more detail around the construction traffic flow as the build is happening.

First - to take you over some of the work that we've been busy doing.

As you can imagine, there is a comprehensive approval process that we need to go through before construction can begin.

The site is a Commonwealth build on Commonwealth land, and we have a number of procedures and guidelines and initial assessments that we need to follow and carry out.

One of those is a self-assessment under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and that self-assessment is now completed.

Geotechnical, contamination and environmental studies have also been completed.

Detailed flood modelling has been conducted and under the current design, there is no substantial impact on the existing flood models.

We have developed a comprehensive remediation plan and this is regularly reviewed by certified consultants trained in Environmental Management and WHS.

Extensive measures have been put in place to manage any potentially contaminated soil, groundwater and stormwater.

These measures are inspected and reviewed daily to ensure that people and the environment are kept as safe as possible.

As you can see, the design for the modules takes into account infection prevention and control guidelines.

The designs for modules include ventilation systems to ensure that rooms are provided with a separate constant flow of fresh air; cabin-style accommodation with entry and exit points from outdoor decks, so the virus won't spread between shared corridors; separate and secure blocks which will accommodate up to 250 residents spread out through approximately 60 cabins; onsite services, including catering, laundry and administration, to support operations and limit the movement of goods and materials off site have also been incorporated.

Infection prevention and control has been fundamental in the design of the centre.

Each accommodation unit and all central facilities have their own individual air-conditioning systems.

The air-conditioning system has been designed so that there is no cross-contamination of airflow between units.

For the same reason, all accommodation units have private ensuite bathroom facilities.

Each staffing area also has separate bathroom facilities to remove the risk of possible infection exposure for staff working in different areas of the centre.

Each accommodation unit will be equipped with modern, flat screen televisions with access to free to air channels. All rooms will also have wifi internet capability to enable returned travellers to use personal devices such as laptops and tablets.

We are moving quickly to deliver the centre, and anticipate that we will complete the first of 500 beds by the end of March next year.

Recognising the evolving vaccination and quarantine environment, the Commonwealth Government will review the capacity requirements for the centre in early 2022 and this will be to determine if additional capacity is required.

The centre is scalable, and has been designed so that it could expand to 1,000 beds at a later stage if required.

Consistent with the construction of the facility in Melbourne, accommodation modules will be built offsite by modular construction companies and transported to site when ready.

Modular accommodation construction has commenced offsite in parallel with works commencing onsite.

I'll now hand over to Glenn, Multiplex's onsite project manager, to give you an overview of construction and take you through the traffic management plans.

Glenn: Thanks Kylie.

Just to take you over where we are at with construction. We have temporary offices, carpark and amenities established onsite.

Our perimeter fencing is in place and bulk earthworks have commenced.

As Kylie mentioned, modular accommodation buildings have been ordered through a range of modular construction companies and construction is progressing off-site. The local community will see heavy machinery onsite as we prepare the site for accommodation modules to be delivered.

We'll operate two shifts a day, including working on Saturdays.

The busiest time onsite will be from mid-January until the end of March next year.

Over the course of the build, there will be plant and equipment onsite, but the noise management assessment plan shows there will be minimal noise impact.

In terms of the construction, a lot of the work will be done offsite, as the buildings are modular constructions and they will be brought onsite already assembled.

This greatly reduces the civil works that we need to do onsite, and will help reduce noise and onsite traffic.

We need the oversized trucks to deliver these modular units onsite, but we don't anticipate that there will be any significant impact on traffic.

In looking at construction traffic, during the early works phase that we're in now, access in and out is via Sugarmill Road.

We estimate that there will be around 40-60 car movements at shift changeover times and one truck every 15 minutes; so around 40 trucks per day.

There will be up to 400 car movements at dual shift changeovers during peak of construction.

During construction phase, we estimate that there will be one truck every 10 minutes during each 10 hour shift, equating to 60 trucks per shift.

Wherever possible, deliveries will be scheduled to ensure congestion on the roads is limited.

We don't expect that there will be a significant traffic impact for local businesses and residents.

Thanks Kylie, back to you.

Kylie: Thanks Glenn, one of the things I really want to emphasise is that this centre is not a prison.

We are building an environment where residents will have balconies to provide fresh air, and will have green landscaping around their residential unit.

Landscaping and urban design has been developed with the goal of maximising amenity for residents.

Courtyard environments provide sunlight access to rooms and secure balconies 'break down' the geometry of the centre, creating visual interest through colour and texture while minimising maintenance and irrigation needs.

The visual strategies aim to offset the sense of a secure facility through foliage, colour and lighting.

The centre will have appropriate security measures in place to minimise the risk of infection and to maintain a secure facility.

There will be screens across the decked balconies to separate each unit. These screens have been designed with infection prevention and control in mind, to stop the ability to reach around and touch someone in a neighbouring unit.

As a safety measure to prevent falls, the balconies are also fenced.

A 1.8 metre high fence will surround each of the residential blocks, and a 2.4 high metre fence will surround the facility.

There will be CCTV throughout the facility and this has been carefully designed to ensure it captures all angles in open areas - for example, along covered walkways in transition spaces, to maintain the centre's security.

There will be a mix of accommodation types available to suits singles, couples and families, and family rooms can accommodate up to six people in each room.

There will also be disability access.

The centre will include a small health facility with 1 or 2 consultation and treatment spaces.

It is intended for short-term, general care matters only and won't have capacity for tertiary level care.

The centres have been designed to be long-term assets, and will provide capacity into the future.

Once there is no longer a need for a dedicated quarantine centre for the COVID-19 response, the centre will be able to be used for other purposes.

While a decision has not been made on the future use, the centre may be used for responses to future public health emergencies, or as crisis accommodation during natural disasters, or potentially as accommodation for Australia's humanitarian efforts.

The decision about future use will be made by the Australian Government as the owner of the centre, and we'll continue to keep the community informed.

Hew: Thank you for watching this presentation.

We will continue to keep the Department of Finance website updated on details for the centre for National Resilience Brisbane, so please keep an eye on the website for further information.

Thank you again.

All reasonable attempts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript against the recording.