

WILLIAMTOWN ADVISORY GROUP

17 June 2024

1pm-2.45pm

Defence Attendees:

SADFO – WGCDR David Fattore; CDR ACG - AIRCDRE Peter Robinson, ACG Chief of Staff – GPCAPT Peter Davies

Community Reps: Sue Hirsch, John Donahoo, Bill George, Lindsay Clout,

State/Local Government/Business Reps: Matt Borsato – PSC; Geof Mansfield – Newcastle CC; NAPL – Shane De Wit, Dylan Parker, Paul McFarlane

Apologies: Steve Kuehn

Review of Meeting Notes – 23 May 23 - Adopted

Action Items – 23 May 23 Meeting

Action	Defence Response
Action 1: <i>Group queried – what was the noise of commercial aircraft compared to fast jets? Request to add commercial aircraft noise levels to reporting.</i>	Defence Advice: The Noise and Flightpath Monitoring System is capable of conducting noise monitoring of all aircraft and reporting noise levels over N70, N80, N90, N100 over noise monitors. Defence land planning officers to provide advice/options next meeting – Q4 2024
Action 2: <i>Defence to consider supplying the LaMax contours around the Base/airport.</i>	Defence Advice: The Noise and Flightpath Monitoring System conducted noise monitoring of all aircraft and people could go to obtain broad results such as number of aircraft registering noise levels over N70, N80, N90, N100 over noise monitors. See link: Department of Defence NFPMS Reporting . Defence land planning officers to provide advice/options next meeting – Q4 2024
Action 3: <i>Invite the Defence Land Planning Group to the next meeting to explain their role and where they have input into local and regional land planning decision-making.</i>	Invite will now be extended for Q4 2024

Noise levels of commercial aircraft vs military aircraft

1. The group discussed in general terms the benefits and dis-benefits of Action 2 as military aircraft operate differently to commercial aircraft. Peak noise events occur for brief

interludes, but do not last long. Commercial aircraft can create lower noise events but for a longer period of time.

2. **Community representatives:** LaMax levels may create issues for property owners.

3. **John D:** LaMax is the **maximum sound level** reached during a measurement period (normally 0.125 seconds for aircraft measurements), expressed in dB(A). This can be a very short period. Different to a sustained noise level over a longer period.

Noise reporting

4. The group discussed whether there should be an independent acoustic engineer to compare the NFPMS data as the ANEF is a planning tool, not an indication of noise experienced.

5. **Community representatives:** stated that purchasing houses needs to be more transparent so people buying on weekend understand the noise levels experienced around the Base.

6. **PSC:** A 149 certificate issued for every property that lies within the 20-40 contour lines on the 2025 ANEF. There is a limit to the details on a planning certificate. The onus is still on the individual to do their due diligence.

7. **Defence response:** ANEFs were introduced in May 1999 by Federal Government. See link [Federal Register of Legislation - Air Services Act 1995 - Direction pursuant to section 16 concerning the responsibilities of Airservices Australia in respect of the environmental effects of aircraft](#)

Benefits of LaMax versus 'lines on a map'

8. The group discussed **Action 2:** *Defence to consider identifying LaMax when updating the ANEF.*

9. **Defence response:** F-35A Biennial Report January 2021 - December 2022 pages 91-131 contains noise information and metrics including number above, event level histograms and maximum noise levels.

10. **PSC:** When the ANEF is updated, Defence should communicate and engage with Council and local residents. An ANEF can change – but we need to communicate and engage through the transition period. Impacts on what people can do in terms of attenuation for their properties. There is a perceived effect on property values.

Impact of day-to-day basis flying operations on the individuals

11. **John D:** Attenuation is needed for F-35A - due to low impact frequency sound from aircraft.

12. **Sue H:** Pastures Drive – one side of the street is impacted by the ANEF, the other side is not.

13. **John D:** TNIP is still around. The cadastral information is not very good. We need noise meters sent out for properties, and then the figures can be assessed for noise attenuation.

Quality of life vs land values vs commercial implication of property values

14. **John D:** Stated that Defence does not know/understand noise. Doesn't employ noise acousticians, no environmental health people are employed.

15. **GPCAPT Dyce-McGowan:** Advised the reality of the ANEF is that it is a projection, a predictive model of future flying activities in a particular airfield.

16. **Lindsay C:** Queried how the review of the 2025 ANEF might apply to Fullerton Cove as the Northern end of Fullerton Cove should have a noise monitoring station. Further queried if Defence is proposing to move noise; and acknowledge that occurs. Stated that Defence Land Planning representatives need to observe and participate.

