



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE
No 23 (City of Brisbane) Squadron

**Minutes of
Meeting**

BP8245150

**MINUTES OF THE 44th MEETING OF THE AMBERLEY CONSULTATIVE
WORKING GROUP (ACWG),
HELD AT RAAF BASE AMBERLEY, 23 SQUADRON ON 10 MAR 20**

Attendees:

WGCDR M Thompson	Air Base Executive Officer	Chairperson
SQNLDR D Nott	Community Engagement Officer	
Mr M Davies	Amberley Base Manager	
Ms V Glyde	PFAS Investigation and Management Branch	
Mr J Madden MP	Member for Ipswich West	
Mr G Hatchman	President Willowbank Area Group	
Mr I Dainer	Vice President Willowbank Area Group	
Mr E Dawson	Dawson's Technical Services	
Mr B Behm	Local Resident	
Mr D Pahlke	Local Resident	
Mrs G Ashton	Local Resident	
Mr M Goddard	Local Resident	
CPL H Freeman	23SQN Admin	Secretary

Apologies:

Ms L Wapler	PFAS Investigation and Management Branch
The Hon S Neumann MP	Federal Member for Blair
Mr J Krause MP	Member for Scenic Rim
Mr G McLay	West Moreton Anglican College
Ms J Lecinski	West Moreton Anglican College
Ms L Ashton-Stewart	Local Resident
Mr P Conroy	Local Resident
Mrs R Conroy	Local Resident
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman's Office	

ITEM 1: OPENING

1. WGCDR Thompson opened the meeting at 1710.

ITEM 2: REVIEW OF COMMITTEE ATTENDEES AND APOLOGIES

2. WGCDR Thompson carried out a review of apologies received as detailed in the meeting agenda. Mr S Neumann MP is unable to attend this meeting.

ITEM 3: REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

3. Attendees acknowledged that they had received and read the previous meeting's minutes dated 26 Nov 19. All were in favour of accepting the previous minutes.

ITEM 4: PFAS INVESTIGATION PROJECT UPDATE

4. Ms Glyde offered apologies on behalf of Ms Wapler, who was unable to attend the meeting, and issued the following updates on behalf of the Amberley PFAS Investigation Project:
5. The project team completed sampling of garden soil and edible biota, being home grown fruit and vegetables, in the additional investigation area in Leichhardt, the Golf Links Estate. The sampling was completed in the first week of February, and laboratory results have been received and are undergoing analysis to produce the report. The report will be released at the next community information session. A good sample size and variety of produce was received during the sampling, and the residents were very cooperative.
6. The project team are currently working on the PFAS Management Area Plan (PMAP), including an ongoing monitoring plan, in which they will outline the confirmed risks and migration pathways, and the subsequent recommendations to Defence to address that migration. The report will also outline the plan for ongoing monitoring of PFAS levels. The PMAP has been reviewed by Defence, the Technical Advisor, the QLD Government PFAS Technical Working Group, and Amberley reps. The PMAP will be finalised and released at the next community information session, along with the Ecological Risk Assessment report which is currently under final review.
7. The project team undertook the second seasonal monitoring sampling event in December 2019. The sampling is conducted every six months to analyse seasonal trends and monitor PFAS levels. The results from this sampling event have been received and the report is being drafted for review.
8. The next community information session date was anticipated to occur in May/June however due to State and Federal restrictions on public gatherings as a result of COVID 19, Defence is currently looking at alternatives to face to face meetings should the directives remain in place.
9. The project team has also completed the task of cleaning a private property rainwater tank due to PFAS being detected in that tank. The task including cleaning of the roof and gutters, as there were concerns about contaminated dust from the base settling on the roof and being washed in to the water tank. The tank was cleaned and re-filled with clean potable water, and as a precaution the tank water will be sampled quarterly for the next year. Results from this sampling will not be shared publicly by Defence in a published report as the work is related to a unique sampling requirement for a single private property, and as such, the findings do not impact reporting that is already completed for the investigation.
10. The project team is working with Ipswich City Council to install permanent precautionary fishing advice signage to replace the ten signs that have been reported by Council as damaged or stolen. Defence will provide the signs, the Council will conduct the installation.
11. At the previous meeting, Mr Behm raised concerns about potential contamination of the lake near the Swanbank power station and whether the project team were aware of this issue. Ms Glyde confirmed this part of the Bremer River, Swanbank Lake and Berry's Lagoon is within the Amberley PFAS Investigation Area and was included in the Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) sampling in 2018. There have been discussions with the power station, who confirmed that they had been drawing water from that weir, using it in the power station, and then depositing it elsewhere in a different catchment outside of the Amberley PFAS Investigation Area. The QLD Government Department of Environment and Science (DES)

