

WILLIAMTOWN ADVISORY GROUP MEETING NOTES
Wednesday 19 August 2015
2pm – 3.30pm

WAG attendees:

Community:

Bill George – Medowie; Ruth Lunney - West Medowie; John Donahoo - Medowie Progress; Bev Male - Salt Ash; Sue Hirsch - West Medowie

NAPL:

Marcus Lancaster; Dr Peter Cock – CEO; Kaitlyn Green

Local/State Government:

Trevor John – Regional Development Hunter; Glen Whitton – Medowie Primary School Principal; Peter Marler – PS Council; Tim Crosdale – PS Council; Matthew Borsato – PSC ; Aaron Spadaro – NSW Premiers Dept; Peter Marler – PS Council; Jeffrey Bretag –PSC

Port Stephens Councillors:

John Nell

Defence

GPCAPT Mick Brown; Ian Hooper; Brenin Presswell, Graham Thompson, Air Base Exec Officer WGCDR Peter Cluff, SQNLDR Phil Mackie
Carolyn Balint, Amy Coffey (JSF Project consultants)

Introduction:

Senior Australian Defence Force Officer for RAAF Base Williamtown AIRCDRE Steve Robertson introduced all attendees at the meeting and provided a brief introduction.

- Community meeting is the final meeting to be held as part of the F-35A EIS process which began in 2011.
- One of the most comprehensive environmental impact assessment processes Defence has undertaken in terms of the technical reports, and community notifications and consultation.
- Defence has hosted at least four public meetings regarding the EIS and the project team have given ongoing updates at the Williamtown Advisory Group meetings and the Williamtown Consultative Forum meetings.

Thanked everyone for their ongoing interest and input into the process and highlighted the need for trust. Trust from the community that Defence will adhere to the conditions and Defence needs to continue to work to earn that trust – from the noise measurements, our operations etc.

Hand over to Joint Strike Fighter Project team (GPCAPT Mick Brown) and Coffey Environments to present the Conditions of Approval imposed by the Minister for the Environment for the Proposed Flying Operations of the F-35A aircraft.

The Minister for the Environment has considered the Final EIS and approved, with conditions, the flying operations of the F-35A aircraft on 10 July 2015.

The approval decision includes four 'core' conditions, along with a number of administrative conditions

A number of the conditions of approval have already been implemented, or are in the process of being implemented by Air Force

Air Force is committed to continuing to work with the Department of the Environment and the community to meet the conditions of approval while meeting the operational and training requirements that contribute to providing effective air power for Australia's national security

Air Force intends to commence flying operations of the F-35A aircraft in late 2018 from RAAF Base Williamtown.

The first few years of the Conditions of Approval involves establishing the reporting mechanisms for the Department.

Core Condition 1. Defence is required to: *Ensure, during the transition period, aircraft noise levels at sensitive receptors at RAAF Base(s) do not exceed the F-35A Lightning II aircraft noise levels predicted in the Environmental Impact Statement. During the transition period monitoring must be undertaken, reported biennially to the Department, and, if noise levels exceed the F-35A Lightning II aircraft noise levels predicted in the Environmental Impact Statement, then corrective measures must be developed and implemented, until agreed in writing by the Minister*

- The 'transition period' is the period when both F/A-18 A/B aircraft and F-35A aircraft will both be operating
- This is expected to occur from late 2018, when the first F-35A aircraft arrive in Williamtown, until 2022, when the full complement of F-35A aircraft have arrived in Australia
- Defence will not be operating full squadrons of F/A-18A/B Hornet and F-35A aircraft together. As F-35A aircraft arrive in Australia, F/A-18A/B Hornet aircraft will be withdrawn from service
- Defence will conduct noise monitoring activities in the transition period, and where necessary, take corrective actions to minimise aircraft noise

Group questioned what corrective measures Defence would undertake for F-35A if the aircraft is louder?

Defence advised that this would be determined when required – but it could mean our aircraft would fly less often, change focus directions, flight profiles and aircraft settings.

