

Meeting notes
WLM Advisory Group – 9 May 2013

Attendees

AIRCDRE Tony Grady, GPCAPT Glen Beck, WGCDR Peter Cluff (Air Base Executive Officer), Brenin Presswell (Defence Support and Reform Group); N-NSW Environment Manager Helen Horn (Defence Support and Reform Group), SAAWR Rep - Bev Male, Raymond Terrace Rep – Ross Osborn, East Medowie Rep - Bill George, Kristen Keegan – Hunter Business Chamber; Trevor John – Hunter Regional Development; Marcus Lancaster – NAL; Bruce Peterson – Port Stephens Council; Aaron Spodaro – NSW Premiers; Kerry Jamieson - Salt Ash Public School Principal, Malcolm St Hill – NSW Trade and Investment

Apologies: Tricia Phillips – Oyster Cove Rep, West Medowie rep - Sue Hirsch; Dean Taylor - Hunter Water Corporation, Mike McIntosh – PSC, GPCAPT Mick Brown – NACC.

Senior Australian Defence Force Officer - Welcome

AIRCDRE Tony Grady welcomed all attendees to Williamtown Advisory Group (WAG) held at RAAF Base Williamtown and reinforced the role of the group. AIRCDRE Grady stressed that blend of officials and representatives from local community groups offered an opportunity for discussion.

What	Who	When
Action: Seek PSC to conduct presentation at next meeting regarding the LEP, and strategic planning update for around RAAF Base Williamtown.	Bruce Peterson	Mr Peterson presented
Action: Commitment from A/SADFO to seek a resolution for NPWS to conduct aerial weed spraying	SADFO/ABXO	Discussions conducted with ABXO, Air Traffic Control and NSW Parks.
Action: Defence/RAAF Base Williamtown reiterated commitment to consult with community over location of the monitors around Salt Ash AWR	SADFO/DSG	DSRG Rep presented monitor locations at the meeting.
Action: A/SADFO committed to another Salt Ash meeting before the end of this year.	SADFO	SAAWR meeting conducted in Dec 2012

Minutes from October 2012 adopted

SADFO Presentation:

AIR CDRE Grady outlined for the group why Air Force operate in the manner they do – acknowledged Salt Ash/Medowie community representatives may have heard the information before.

- Exceptionally complex, dynamic, unforgiving and lethal operating environment and coming second in combat operations is not a viable option for Defence.
- Decisive outcomes rely heavily on realistic high-end training and quality personnel

- Joint/combined effects will be required to sustain any significant combat scenario and the ability to integrate seamlessly and effectively in coalition ops is key.
- Both Air to Ground and Air to Air disciplines are highly perishable skills, and although simulation quality is improving trainee pilots require real exposure - SAAWR (5% of training)
- Aerial tactics evolve quickly
- Fast Jet operations are essential for the security of Australia
- Preparedness levels are directed (non-negotiable), and based around agreed Notice To Move (measured in days)
- Programs are designed to optimise limited resources and opportunities - Achieve key combat-related competencies/outcomes; reliance on external agencies/international assets; and can impose significant constraints on flexibility.
- RAAF Base contributes in excess of \$1 Billion per annum to the community and local businesses
- Acutely aware of the impact of our operations on local community, and RAAF Williamtown is engaged to minimise our footprint on the local area

Fly Neighbourly Program

- Trial Period – from mid-2012 for 3 months
- Standing Instruction – promulgated November 2012, and applicable to visiting SQNs
- Noise Monitors installed around Grahamstown Dam, West Medowie – (DSRG presentation)
- Reduction in complaints recorded around Base, Raymond Terrace and West Medowie
- Attributed to revised ground tracks/departure profiles, and increased notifications of Base activities

Community Engagement

- WLM Consultative Forum
- WLM Advisory Group
- Community engagement with SAAWR group – 2 meetings in 2012, and other planned for June.
- Working with Medowie and Salt Ash (Bev and Bill) to identify areas to site the new Noise Monitors (DSRG to present later)

Listening to communities

- Looking into a review of ‘Pop-to-Dive’ Pattern over the SAAWR
- Community has raised concerns around SAAWR use in school holidays - AF is looking at it – but it is difficult as the training programs roll out within certain timeframes, and during certain phases of the training the SAAWR must be used.

