

**Submission
No 23**

**INQUIRY INTO THE DEFENCE INDUSTRY IN NEW
SOUTH WALES**

Name: Clarence Valley Council

Date received: 21 June 2017

Submission to the Standing Committee on State Development:

Defence Industry in New South Wales

Attention the Committee;

Clarence Valley Council, on behalf and as a member of the Clarence Valley Marine and Engineering Cluster are making the following submission to Standing Committee on State Development: Defence industry in New South Wales.

The aim of this submission is to increase awareness of the Clarence Valley Local Government Area (LGA) to the Defence Industry broadly, and the Standing Committee specifically. The Clarence Valley LGA is open for Defence Industry investment, with a dedicated marine industry already servicing the Australian Defence Industry, in-place infrastructure, skilled labour and available land with the capacity to meet further investment.

The Clarence Valley is strategically located 600kms north of Sydney with Brisbane and the growth centres of south east Queensland only 3 hours to the north by road. By 2026 the Clarence region will have an estimated 4.04million people residing just over its back fence.

The Clarence is at the intersection of three major highways (Pacific Highway, Summerland Way and Gwydir Highway) and the north-south state rail network. The Clarence has its own regional airport (at Grafton) and seaport at Yamba.

The Clarence is easily accessible by both road and sea with travel times substantially reduced as a result of on-going highway infrastructure upgrades.

Port of Yamba – Australia relies extensively on its ports for international trade by sea. Yamba, located at the mouth of the Clarence River is one of five internationally recognised ports in NSW. Yamba serves the whole Northern Rivers and New England regions including the towns of Grafton, Maclean, Ballina, Lismore, Casino and Coffs Harbour. It is also the home port of the state's second largest fishing fleet and handles a range of imports and exports.

The following highlights areas the Terms of Reference and the Clarence Valley Local Government area have synergies and opportunities:

- a. maximise opportunities for NSW-based companies from Defence's growing exports and investment in Defence capability – in both acquisition and sustainment
 - Clarence Valley is renowned for its innovative ship and boat building with the overall marine and related industry valued in 2009 at over \$800 million (Introducing the Clarence marine precinct).
 - The Clarence Valley has a private Shipyard and Slipway owned, maintained and operated by Harwood Marine who are an International shipbuilder and have built ships up to 80 meters in length. Harwood Marine is an International Standard Shipyard with DNV/GL and ISO 9001/2008 certification and experienced ship building and certified workforce. Harwood Marine is an environmentally compliant shipyard under EPA Licence.
 - The Clarence Valley has a significant cargo berth located at the Goodwood Island facility. Its facilities and capabilities include:
 - Wharf space: 70 metres
 - Storage area: 5000sqm paved
 - Permissible deck load: 2600 kg/sqm
 - Depth alongside: 6 metres
 - Maximum concentrated load: 8 tonnes
 - Access: Goodwood Island Road
 - 10 km from the Pacific Highway

- This infrastructure is assisting the RMS in the development of its state significant infrastructure projects including the highway upgrade between Woolgoolga and Ballina, and the two new major bridge upgrades at Harwood and Grafton.

d. maximise the economic benefits of locating Defence force bases and Defence industry in the regions

- Council's adopted economic development plan and the Clarence River Way masterplan have reinforced the value of the Clarence River to the region, and to future economic growth driven by commercial and recreational demand. The strategic plans aim to develop the potential of the river, with an adopted infrastructure and investment framework in place. Council welcomes new business investment from the Defence and associated industry.
- The Clarence Marine Precinct is clearly differentiated from other marine industry precincts on the basis of the following attributes:
 - The quality of the precinct's natural resources with the Clarence being one of the nation's last big, wild and working river systems,
 - The location within the wider North Coast marine boating region,
 - The strength of the existing marine industry base,
 - Available port services that currently support commercial shipping,
 - Open water access,
 - The size and spread of the precinct. The 'traditional' view of marine industry precincts is one based on a fixed location. The Clarence Marine Precinct is not limited to a single location, but rather has development possibilities located between the river mouth at Yamba and the City of Grafton. This spread of geography ensures that development will not be limited by artificial boundaries,
- The Clarence Valley has seven industrial estates open for business. Industrial areas in the Clarence operate within a strategic planning framework that groups services, business types and infrastructure into locations with the capacity to support investor expectations. In addition to these lands, Council is currently implementing an industrial lands strategy with expansion earmarked for Maclean, South Grafton, Trenayr and the Grafton Regional Airport
- Case Study:
 - After winning a contract to build two new barges in 2014, Yamba Welding and Engineering has recently secured a \$5.4 million contract to build eight vessels for Australian Border Force showing the demonstrated ability of local Clarence Valley businesses in meeting and servicing Defence force requirements.

e. how to establish and sustain Defence supportive communities

The Clarence Valley welcomes Defence industries through supportive communities and is further encouraged by a pro-investment minded council.

- The Clarence Valley has a low cost base compared to cities. Land including commercial, industrial, and residential prices is much lower. Security levels and crime are much less than in the cities
- Clarence Valley Council and its communities understand the importance of the supply of skilled marine industry labour to the Clarence Marine Precinct to ensure a Defence supportive community. This is recognised in a number of industry training and development initiatives:
 - The Clarence Industry Education Forum has developed a marine education pathway, Career-Link in Marine Services - a new model of engaging young people enrolled in Clarence Valley high schools in a package of education, certified training and workplace experience whilst at school, with access to advanced TAFE studies and University degree course options.
 - The Clarence Valley's Maclean High School has been successful in securing Australian Government funding to establish a construction trade training centre in a partnership project with New South Wales TAFE.

- The North Coast College of Marine Studies (COMS) aims to establish a School of Excellence in 'all things marine' to equip people with skills to enter the local, national and global marine industries.

Des Schroder – on behalf of Clarence Valley Marine and Engineering Cluster

Director Environment, Planning & Community
Clarence Valley Council