

WILLIAMTOWN ADVISORY GROUP

Wednesday 1 November 2017

2pm – 4.30pm

DRAFT Meeting Notes

Senior Australian Defence Force Officer (SADFO) welcome and introductions

Attendees: Community: Sue Hirsch, Tricia and Barry Phillips, John Donahoo; Robyn Thompson, John Donahoo, Steve Kuehn. **NAPL** – Dr Peter Cock, Marcus Lancaster. **NSW Government:** Aaron Spadaro - NSW Premiers and Cabinet; Jo Erskine – NPWS, **Local Government:** PSC; NCC – Geof Mansfield

Apologies: Bill George; Lindsay Clout, Bev Male

Introductions and welcome to group by Air Commodore Heap.

Welcomed group and re-iterated the role of the WLM Advisory Group to be the Base's primary conduit to the local community.

AIRCDRE Heap introduced Air Commodore Michael Kitcher as the new Commander Air Combat Group.

AIRCDRE Kitcher outlined his past association with the Base during his early flying years as well as being Chief of Staff Air Combat group and attending the meetings in 2012.

Acknowledged Air Force was a part of the local community and outlined AF needed to be, and to be seen as part of the local community. 2012 – As Chief of Staff for ACG, instigated the ACG Fly Neighbourly program with changed departures and arrivals procedures. This is now the standard for all aircraft flying into RAAF Base WLM – it includes military and civilian aircraft.

F-35A Update:

There are now 230 F-35A in service – United States Navy, United State Air Force, Netherlands, Israel, Italy and United State Marines will all fly F-35A aircraft. Australia has 2 aircraft at Luke AF Base. We currently have eight pilots and 30 qualified maintainers qualified to fly F-35A aircraft.

3 Squadron will be the first to train, and accept F-35A aircraft. 2OCU will transition in training in Dec2020, and 77 SQN are lined up to 2021. The fourth SQN – 75SQN will accept the F-35A in 2022 if all goes to schedule.

Capability: The aircraft operates well – it will be a formidable fighter aircraft. There are three variants – F-35C – for aircraft carriers; F-35B – is capable of vertical take-off – this is a very noisy aircraft, and there is ours – which is the F-35A.

The aircraft is powerful and predictions made regarding its ability to take-off in military power settings and minimum after-burner required is true. The conditions at

Luke AFB are very hot – up to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. – Military power take-offs are the majority of take-offs.

At WLM, our expectation is that more than 80% of take-offs will be military power only. The only time we should need to use AB is due to a reduced runway length for whatever reason, or a wet runway. The discussions we had in 2012 around how noisy the aircraft would be - means we now are pretty confident about the impacts / noise etc.

The first two jets will arrive late next year. The modelling done for the Environment Impact Statement look to be pretty accurate – however it still remains that we will have to conduct all the necessary readings here.

Hawk use will remain the same for as long as the Hawks remain in service. F-35As will use the Salt Ash Air Weapons Range – for gunnery only and it will not be used for practice bombing.

John Donahoo: The standard instrument departures need to be etched in stone.

AIRCDRE Kitcher: Standing Instructions are not releasable documents. The Fly Neighbourly Procedures (I) put in place in 2012. We fly exactly the same procedures as introduced in 2012.

Action Item: *RAAF Base WLM look to provide information/documentation to outlines flying procedures and noise mitigation actions to increase community understanding.*

John Donahoo: Need the LAMax data for the Hornets and the F-35A aircraft as part of noise information. Ultimate ANEFS are needed for WLM.

AIRCDRE Kitcher: Both ends of the runway have been extended – 1200ft to the SE, and 800ft to the NW – it will not make that much of a difference except that the aircraft will be 1200ft further away and they will be higher when leaving the Base environs.

John Donahoo: Will the ANEF lines move as a result of this move.

Defence: A number of these questions can be answered in the Noise specific meeting planned for next year – Q1 2018.

AIRCDRE Kitcher: A normal pattern will be flown on the range; there will be no afterburner used on the range. Classics don't use A/B on the range. There are no pops (reverse pattern) flown on the range anymore.

The reduction of hours on the range is primarily due to pilots not doing bombing training. The simulators do help – but we still have to do roughly the same amount of hours. The Classic SIMs are still capable – but they are getting old.