Information Program

- Website - Provides a monthly picture of scheduled flights, weekly updates and alerts
- ABXO addressed Hunter Councils meeting Nov 2012, establishing links to local council websites, businesses etc
- Media Alerts, Media Releases
- RAAF Base Connect – Radar, Port Stephens Examiner
- Direct Email Notifications to Base neighbours, businesses

<http://www.airforce.gov.au/flyingareawilliamtown>

SAAWR Usage

- Authorised to a max of 115 days pa
- Long term average approx 60 days pa
- Range use for 2012 – 60 days
 - Hawk – 21 days; Hornet – 29 days; PC-9 – 10 days
- Range use for 2013 – 13 days to date
 - Hawk program has been delayed due to maintenance issues with the aircraft

F-35A Acquisition

- Govt committed to acquisition of 14 F-35A aircraft to date
- Foreshadowed (early May) up to 72 Aircraft
- F-35A will replace our current fleet of 71 F/A-18A/B Hornets
 - Hornets withdrawn from service 2020 – 2022
- This includes 2 operational squadrons and a training squadron based at RAAF Base WLM; and a 3rd operational squadron will go to RAAF Tindal
- First two JSF anticipated off the production line at Fort Worth in August 2014
- First JSF in Australia in late 2018
- The first squadron operational in Australia in 2020

F-35A Operations

- Reduced SAAWR operations - Gunnery passes only; Increased use of hi-fidelity simulation
- Hawks maintain extant footprint
- Hornets usage reduce as progressively withdrawn from service
- Reduced SAAWR usage rate/modified departure profiles principally responsible for amended 2025 ANEF contours....good news
- Anecdotal assessment of JSF footprint

***Action 1:** Confirm whether a certain number of days were identified for the F-35A to operate on the SAAWR.*

Updates: *(Each representative provides an updates that might be relevant to the meeting)*

Defence Support and Reform Group – Brenin Presswell

What is a Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System (NFPMS)

- Tracks aircraft movements
- Attempts to identify the resultant noise
- Reports let communities investigate noise for themselves
- Improve accountability to neighbours

An NFPMS is an automated network of noise monitors linked to a radar system that:

- Bruel and Kjaer (the current supplier) is the world's largest supplier of NFPMS
- NFPMS are used by over 100 airports worldwide
- Defence is the first military customer
- Defence's NFPMS reports aircraft noise using the same metrics as civil NFPMS
- Military aircraft are tracked in the same way that civil aircraft are tracked

New Flight Path Monitoring

- Better understanding of any noise changes resulting from the new flight paths

- New reporting for the north-western side of Medowie
- Clarify any differences between civil and military aircraft noise in Medowie

What does the NFPMS allow Defence to do?

Report Activity for Local Communities

- What are the key flight paths?
- What aircraft mix is there?
- How many aircraft are using which flight paths?
- Are there differences in where different aircraft types fly?

Collects and Reports Noise Data

- Loudest aircraft noise event
- Average noise event level
- Noise by aircraft category
- “Number above” (frequency of noise)

http://www.defence.gov.au/id/aircraft_noise.htm

How does it work?

- Automated monitoring terminals record noise
- Radar logger identifies aircraft tracks
- Algorithms attempt to match noise events with a nearby aircraft track
- NFPMS at civil airports assume that the closest aircraft is the loudest

The NFPMS has been modified for military aircraft by:

- Improving its ability to detect formations;
- Changing turn-radius and acceleration algorithms to match how military aircraft fly; and
- No longer assumes that the closest aircraft is the loudest

New Noise Monitoring Terminals for RAAF Base WLM

Total of 15 monitors Salt Ash Activity

- Better coverage and understanding of Salt Ash operations
- Intend to identify differences between pattern activity and simple overflights by military aircraft
- Opportunity to better identify formation activity

New Noise Monitoring Terminals

Defence has selected 5 sites for new noise monitoring terminals

- Sought community comments
- Two (2) comments received, both queried location of proposed Medowie East terminal
- Proposed response: Site terminal on-range near closest residences
- Proposed install-by date: July 2013
- Sites and date subject to negotiation between Bruel and Kjaer (EMS) and landowners
- Terminal requirements: physical security, utilities and maintenance access

RAAF Base Williamtown

ABXO report

- Since October 2012, the Base has had operational standby over Christmas, then the Fighter Combat Instructor course began in late January. Visiting USAF F/16 aircraft and Super Hornets have operated from the base.
- The FCI course moves to the Northern Territory during June, but will return to Williamtown on 28 June. Aircraft will return to Base early that morning. Residents should expect aircraft noise around dawn. This will be advertised widely in the local media as well as on the web site.
- The RAAF's Salt Ash Air Weapons Range had minimal use early this year with four days in Feb, five in March and four in Apr. Further use of the range will occur in next Friday 17th and in late May and early June. The next six months of operations are currently being programmed with Hawk operations in catch-up.
- No 6 Aviation Regiment will be operating throughout the Newcastle area during the period 17 – 27 June. They will be conducting night flying operations during that time.
- Base personnel continue to deploy to the Middle East, although numbers will decrease in the next rotation in support of whole of government directed operations and drawdown.
- The release last Friday of the Defence White Paper has singled the government's intention to proceed with programmed airfield upgrades to support Joint Strike Fighter operations at Royal Australian Air Force bases Darwin, Tindal, Williamtown, Amberley, Edinburgh, Townsville, Learmonth, Curtin and Scherger.
- The government also announced the purchase of 12 more Super Hornet aircraft in Growler configuration, to be based at Amberley.
- Other Base redevelopment activities remain on hold pending further funding and direction from government.
- Base personnel participated in approximately 160 local and regional ANZAC Day representative events such Dawn Services, marches through townships and presentations at schools. These events were as far away as Manilla north of Tamworth to Sydney but mostly throughout the Hunter region.
- The base has also participated in a number of charity fund raisers including raising a collection on National Autism Day which raised \$3000 and \$1000 to Variety. The next major Base wide fundraising will be for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome in late June.