Base Overview

17. The SADFO provided an overview of noise complaints, indicating a reducing trend:

- a. 2024 – 21 complaints to 13 Jun 24
- b. 2023 – 69
- c. 2022 – 80
- d. 2021 – 110
- e. 2020 – 102
- f. 2019 – 73
- g. 2018 – 80
- h. 2017 – 90+

18. The SADFO provided an overview of base activities:

- a. In November 23, the Newcastle Williamtown Air Show Base Open day occurred, with 25,000 people attending.
- b. The airfield capital works program is practically complete, with the aerodrome now Code E aircraft capable.
- c. A significant number of aircraft/personnel are taking part in various activities, and EX Dawn Strike 24 will occur at the end of June.
- d. A significant number of personnel and aircraft will be heading to Darwin and Tindal in July for EX Pitch Black 24.

SAAWR Overview

19. The SADFO provided an overview of activities at SAAWR:

- a. Hawk 127 aircraft have had 15 days of training scheduled thus far, with more training to commence in July 24 for approximately one month.

- b. PC-21 aircraft will support 4SQN activities as required.

ACG Overview

20. CDR ACG provided an overview of F-35A Program. The Air Force currently has 63 of a total 72 aircraft based at RAAF WLM and RAAF TDL.
21. CDR ACG advised he also has WH&S requirements to meet on the Base for all ACG personnel. Bedding down F-35A operations, using simulators more are all part of the process of working smarter, which benefits local residents.
22. CDR ACG outlined the need to be efficient with taxpayers' money as Australia's strategic environment is important.
23. ACG SQNs are absent from the Bases for up to three/four months of each year. Changes are occurring for AF personnel as well. For RAAF Base Pearce, there was a plan to relocate 79SQN to WLM but instead it was deemed important to leave the SQN at Pearce.
24. Defence will train and operate more in Northern Australia as a result of the Defence Strategic Review /National Defence Strategy. However, families will not be relocated as families don't want to go. Army tried it and it didn't work.
25. Do not expect F-35A to conduct many operations on SAAWR. The days of Classic Hornet operations are done. Hawks will continue to use the range as they do now, as will the PC-21s into the foreseeable future. This will include parachuting activity for combat controllers, from a C-130J aircraft for example.
26. **Bill G:** What happens in the case of catastrophic engine failure?
27. **Defence Response:** Salt Ash Air Weapons Range has been Gazetted and in use since 1946 and was re-authorised for air to surface use in Gazette Number 27 dated 7 July 2004:
- a. The Restricted Airspace associated with the Salt Ash Gazettal is R596, promulgated by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.
 - b. Defence regularly reviews the use of air weapons ranges, and assessments are conducted as to the ongoing effectiveness for these areas for military training purposes.
 - c. The Salt Ash Air Weapons is routinely subject to these reviews including the use for fast jet training activities.
 - d. The restricted airspace R596, larger than the lateral confines of the DPA, has been promulgated for military flying training conducted at SAAWR. The lateral confines of the SAAWR DPA (which are articulated in the Gazette issued under the provisions of Defence Force Regulations 1952) are designed to protect the public from Defence use of SAAWR.
 - e. The restricted areas directly associated with the SAAWR are promulgated by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and administered under the Airspace Act 2007 with which Defence complies.

28. **CDR ACG:** A considerable amount of training is conducted in the NT – Delamere and Bradshaw, and Evans Head – NSW. The Take-off profile is nose-up and is designed to minimise noise for sensitive receivers for departures over Grahamstown Dam.

29. We do not do as much training in the WLM local circuit. Simulation is used extensively but we still have to do some live training to ensure aircrew attain the necessary experience.

30. The group discussed a new **Action:** *I&P drift south on Cabbage Tree Rd*

31. **Defence response:** CDR ACG committed to looking into it. However, explained the F-35A lands much faster than the F/A-18 Hornets so there is a minor drift to the south when landing.

32. CDR ACG provided an outline of the new Western Military Airspace and resulting changes to flightpaths off the end of the runway (go to slide pack for overview) versus what has occurred in the past. There are less departures turning to the left at the end of the runway and more aircraft departing towards the dam and turning left at high altitude at the end of the dam.

33. **Belinda Fenner** – Aircraft Noise Ombudsman representative – see attached document ANO-Defence presentation June 2024



ANO_Defence
presentation June 2

NAPL Ltd update – NAPL Presentation June 2024



NAPL Presentation -
June 2024.pdf

Community Representative Update

34. **John D:** Local Fullerton Cove resident Richard Antcliffe would like to invite everyone to his place when the jets are landing in over Cabbage Tree Rd.

35. **John D:** Defence needs to consider its responsibility towards children's hearing at the end of the runway when people line up their cars there. There are no noise hazard signs.