Defence advised it would continue to use SAAWR with the introduction of the F-35A. Group were reminded that after 2021 – the range would only be used for gunnery for the F-35A. The Hawk would continue to conduct bombing runs.

AIRCDRE Robertson advised that if there were issues with noise levels regarding the F-35A – then Defence would be forced to change the way the aircraft was operated.

Modelling assumptions? – PSC asked would the ANEF change if the modeling assumptions were incorrect?

Defence advised the intent would be to comply with the original conditions, and given that these were part of the ANEF process for August 2011 – the assumptions should hold.

Defence cautioned that we would have to take into account the experience of flying the F-35A in Australian conditions before we would completely understand the operations of the aircraft.

Core Condition 2. Defence is required to: -

The management and mitigation measures identified include:

- Actions to minimise the impact of aircraft noise on communities through flight scheduling and operational procedures
- Continued community engagement
- Implementation of environmental and emergency management procedures
- A number of the measures identified have already been implemented

Actions to be implemented to further support Condition 2 include:

- Adoption of a 60% thrust setting during climb as a standard operating procedure, where training and operational requirements and flight safety circumstances allow
- Limitation of afterburner take-offs to only those that are required for training, operational and safety reasons
- These measures will help to further reduce the impact of aircraft noise resulting from F-35A aircraft flying operations
- Air Force has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman to independently review F-35A aircraft noise management and complaint handling

Core Condition 3 - Defence is required to:

Prepare and implement Aircraft Noise Management Plans, as described in the Aircraft Noise Management Strategy, at RAAF Bases Williamtown, Tindal, Darwin and Townsville to minimise noise disturbance at sensitive receptors

- Continue engagement with forums such as the Williamtown Action Group and the Darwin International Airport Community Consultation Group
- Maintain an ongoing noise monitoring and/or measurement capability in areas of concern, including at Salt Ash Air Weapons Range

Core Condition 4 - Defence is required to:

Prepare and implement a Fauna Management Plan for areas in the vicinity of RAAF Base Williamtown and Salt Ash Air Weapons Range

- This includes measurement and comparison of current F/A-18A/B Hornet aircraft noise with actual noise resulting from the operation of the F-35A aircraft, in environmentally sensitive locations such as wetlands near RAAF Base Williamtown and Salt Ash Air Weapons Range
- Implementation of corrective measures if noise measurements indicate that corrective measures are required
 - Defence will ensure F-35A noise levels around RAAF Base Williamtown and Salt Ash Air Weapons Range do not exceed the levels predicted in the EIS
 - Continuation of noise monitoring for RAAF Base Williamtown and Salt Ash Air Weapons Range
 - Development and implementation of Aircraft Noise Management Plans for F-35A operations at RAAF Base Williamtown and Salt Ash Air Weapons Range
 - Continued community engagement, including participation at the WAG, Williamtown Consultative Forum and Salt Ash
 - Fauna management plan and noise monitoring for ecologically significant species

Medowie Progress Association Representative John Donahoo submission to meeting.

Defence to action/provide additional information on queries as part of August 2015 meeting, or where necessary provide information at the next WLM Advisory Group in 2016.

Richard Antcliff – Hornet Overflights

1. Richard requests that the downwind leg for Hornets in the circuit landing on Runway 30 be extended to reduce noise at his house.

Defence response: ACG/ATC to respond at next WAG meeting

Voluntary Acquisition

2. A voluntary acquisition scheme is needed for severely affected local residents where proposed F-35A noise at their house is greater than 90 dBA.

Defence response: - Defence to provide current policy for Noise Attenuation Policy and voluntary acquisition at next WAG meeting.

Leonard O'Connell – Flooding on his Property

3. Any progress on proposal for Defence to fund a drainage study?

Defence response: Refer to Base Services Manager for response to this question and response to be supplied at next WLM Advisory Group meeting in 2016.

Consultation

4. There are two types – insincere and sincere
 - a. Insincere – involves ticking boxes and providing answers to different questions to the ones asked.
 - b. Sincere – means if you don't know the answer to a question, you say so, and then you get the questioner's contact details and assure them that a formal reply will be provided.

Defence response: Defence will take this as a comment.