then conducted a detailed site investigation, with support from Defence, in that catchment including Bundamba Creek and Oaky Creek. The results of the DES investigation have been published on their website. DES have put up precautionary fishing advice signage in that catchment. Mr Pahlke requested to know the outcome of this investigation. Ms Glyde advised all results are published on the Qld Government website and she will provide the link in the minutes for this meeting.

Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science investigation results:
<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/pollution/management/disasters/investigation-pfas/sites/ipswich>

12. It was noted that the Warrill Creek and Bremer River are subject to flooding and there is a likelihood that the PFAS is transferred further by this. Ms Glyde confirmed that flood modelling was taken into account in the Detailed Site Investigation, and flood plains were sampled for this reason. Those results are in the Detailed Site Report published in 2018.

13. Mr Pahlke wanted to know if the foam with PFAS was used after the 2011 floods, and referenced a Courier Mail news article titled “Deal on Toxic Foam”, which states that Defence are still using toxic chemicals in the fire fighting foam. Ms Glyde clarified a key difference between historical uses of fire fighting foam, and current practices. The Amberley PFAS Investigation is dealing with legacy contamination from a time before it was known to be an environmental contaminant. The source areas that the Investigation is dealing with on the base are where the foam was repeatedly used for fire fighting training exercises in grassed areas. This is what has resulted in some areas of heavy PFAS contamination in the soil. Ms Glyde advised that in 2004 Defence switched to a different chemical and any foam use now is strictly contained and there will never again be an instance where it is used on open ground except for in a real and absolute emergency in order to save lives. After such an emergency the clean-up would be treated as a contamination spill, adhering to strict environmental regulations and guidelines. Current fire training practices use a different product, a PFAS free foam and again, it is strictly contained. Mr Pahlke wanted to know if the Courier Mail’s statement was an incorrect fact. Ms Glyde advised it was not technically untrue, as the new chemicals used in the fire-fighting foam do still have trace elements of PFOS, however the article does not provide the context and background that was just explained to this forum. WGCDR Thompson advised that after use, the foam is pumped into trucks and transported to Melbourne for destruction, and reiterated there is a contamination clean-up process that takes place after it is used. The only time the foam is freely used and not contained is when it is used during a real emergency.

14. Mr Pahlke requested an update on the request for free blood testing for residents in the PFAS contamination area. Mr Madden advised on behalf of Mr Neumann that the request was put forward to the Health Minister, however was denied due to Amberley having less evidence of PFAS contamination compared to other locations, and due to having little diagnostic value. Mr Neumann said he would continue to advocate for free blood testing for residents living in the PFAS affected areas.

15. Ms Ashton stated that there are a few families in the Amberley area who have been continually eating and drinking contaminated food and water for 30+ years, many points of reference for measuring levels have been missed, as well as the incalculable cost to health and mental health. For the free blood testing, she believes they should set a strict and very specific criteria to target the residents at the highest risk, and that only those families who meet that criteria should receive it. Ms Ashton was quoted \$900 for the testing for her family. Mr Pahlke agreed and reiterated the point of affected families having to absorb the cost of the testing, as well as the devaluation of their properties, when the contamination wasn’t their doing.