Marc Goodall: What will be the impact of the F-35A – is it the same as the F/A-18s in after burner?

AIRCDRE Kitcher: The F-35As sound a bit different – it is a bit noisier but not that noticeable. At Luke AF Base, I heard the F-16s/F-18s/F-15s and it doesn't really sound that much noisier.

Ends.

AIRCDRE Heap thanks CDR ACG for his overview, and his time to address the group.

Revert to the Action Items:

Action:	Who	Response
<i>ACTION: AIRCDRE Heap advised Mr Cox he would be willing to go to Arthur's house during SAAWR operations</i>		
ACTION: Working towards developing an open discussion with the community for the introduction of the JSF.	SADFO	In the lead-up to the arrival of the JSF, AF plans to host a number of sessions for people to better understand the aircraft operations.
ACTION: AIRCDRE Heap suggested drainage plans could be outlined to the next PFAS Community Reference Group meeting if required; E&IG offers a brief to next WLM Advisory Group meeting which will provide clarity around the future of Lake Cochrane, and base changes.	DE&IG	CRWG Look to set for 2018 meeting – James will address at his brief
Action: Distribute links to the presentation to WAG members.	NSW Govt	Provided to group out of session. https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/98-126/pdfs/98-126.pdf follow this link for the US NIOSH Standards 1998. http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-and-prevention/health-and-safety-topics/work-related-stress/?a=22683
Action: Query Defence's response to the development application for Bower Estate.	DE&IG	If DA was supplied to Defence, Defence would respond.
Action: AF request Dept of Premier's & Cabinet links to relevant studies ie DPI research, hydrology studies	SADFO to NSW Govt	Will send out links

conducted as part of the Groundwater Studies.		
Action: Why can't an ultimate ANEF be developed for WLM like was done for Canberra airport	DE&IG	It is not possible to create an 'Ultimate Capacity' ANEF at a military airfield. These forecasts as these are dependent on knowing the future 50-100 years out., such as knowing how next-generation aircraft will fly, how often, and having suitable modelling data for the future fleet's noise footprint and mode/s of operation. While 'Ultimate Capacity' ANEF maps are used in the civil sphere they are not appropriate for the military airfields and Defence has methodological concerns about the concept's application to military airfields.
Action: NACC/JSF Division people need to attend/present at the WLM Advisory Group	JSFDIV	Attend meeting in Feb 2018

Discussions were held around retention ponds on Base and their ability to cope with heavy, flooding rain. There are 9 retention basins on Base, and the principal applied was to not leave the area any worse than it was when the Base redevelopment began. Not enough culverts on the road sides and another study needs to be done so all the water is not diverted in the one drain.

PFAS Representative James McLachlan: Defence is doing more studies to understand how PFAS moves on the Base, and there will also be work on base drainage. It will be a wider/greater study of the broader landscape.

Discussions are being held with PSC on drainage and the sheer volume of water.

Action Item: *Drainage Management - Request information from PSC to increase understanding of the drains study and what areas it will involve?*

Action Item: *PSC to take on board the questions around drainage plans and issues. We need to have an understanding of the community, council, state government contribution.*

Sue Hirsch: PSC had two studies done Richardson Rd, Campvale. They will need to recap and rebuild the roads. We don't need to dam areas and create bigger floods due to roadworks. We need to investigate the drainage impacts. There was a discussion at the Medowie Progress Association meeting.

Dr Peter Cock: Airport is working with PSC to improve drainage efficiency in the area. Community groups can lend their support to a project.

Dr Cock: We all have a desire to fix up the problems, it is a broader issue as the areas are low-lying, and have high water tables.

PSC: Council has a PFAS/drainage sub-committee.

Action Item: *Group requested a separate meeting for drainage issues with PSC, OEH, Newcastle Airport, RAAF to talk drainage.*

John Donahoo: Queried the design and capacity for the drainage retention basins.

NB: PSC approvals for the NACC Redevelopment required 1 in 50 year flood event.

John Donahoo: Defence is not going to run a drainage study. But as more development occurs around the Base/Airport more and more water will flow into the drains. The increased volumes of water need to be addressed. Moores Drain can't cope – need bigger retention basin.