Civil Aircraft Operation over Medowie

5. The SADFO letter of 6 August 2015 advised that civil aviation noise abatement procedures only applied from 6.00 am to 8.00 am. This is contrary to previous advice. This period needs to be extended to 24 hours per day, and a map needs to be attached to the NOTAM that shows the flight track for aircraft departing on Runway 30 which should be located over the centre of Lake Grahamstown. All civil aircraft should be required to ascend at their maximum allowable rate of climb.

Defence response: Refer to WAG Minutes March 2015; and MR issued 22 April 2015 – see attachment #1

Aircraft Noise Level (ANL) Contours

6. A map showing ANL contours, overlaid with ANEF contours and F-35A flight paths (including altitude data), and average daily movements is needed to show potential developers and home purchasers all of the noise data relevant to them on a single map. Production of this map is in Defence's interests, as it should deter development in the 20-25 ANEF zones and in other areas where the F-35A noise is forecast to be greater than 85 dBA. Moreover, Defence is obliged to provide ANL data to enable acoustic engineers to calculate noise attenuation requirements for houses in noise affected areas. The AS 2021 shows ANL data for civil aircraft but no data is provided for military aircraft.

Defence Response: DSRG to provide response by next meeting.

F-35A Spectral Data

7. Prima facie, the method for calculating spectral noise data for the required range of overall noise levels for the Hornet and the F-35A that was provided to Port Stephens Council in 30 April 2010 is incorrect. Defence should examine and correct errors where necessary. Moreover, this advice to Council is inconsistent with the draft EIS spectral data shown at Appendix F, Figure 87. When the third octaves are logarithmically added they do not coincide with values shown in the 2010 Defence

letter. Spectral data is important as the AS 2021 requires it to be used for noise attenuation calculations when the required Aircraft Noise Reduction (ANR) is greater than 30 dBA. As the criterion for maximum noise permissible in a bedroom is 50 dBA, then where the ANL exceeds 80 dBA, spectral data is to be used.

Precision Approach Systems

8. Defence to advise progress on increasing the ILS glide path from 3 degrees to 3.5 degrees, and the installation of a precision approach system on Runway 30. The foregoing proposals will together reduce the intensity and frequency of noise at Riverview Ridge and Lakeside.

EIS Deficiencies

9. The EIS is deficient as it does not overtly state that Riverview Ridge will experience an 8 dBA noise increase. Moreover, the parallel runway option ANEF lines were prepared assuming the existing ILS would remain in situ thereby defeating the purpose of a second runway. The Environment Minister should be advised of the foregoing deficiencies.

Defence response:

Mr Donahoo requested Defence provide an Aircraft Noise Level contour map in 5 dBA increments for the Port Stephens Area.

Defence notes that LAmax contours on a single map comparing F/A- 18A/B Hornet aircraft and F-35A aircraft are provided in the Draft EIS Volume 10, Appendix F RAAF Base Williamtown and Salt Ash Air Weapons Range Noise Impact Assessment, Section 9.1.2.

Should a more detailed view of this data be required, it is available via the TNIP program provided with the EIS.

Defence Response:

Mr Donahoo request for Noise Power Distance data for the F-35A aircraft.

Defence has responded to this request on numerous occasions, and reiterates that the requested data is subject to US export control restrictions, and cannot be provided.

Defence notes that Mr Donahoo has raised similar issues on numerous other occasions. Mr Donahoo's submission on the EIS raised a number of issues that were again raised on August 19. These queries have previously been comprehensively answered in the Supplementary Report to the EIS for the flying operations of the F-35A as well as noise experts during the community consultation phase.

The Aircraft Noise Ombudsman has further answered queries from Mr Donahoo that are similar to those raised on August 19.

Mr Donahoo referred to a document in his possession, purportedly sourced from Port Stephens Council. Mr Donahoo questioned the validity of EIS noise calculations and

impacts based on differences perceived between calculations he has made from data in the council document, and calculations presented in the EIS.

