

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**297. Mr S Esau (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:**

What (a) is the strategic significance of the Silvermine Military Complex in Simon’s Town, Western Cape, to the SA Navy, (b) negative impact did the theft of cables and damage to antennae have on the effective communication with vessels at sea and otherwise, (c) maintenance and repairs took place after each incident and (d) are these reports available for inspection? NW316E

**REPLY**:

1. (a) The primary function of Navcomcen Cape (NCC) at Silvermine Complex is to support strategic and tactical radio communication for the SA Navy. In addition, NCC also provides strategic HF Communications to the SA Air Force (SAAF).

In order to provide these functions, NCC comprises of an Upper and Lower Antennae Farms. The lower antenna farm was destroyed by fire and the repair solution to get this antenna farm back to operational status is currently in process. The antenna cables from the upper antenna farm runs underground through this field and was not damaged in the fire. It is these cables that were cut and stolen leaving the communication centre with a limited reception capability.

(b) NCC had limited reception capability due to the antenna cable theft and Navcomcen Durban (NCD) (standby communications centre) provided support as a back-up for reception services. However, NCC is still able to maintain daily strategic communications with SAS AMATOLA currently on OP KETANE and NCD provided communications for the SAN.

(c) The antenna and the perimeter fencing that were damaged in the fires have not been repaired. After the recent theft in Jan 17, repairs have been effected on one antenna which was fully restored. After the theft in Feb 17, the restored antenna was damaged again and awaiting further repairs.

(d) Yes.