36. **Defence Response:** SADFO advised the land on Medowie Rd where people park is not Defence land; and people choose to park there. Discussion centred around where does responsibility stop/start ie parents vs Defence vs Council.

37. **Community representatives:** thought a simple warning sign at the end of the runway would be appropriate. Group thought Council and Defence should have discussions.

38. **Defence Response:** SADFO advised there had been no noise complaints from any community members using the area near THR30. People choose to park there.

39. **John D:** Discussions around spectral data, including:
- a. F-35A – A/B; Mil power.
 - b. EPNL Data – and other power settings.
40. **Defence response:** information has been provided in the past (Refer to biennial report – EPNL data).
41. **Bill G:** Queried who owned the weir adjacent to the Weapons Range near Moffats Swamp. Impacts on surface water for Medowie as per the flood planning maps.
Noise hazards at the end of the runway
PFAS issues – drain at the end of runway – warning signs needed
What are the measurements at the end of the runway in that drain?
42. The group discussed new **Action:** *General update on PFAS –provide current works program at next meeting.*
43. **Lindsay C:** Requested a review of the current noise complaint response process. Less than helpful explanation from (named) personnel.
44. **Defence Response:** SADFO advised pre-recorded information is used to develop a response for noise complaints from the community. It is a template response process to ensure AF understands the person's issues, and records the correct information. The process involves a staff member identifying the SQN as per the flying program, and queries whether the pilot was flying appropriately. SQNs reply as part of the response.
45. Outline of noise complaint process:

Noise complaints

[RAAF Base Williamtown | Air Force](#)

RAAF Base Williamtown Base Aircraft Noise Management Plan

Noise Mitigation:

33. Complaints regarding Air Force aircraft noise should be made to the Noise telephone line on 1800 033 200 or submission of an Aircraft noise complaint/enquiry form.

34. On receipt of a noise complaint, a Defence member will initiate an investigation to determine the occurrence and likely operating Squadron. Contact will be made to the complainant to provide information on the nature of the operations to the query. Complaints relating to civilian aircraft will be directed to Newcastle Airport.

35. All completed investigations are forwarded to Air Force Headquarters Aircraft Noise/Environment, Canberra for further vetting. Noise complainants are able to contact the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman web site or:

Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
GPO Box 1985
Canberra City ACT 2601
ano@ano.gov.au

46. SADFO advised processes are reviewed annually.

47. **Lindsay C:** ANEF Review could take in the current situation as part of the consultation process. It is a noisy aircraft. The EIS – which nominated 60% reduction on departures to minimise noise not happening.

48. The group raised a new **Action:** *Query as to whether there are any drain works on Dawsons Drain and Lake Cochrane?*

49. **Sue H:** Revision of the ANEF, higher density or natural growth?

50. **Matt B:** The ANEF update is coming up and how it is communicated will be important. Defence needs to learn from the past. Whenever the lines on the map change, people and properties can be affected. Maintain dialogue with Council.

Close and next meeting

51. SADFO thanked the group for their forthright comments. Advised that WLM stakeholders are grateful for their ongoing commitment and participation in the WAG.

52. **Next Meeting.** Q4 2024.

Actions

Action: <i>Revise the action – Defence to consider identifying LaMax when updating the ANEF</i>	Defence response: F-35A Biennial Report January 2021 - December 2022 pages 91-131 contains noise information and metrics including number above, event level histograms and maximum noise levels.
Action: <i>I&P drift south on Cabbage Tree Rd –</i>	Defence response: CDR ACG committed to looking into it – however explained the F-35A lands much faster than the F/A-18 Hornets – so there is a minor drift to the south when landing.
Action: <i>General update on PFAS – provide current works program at next meeting.</i>	Extend invitation to PFAS branch staff. Please find a link to the Defence RAAF Base Williamtown PFAS remediation program documents - RAAF Base Williamtown About Defence
Action: <i>Query as to whether there are any drain works on Dawsons Drain or Lake Cochrane?</i>	Defence response: No Defence works on Lake Cochrane.
Action 3: <i>Invite the Defence Land Planning Group to the next meeting to explain their role and where they have input into local and regional land planning decision-making.</i>	Invite will now be extended for Q4 2024

Useful Links:

<https://www.defence.gov.au/id/Environmental.asp>

Environmental compliance for F-35A - [Flying operations of F-35A aircraft](#) | [About](#) | [Defence](#)

Important Links:

Aircraft Operations and Noise information, and F-35A project

<http://www.defence.gov.au/aircraftnoise>

<http://www.defence.gov.au/AirCraftNoise/Environment/Default.asp>

PFAS Related:

Latest information and latest community updates can be accessed via the following link:

<https://defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/Williamtown/>