James McLachlan: The retention pools were developed within the council regulations. The water treatment plant can't stop it completely – but we are looking to reduce PFAS levels through water cleansing. We are managing the source areas and stop the pathways, and also to stop it getting into the water table by removing the sediment from the drains and limit/control water running off the base as much as possible. 70 litres/second is the current rate. Defence is looking around the world and trialling/developing new technology as companies race to find a solution to this problem.

Action: *Continue to update the group on new technologies/developments*

John Donahoo: Defence needs to focus on areas where the contamination is the greatest. Assess the speed it is travelling by using the inspection points

James McLachlan: Defence tests the bores across the inspection area. The water flow is quite well known.

AIRCDRE Heap: Steady state of bore sampling – which might go on for a number of years.

James McLachlan: It is important for people to understand that the monitoring is ongoing. Have to remember that if a person does not want their property on a map we can't put it on.

Defence will scope a number of ideas before we will get to a final Base solution. 4 Corners Report highlighted a particular document. This related primarily to AFFF foam and impacts on water species. 15 investigations are currently occurring around Australia. We have learnt from the Williamstown and Oakey experiences on how to talk to people. AFFF form 3% of the total use of PFAS chemicals world-wide. 97% of its use world-wide is not for fire-fighting foam.

12 months of samples from bores and hydrology to develop our understanding of the natural environmental process. It takes about 2 years – desktop exercises, and then has to conduct site investigations.

Defence has learnt a lot – which is in turn informing the rest of Australia and the world about the nature and extent of PFAS.

Defence is looking to remove the sediment, to remove source areas as much as we can. Looking to develop a specific management plan.

AIRCDRE Heap: The 1987 Report into AFFF identified that it should be treated as a toxic waste and not be allowed to pour into drains. The chemical blocks oxygen and kills fish/plant like. At that stage there was no known human health risk. PFAS is in everybody and everything.

Ruth Lunney: When will there be a management plan? Looking to have a Management Plan by late first quarter -2nd quarter. Would like to advise the links do not work.

Action: *Update the links on the website.*

Dot Harland: Update on the vegetable garden do we have any results as yet.

AIRCDRE Heap: There was no uptake in the fruit and veges on the general studies we did. Study not finished as yet – but also looking to get CSIRO to conduct the study.

Barry Phillips: As an oyster farmer, I would like to know will dilution help?

James McLachlan: Floods do spread/dilute or flush PFAS – so eventually it dilutes but it is still important for Defence to isolate the source area. As a land owner we are looking to keep in from moving into other areas and this involves moving the soil and other pathways to reduce the amounts over time.

Sue Hirsch: Queried whether there would ever be testing around WLM – for eggs and meat. If there is PFAS in the soil/grass/water ie PFAS in all the pathways – how much of local cattle could you eat for home consumption – but it is okay to sell to the broader community.

NSW Health guidelines are here. Victorian EPA Fact Sheet – September 2018. Recommended Daily Intake is determined over a lifetime.

John Donahoo: Discussion around Lake Cochrane circulating water around which will collect PFOS/PFOA - need to debunk this.

James McLachlan: Defence is commissioning a study on the aquifer and how it relates to the base. Need to understand the movement of the water and the plumes. A detailed site investigation is due out in December 2017 and will be presented to the local community at walk-in sessions.

SADFO Update:

AIRCDRE Heap advised he would remain Commander Surveillance and Response Group, but SADFO role was changing in 2018. AF recognised they needed to have a dedicated position so GPCAPT Peter Cluff would be taking over the role Q1 2018. GPCAPT Cluff is known to WAG members as he was ABXO at RAAF Base WLM a few years ago and attended the WAG meetings.

Community updates:

Sue Hirsch: Medowie Community website is up and running and it would be a great opportunity for the SADFO Updates and advisories to be listed on the site.

ACTION: Base to upload information on the Medowie community site.

Group discussed the problems around ANEFs, and the fact that it caused many issues for residents/community. Land use issues becoming more complex and the group was looking for a possibility for Defence/Port Stephens Council to develop/overcome the issues around all of the planning issues that have been going on for a long time.

Aaron Spadaro: Commonwealth/State/Local governments need to look at how to deal with noise issues.