16. Ms Glyde advised that the local Public Health unit are available to speak with any of the ACWG members about health related concerns. Contact details have been provided in minutes of previous meetings, and are provided again in the minutes of this meeting.

West Moreton Public Health Unit (WMPHU)
 Ph: 07 3818 4700
 EH_WestMoreton@health.qld.gov.au
 Please note there is an underscore after EH

ITEM 5: BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

17. WGCdr Thompson advised that a letter of condolence was sent to Ms Lola Hooper for the passing of Mr Don Hooper.

18. Reference paragraph 39 of previous minutes, Mr Davies advised that more signs have been ordered to notify people of the Defence boundary near Ms and Mr Conroy's property, they will be put up soon, if not done so already. Extra signs were also placed outside Mr Behm's fence line. Mr Behm advised that the signs are being ignored, trespassers are entering via Goddard Rd, across the creek, over the fence, up the fire trail, coming out the gate at 272.

Action item: Mr Davies will arrange for more signage.

19. Reference paragraph 42 of the previous minutes, Mr Davies advised that the base's immediate neighbours will be contacted regarding the controlled burn offs as part of the Base's remediation plans. Not many have been planned for this year. A letterbox drop is to be arranged a week beforehand.

20. Reference paragraph 43 of previous minutes, WGCdr Thompson advised that Base Notices pertaining to testing, blank firing, any exercise or activity involving QPS, etc, will be extended to the ACWG contact list. For any enquiries, the 24/7 base point of contact is the Air Base Command Post (or Duty Member after hours) on **07 5361 2888**.

21. Reference paragraph 50 of previous minutes, Mr Davies advised that the kangaroos located at the golf links area were moved on by Landcare, however they may have come back since then. Mr Behm said he believes the kangaroos were there for water, as they were drinking from the dam and it was during the drought. Mr Davis advised that they are in the process of working to alleviate the problem.

22. Reference paragraph 51 of previous minutes, Mr Hatchman advised that he had a meeting with the 23SQN Association two weeks ago, with the goal of designing and installing plaque for the establishment of Amberley, with the intent that this be unveiled on 07 Jun 20 to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the establishment of RAAF Amberley. A proposed location is at the old school building. Mr Davies advised that the old school area will be renovated and that the cadets will move to there. Mr Madden advised that yesterday they announced the QLD Veterans Memorial Grant of up to \$40k, which is a funding pool not fixed to war, for the building and restoring memorials. Mr Hatchman wants to recognise the base's Aboriginal and European Settler heritages.

Action Item: Mr Hatchman is to send the proposal to WGCdr Thompson and Mr Madden.

ITEM 6: AMBERLEY BASE UPDATE

23. WGCDR Thompson issued the following Base updates:
24. All the RAAF Bases will have a renaming ceremony to be dual-named, to recognise Aboriginal heritage. The local elders are being liaised with by the SADFO and ILO regarding the naming. This will happen in the next couple of months.
25. Amberley have been supporting the bushfire relief efforts, predominantly in NSW and VIC, as well as supporting evacuations from China to Darwin or Christmas Island to control the spreading of COVID-19.
26. Flying is back to normal, including night flying. No major activities are planned, except for departures and transits of aircraft supporting Ex Pitch Black in NT.
27. The position of SADFO has been changed to Base Commander and has been created as a specially designated position, the Base Commander is now GPCAPT Ian Kardy. Former SADFO, AIRCDRE Tyler, has gone back to her primary position as Commander Combat Support Group.

ITEM 7: NOISE COMPLAINTS

28. WGCDR Thompson stated that between 21 Nov 19 to 3 Mar 20, there have been a total of 22 noise complaints. 12 of these were F/A-18s, six C-17As, one C-27, and three unknown. The locations ranged from Noosa to Goondiwindi. Mr Madden inquired if the aircraft tend to fly in the same areas, WGCDR Thomson responded that they have different training areas. The jets use the Northern and Southern runways, and the C-17s and C27s aircraft use these as well as the cross strip.