Defence notes that the document which Mr Donahoo is referring to is based on information supplied to Port Stephens Council in 2010. This information was prepared by a contractor to Defence as part of an aircraft noise training package delivered to council staff and the noise data contained therein is now significantly out of date. Taking this document out of context means it could be incorrectly applied.

The EIS provides the most complete up to date data which also takes into account the operational parameters of the F-35A in Australia. This is the most appropriate set of data for council and public use in determining the impacts of F-35A aircraft noise. Furthermore, the TNIP provided with the EIS is the best tool for land planning purposes, and provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date noise data. It should be noted that the TNIP provides the ability to examine aircraft noise levels and specific locations in detail, and provides noise contours down to single unit spacing.

The Aircraft Noise Ombudsman has noted that the TNIP provides adequate information for the public.

Land Use Planning

10. The Port Stephens Council (PSC) and/or the NSW Department of Planning (DOP) should consider the introduction of additional development control in land adjacent to the Williamtown airfield. Firstly, the PSC Development Control Plan (DCP) on development in aircraft noise affected areas should be mandated by incorporating it as a State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP), or, including it in the PSC Local Environmental Plan (LEP). Secondly, the PSC or DOP should mandate that where the ANL is greater than 85 dBA, and where a specific number of F-35A movements are exceeded, then noise attenuation to new houses is to be provided. This provision should be advisory where the ANL is greater than 70 dBA. The Final Report into Aircraft Noise Insulation for Residential Development in the Vicinity of Perth Airport is recommended reading for all WAG members.

Defence response: Report will be uploaded to RAAF Base WLM Advisory Group website where the WLM Advisory Group Minutes 19 August 2015 will be placed (file size too large).

Further discussions and actions arising from meeting:

Attenuation Study:

Community representatives discussed the need for Defence to attenuate houses in the vicinity of SAAWR, or pay some form of compensation.

Discussion centred around the differences for military operations such as high intensity but low duration for military operations versus low intensity but high duration for civil airports.

Action: *Defence to pursue Attenuation Study for SAAWR activities as proposed by AIRCDRE Tony Grady in November 2014.*

Legal Action:

Bill George reminded the group that Legal Action by Salt Ash and Medowie residents was currently facing the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to be in October 2015. Advised it would be interesting what Defence would do.

Ruth Lunney said she would hope that any compensation would need to be paid quickly and not make people wait too long.

Bill George advised that the Commonwealth lagged behind the State Government best practice in relation to NSW.

Discussions centred around the need for Defence Buffer Zone Policy/Plan.

Action: *Group discussed the need for Council to have the current data for the F-35A if possible so Council officers can utilise it for planning decisions, and consultants can use it for noise attenuation.*

Action: *Defence has undertaken to compare the current noise data via the NFPMS quarters with the figures determined in the Environmental Impact Study to better understand the noise data.*

Discussion around the need for Defence to link the EIS conditions of approval with the NFPMS on the Defence Aircraft Noise website so community members can find the information easily.

Action: *EIS Conditions will be posted on the Defence website and a link can be established between both websites.*

3.30pm

Meeting concluded

Action:	Who	When
Action: <i>Defence to pursue Attenuation Study for SAAWR activities as proposed by AIRCDRE Tony Grady in November 2014.</i>	DSRG	Study once conducted to be distributed to WAG members
Action: <i>Group discussed the need for Council to have the current data for the F-35A if possible so Council officers can utilise it for planning decisions, and consultants can use it for noise attenuation.</i>	JSFDIV	Update WAG meeting Feb 2016
Action: <i>Defence has undertaken to compare the current noise data via the NFPMS quarters with the figures determined in the Environmental Impact Study to better understand the noise data.</i>	DSRG	Update WAG meeting Feb 2016
Action: <i>EIS Conditions will be posted on the Defence website and a link can be established</i>	DSRG	To b done by Feb 2016

<i>between both websites.</i>		

Additional questions/queries to be addressed in the body of the minutes, or presented to next WAG in 2016.

Important Links:

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

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

F-35A project

<http://www.f35evolution.com.au/EIS/approval>

PWC Report for the F-35A Facilities Project

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Public_Works/NA/CC/Public_Hearings

For past WAG and WCF Minutes:

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