John Donahoo: Ultimate ANEF is needed

Sue Hirsch: 800 metre runway extension – does this put aircraft 34ft lower over Riverview Ridge? Can someone clarify this for me please?

Defence response: Runway extensions are designed to ensure the F-35A (and other aircraft) has the full extent of the runway to operate ie take-off with minimal noise issues during certain weather conditions and operational requirements.

Action: Approvals from PSC and what is the journey between the levels of approval?

John Donahoo: Need higher resolution to get this sorted. Have someone from the Dept of Planning Section 117 for re-zoning purposes. Halloran Road – acoustic consultants got to TNIP, and run all the flight paths; use LA Max and the information needs to be released ie an increase of 5dBa – but you can't see the difference. This needs to be discussed.

SADFO: The first meeting next year is designed for specific noise discussions.

Aaron Spadaro: Department of Premiers and Cabinet, NSW EPA working with Defence to get the terms of the human health assessment to be finalised. Mid-Nov NSW Human Health Risk Assessment Expert Panel and then looking to late November early December the drop-in might be happening. NSW government will send officers to the sessions as normal.

Human Health Risk Assessment – interesting given the civil action over Dupont.

John Donahoo.: There are probably causal links for PFAS to certain types of cancers. But Defence, and Federal and State Health experts continue to say there is no proven link.

SADFO: We know PFAS bio-accumulates - but the key issues are what are normal.

Barry Phillips:

Action: All that concrete will put additional water into Moors Drain. No worse today than in the past. DA approved for 1 in 50 year flood event.

Actions arising from the meeting

Action:	Who	Response
Action Item: RAAF Base WLM look to provide information/documentation to outlines flying procedures and noise mitigation actions to increase community understanding.		
Action Item: Contact PSC so we have an understanding of the drains study and what areas it will involve?		
<p>Action Item: Drainage Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request information from PSC to increase understanding of the drains study and what areas it will involve? • PSC to take on board the questions around drainage plans and issues. We need to have an understanding of the community, council, state government contribution. • We need a separate meeting for drainage issues with PSC, OEH, Newcastle Airport, RAAF to talk drainage. 		
Action: Continue to update the group on new technologies/developments		
Action Item: Update the links for the AF, PFAS website.		
Action Item: Base to upload information on the Medowie Progress Association community site.		
Action Item: Group requested clarification of (DA) approvals from PSC; and what is the journey between the levels of approval?		
Action Item: All that concrete will put additional water into Moors Drain. No		<i>Need to review with Barry Phillips.</i>

<i>worse today than in the past. DA approved for 1 in 50 year flood event.</i>		
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AIRCDRE Heap:

Additional questions/queries have been addressed in the body of the minutes.

Any action items where possible will be addressed out of session in the meeting notes.

4.30pm Meeting concludes

Next meeting: - Early 2018

Important Links:

For past WAG and WCF Minutes:

http://www.airforce.gov.au/Bases/New_South_Wales/RAAF_Base_Williamtown/?RAAF-hGKolBgcjFzkAjuJv83Grq59BEM+C152

Air Force Flying Operations pages:

<https://www.airforce.gov.au/operations/flying-operations/flying-activity>

RAAF Base Williamtown Environmental Investigation of Ground Water Contamination

The link for the Williamtown site is:

- <http://www.defence.gov.au/environment/pfas/Williamtown/default.asp>

Remediation investigations

- http://defence.gov.au/Environment/PFAS/docs/Williamtown/FactSheets/PFAS_ManagementAndRemedialActivitiesAtRAAFBaseWilliamtownFactsheet.pdf

Lake Cochran water treatment plant (WTP)

- <http://defence.gov.au/Environment/PFAS/docs/Williamtown/Factsheets/FactsheetLakeCochranWTPDec2016.pdf>

Health Based Guidance Values

- <http://defence.gov.au/Environment/PFAS/docs/Williamtown/Factsheets/DefenceWilliamtownHHRAFactsheetAug16.pdf>

Blood testing and epidemiological study

- [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/1BD420CE5651940ACA2580790004DF7D/\\$File/FAQ-Blood-testing-advice-consumers.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/1BD420CE5651940ACA2580790004DF7D/$File/FAQ-Blood-testing-advice-consumers.pdf)