NAL

- Additional Virgin flight has been added and new daylight saving schedule.
- Development application considered and outlined as part of the Masterplan.
- Grant funding application looking to arrivals and baggage carousel, and looking to extend the parking apron – through State and Federal Government funding applications.
- No increase in passenger for 2012, 1.18 Million passengers

Questions

Salt Ash Rep - Bev Male raise some questions around regarding was there a need for a Newcastle Airport Noise Working Group.

NAL Response: Air Services Australia receives one complaint every six months and considers this forum to be an adequate mechanism to discuss the community.

Salt Ash Rep - Bev Male: Queries around whether or not an EIS needs to be done for larger commercial aircraft?

NAL Response: Needs to be considered through a Development Applications/Council approval. Defence is also involved in the process.

Community enquiry regarding community consultation for introduction of larger aircraft.

Action 2: Clarification required on process for introduction of new aircraft.

NAL projections were included in the 2025 ANEF (August 2011) including the projected number of movements each week.

Bev Male:

(Part of the questions tabled at the meeting)

Is there an industry funded noise abatement program for Newcastle Airport Ltd?

Action 3: Will get clarification around this question and be addressed at next meeting.

Discussions continued around aspects concerning community consultation around commercial aircraft, and is there any difference in noise with alternative or larger aircraft.

Hunter Business Chamber

Kristen Keenan presented the Hunter Industry Defence Strategy and positioned to attract Defence contracts. State Government is fully supportive of Defence contracts and it's the first time it has been done.

Ms Keenan flagged the Defence Industry Conference occurring at Fort Scratchley in late May.

Bruce Petersen (PSC)

- Recognised the need to take advantage of Newcastle Airport, however we need a strategy to guide development.
- Growth needs to occur around the airport, and we need to ensure the development is appropriate such as no residential housing under the flight path.
- No schools or sensitive receivers under the flight path
- Need to include state Department of Planning – bigger than council/regional issue.
- Need to do it properly as in the past there has been poor process and a lack of accountability.
- We don't want to ask in 15 years how did we get here.

Premiers and Cabinet

Aaron Spadaro

- Need to assess with cross agency issues and gaps in government service delivery.
- The Lower Hunter Strategy developed in 2006, and reflects a whole of government approach to planning.
- New approach and government oversight. The White Paper and the new Planning Act is about to be introduced that will give certainty to developers and provide clear guidelines up front.

NSW Trade and Investment

Malcolm St Hill:

The Defence & Airport Related Economic Zone was a concept developed in the recent past and is a good example of all levels of government working together.

Chief of Staff – Air Combat Group

GPCAPT Glen Beck:

Air Force is involved in community engagement and noise monitoring.

Important for the community to remember that all aircraft have to go somewhere. Flight paths are planned to have the least possible impact on the local community.

Aircraft avoid as much as possible – Raymond Terrace, Medowie and Salt Ash – but there are limitations and sometimes there are limited choices in terms of aircraft operations. For example – There is no other option but to fly north-west of Grahamstown Dam when aircraft depart from Runway 30.

- Queries around whether Defence would contribute, or had contributed to the Lower Hunter Growth Strategy.
- Discussions around Transport plans for NSW and Hunter Region Transport Plan which will involve a community consultation process.

Port Stephens Council

Bruce Petersen

PSC LEP adopted 26Mar2013, and there were changes to zonings around Defence – key changes were rural/environmental zonings.

NACC Update:

Andrew Pickett

White Paper released on **3 May 2013** and supports the **3 May 2012** announcement by Minister Smith.