ITEM 8: AGENDA ITEMS

29. Mr Behm requested a meeting be set with Mr Davies regarding the blocked drain on the perimeter track in the vicinity of Gate 16. The meeting is scheduled for 23 Mar 20.
30. Mr Davies advised that 16 Mar 20 there will be a consultant assessing the area, and will create a proposal for the treatment of the rag weeds. Mr Behm warned that there have been horses that have caused wire to be pulled out from the fence which may cause a safety hazard.
31. Ms Ashton thanked the base for the arrangement of the cattle grazing, and issued the following feedback for future grazing arrangements:
On the day, people were arriving in drips and drabs and parking everywhere, there seemed to be no clear organisation or direction, no escorts dedicated to each person arriving, they seemingly had free reign of the base. A mini-bus picking up the farmers would be a far more efficient arrangement, and would have allowed for better security control.
32. The other issue was there seemed to be a few ineligible people that were accepted, nobody said that they had been asked for proof of eligibility. There could be concern for security, as well as the biohazard risk of bringing non-local cattle to the grazing paddocks. Another issue was the control was taken away from defence due to the ballet process, a tender process may have been more affective in keeping the control within Defence. She wants to know exactly how JLL underwent the screening process to assess the eligibility of the applicants.

Action Item: Mr Davies to follow up with JLL on the screening process for the cattle grazing applicants.

ITEM 9: COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK

33. Mr Dawson advised that he is fully supportive of the cattle grazing initiative, as it is a win-win for the local farmers and for Defence.

34. WGCDCR Thompson advised that from now on there will no longer be ANZAC services held at the RAAF Amberley memorial garden due to the security risk. Residents in the local area who have a direct link to people named on the honour stone are invited to a small service on the base on 24 Apr 20, Mr Hatchman advised that CHAP Williams emailed him regarding this service. SQNLDR Nott advised that she will arrange for a RAAF photographer to be present to take photographs for the Ipswich City Council webpage.

35. Regarding the funding for the Cunningham Highway upgrade, Mr Hatchman advised that last year the Deputy PM advised him that \$170 million would be granted in funding, but the State government would need to come up with the other 50%. Afterward, he received letter from Mr Neumann stating that the funding was to be downgraded to 80/20. Mr Madden advised that he hadn't heard of the offer from the Federal government for 80/20. He advised that the 'Amberley Bypass' project is actually made up of two different projects in different locations. One of the projects takes place at Yamanto, where the shopping centre is to be upgraded, and where service roads are to be installed. He suggested to the Minister that they separate the two projects. In rural areas, National Highway projects are funded 80/20, but in urban areas its funded 50%. If the projects are separated, Yamanto could be arguably considered to fall into the urban category and receive 50% funding, whilst Amberley would be considered 80/20. Before the last election, LNP proposed 50% funding, however the Minister for Main Roads rejected this. ALP said they would match 50%, however both proposals were rejected. Due to Amberley's growth, the Federal government have asked for the business plan to be reviewed.

36. Mr Pahlke requested that the minutes be released sooner after the end of the meeting instead of just before the next meeting. He also queried regarding parking and escorting, as he doesn't have a base pass. WGCDCR Thompson advised that upon arrival, attendees should notify the guards that they are there for the AGWG meeting, and they will be escorted by Mr Davies. SQNLDR Nott advised that only people who work on the base are able to be issued base passes, for security reasons.

ITEM 11: NEXT MEETING

37. The next ACWG meeting date will be advised after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

38. The meeting was officially closed at 1840.

M Thompson
WGCDCR
Chairperson

Apr 20

M Davies
Mr
Base Manager

Apr 20