- *We are contractually committed to two and they will be delivered in 2014-2015 in the United States for testing and training purposes.*
- *We have previously announced a commitment to purchase another 12 and that commitment will occur but it will occur two years after the previously anticipated timetable.*
- *We remain committed to the Joint Strike Fighter project*

Stephen Smith MP, Minister for Defence, 3rd May 2012

- **2014/15** – First two aircraft delivered
- **2015** – Commence construction of facilities
- **2018/19** – At least two aircraft fly to Australia
- **2019** – Stand up maintenance training at Williamstown
- **2020** – First operational squadron at Williamstown
- **2021** – Second operational squadron at Williamstown

Specialist technical studies currently being finalised include:

- Noise study will analyse the existing noise conditions where the F35-A will be located and assess future noise conditions as a result of the introduction of the F35-A;
- Air quality study will consider the air emissions associated with the operation of F35-A aircraft and potential impacts on local and regional air quality;
- Aircraft hazards and risk study will assess individual and societal risks associated with the operation of the F35-A aircraft compared with those currently experienced with the F/A-18 Hornets;
- Biodiversity study will consider potential impacts on native biota and environmentally sensitive areas from the operation of the F-35 aircraft;
- Surface water quality study will consider potential impacts on environmental values and beneficial uses of surface water associated with the operation of the F-35A aircraft;
- Planning and land-use study will consider potential impacts on land use, property value and development associated with the introduction of the F-35A aircraft; and
- Social impact study will consider socio-economic aspects of the existing environment and how they may change with the introduction of the F35-A aircraft.

Proposed EIS is now larger than what was envisaged in 2011 and was planned to be completed in 2010-11. Schedule is currently being reviewed by Consultant and Defence as a reflection of the complexities and size of the proposed EIS. Additional knowledge about the aircraft is being gained.

Intent of the new schedule is to ensure that we provide:

- Defence with appropriate time to review technical reports and EIS chapters;
- Provide the public and other stakeholders with appropriate time to review and provide comments on the EIS;
- Consider periods such as Christmas and New Year;
- A new schedule will be placed on the EIS website when finalised;
- Appraisal of existing levels of noise over Williamtown and SAAWR;
 - ANEI is to be produced utilising best available data including NFPMS and existing airfield movement data.

Noise impact assessment is to be carried out on a range of land uses eg. residential dwellings, schools, recreational areas.

Key activities to date include website went live, engagement forums, 1800 number, newspaper ads and fact sheet inserts.

Website went live in June 2012

- 247 subscribers;
- 3 stakeholder queries in Mar 13 (0% EIS related).

1800 number

- 8 queries in Mar 13 (0% EIS related).

Stakeholder engagements forums have been held at Williamtown in March and June 2012

- Attended Williamtown Advisory Group meeting and Williamtown Consultative Forum in 2012;
- Public Notice placed into Port Stephens Examiner and Newcastle Herald in late August and December 2012.

General points:

- Large-scale process and many documents will be produced – continual process of updating the information for the technical reports.

- Defence committed to the community consultation process. There will be panel sessions to explain areas of the report, and there will be ample time for people to review the document.
- Will not conduct any more community consultation meetings until the technical reports and the draft document are completed.
- Will continue to keep people informed through the public consultation process, the website has been live for 12 months.
- The communication mechanisms will be maintained throughout the lull in the process.
- Public Notices will be published soon to advise the community of the delays in the project.
- Recognise the need to get the EIS right, and will commit to using the best information possible.

Query: Is the Response from Defence

EIS will incorporate Federal and State legislation requirements

Action 4: Can we provide a link to the Federal Department of Environment – discussions around the list of conditions under which Defence is drafting the EIS?

Bev Male:

Please refer to the attached document for Mrs Male’s comments –

Mrs Male made a general statement regarding the RAAF Base operations and stated the community has questions. Mrs Male said she believed her role was to express the concerns of the community.

Mrs Male stated the community’s issues were:

- Flying during school holidays
- Noise and the EIS – we don’t want to know about average noise – we want to understand what are the individual noise events

Please refer to the attached document for questions ... Defence responses will follow.

Action 5: Address B. Male’s questions prior to the next meeting in latter part of 2013. Answers will be added to the minutes.

Action 6: Committed to tighten the agenda to allow for community updates/presentations for the next meeting

Items to be carried over:

- Responses to Mrs Bev Male’s questions as tabled at the meeting and attached to the minutes. Added as an agenda item.

Set date for next meeting –Latter part of 2013

Meeting closed Approx 12.30pm

Actions:

What	Who	When
Action 1: Confirm whether a certain	SADFO	By next meeting –

number of days were identified for the F-35A to operate on the SAAWR.		proposed Nov 2013
<p>Action 2: Is there an industry funded noise abatement program for Newcastle Airport Ltd?</p> <p>Action 3: Clarification on process for introduction of new aircraft?</p> <p>Action 4: Is there an industry funded noise abatement program for Newcastle Airport Ltd?</p>	NAL Rep	By next meeting – proposed Nov 2013
Action 5: Can we provide a link to the Federal Department of Environment – discussions around the list of conditions under which Defence is drafting the EIS?	DSRG	By next meeting – proposed Nov 2013
Action 6: AF committed to look at the agenda for the next meeting	SADFO	By next meeting – proposed Nov 2013
Action 7: Address B. Male’s questions prior to the next meeting, and they will be presented to the meeting.	SADFO	By next meeting – proposed Nov 2013