

**WILLIAMTOWN COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE FORUM – 26 OCTOBER 2004
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

1. **Introduction and opening of the meeting.** Meeting Chair, Mr Terry Weston, Acting Head Infrastructure (A/HI), opened the third meeting of the Williamtown Community Consultative Forum (WCCF) at 1³⁰ pm. He then invited Mr Graham Lacey, Acting Director Force Disposition and Land Planning, to lead the discussion on the businesses arising from the previous meeting.

The following members attended the meeting:

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| ALLEN Trevor | Port Stephens Council |
| ANDREWS Helen | Defence (CSIG CNN-NSW) |
| BALDWIN Bob MP | Member for Paterson |
| Cr SWAN Ron (acting Mayor) | Port Stephens Council |
| GPCAPT Rick Owen | Defence (CDR ACG) |
| CARR WGCDR Dean | Defence (BCDR WLM) |
| CHARD Ben | Premiers Dept. |
| COLLISON Jennifer | Premiers Dept. A/Regional Coordinator |
| Wonona Christian | Newcastle City Council |
| Graham Giddey | Newcastle Airport |
| LACEY Graham | Defence (A/DFDLP) |
| PAINE WGCDR Gary | Defence (DPD(E)-ID(B) CSIG) |
| PICOT Ross | Defence (Manager CN-NSW) |
| WALKER Phil, Chief of Staff | for Senator J. Tierney |
| TURNBULL Chris | Hunter Water Corporation |
| WESTON Terry | Defence (A/HI) |
| WEGNER Erwin | Defence (EOLUA/CSIG) |

Invited guests:

| | |
|------------|-----------------------|
| But Adrian | Airservices Australia |
| McLeod Ian | Airservices Australia |

Action Items from the previous meeting

2. **Environmental Management Plan (EMP).** Defence presented the RAAF Base Williamtown Environmental Management System, of which the EMP is a subset, and distributed handouts consisting of *Defence Environmental Policy, Understanding Environmental Management System in Defence and RAAF Base Williamtown Environmental Vision*. Defence also outlined the distribution of responsibility for the EMS within the Base and mentioned the existence of the Environmental Working Group at the Base.

Action: No action required.

3. **Noise Monitoring Plan (NMP).** Airservices Australia (AsA) presented to the meeting their Multiple Airport Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System which is installed in vicinity of RAAF Base Williamtown and the Salt Ash Air Weapons Range. AsA advised that the monitoring (temporary) sites were decided and are already collecting aircraft data.

Action: AsA will report the progress and the results to the WCCF at the next meeting early 2005.

4. **Noise Attenuation at Salt Ash Public School.** Defence reported on the progress of the noise attenuation provided by Defence for the Salt Ash Public Primary School. In broad terms the works include the provision of heavier insulation in the roofs of the buildings, sealing air gaps that allow noise penetration, double glazing to all windows and air conditioning.

Progress to date: The first stage of works, which involved the re-roofing of two of the older main administrative buildings, was undertaken during the September 2004 school holiday break.

Future Works: Documentation of the Stage 2 works planned to be undertaken over the Christmas 2004 school holiday break has been completed and forwarded to NSW DET for review and approval. Tenders are planned to be called in the last week of October / first week November 2004 for this Stage 2 work.

Summary: Works are on program for completion by the start of the 2005 school year. Close liaison will be maintained with representatives from NSW DET, including the school principal, to ensure that the final result meets project expectations.

Action: Defence to report on progress to WCCF at the next meeting.

5. **Road and SAWR Perimeter Signage.** Defence reported that there is a program to replace the damaged or demolished (by the public) fences and gates at the Range. DRM was engaged to develop and install by December 2004 a new far more robust system preventing entry to the Range area. Its effectiveness would be assessed.

There are some difficulties with production and placement of new road signs as there is no Australian, or international, standards concerning the design and siting of the aircraft noise road signs. Therefore, in cooperation with Port Stephens Council and the NSW Road Transport Authority, some pioneering work is required. Jennifer Collison of the Premier's Department offered some assistance.

Action: Defence and the Premier's Department to report the progress at the next WCCF meeting.

6. **Health studies.** Hunter Water Corporation (HWC) presented a paper *Salt Ash Air Weapons Range and Water Quality in the Aquifer*, followed by a power point presentation *Grahamstown Dam and Tomago Sandbeds – Protection of Water Quality*. HWC indicated that they had received enquiries relating to potential contamination from Salt Ash Air Weapons Range, and in particular the level of lead in water extracted from the Tomago Sandbeds. HWC advised that the levels of lead (and other heavy metals) in water extracted from the sandbeds are consistently within NHRMC guidelines.

Action: No further action required.

The NSW Premier's Department asked Port Stephens Council (PSC) three questions:

- Have PSC undertaken any health studies in the area around the RAAF Base Williamtown?
- Have PSC been contacted by community members regarding any potential health risk?
- Is PSC planning to undertake any studies?

PSC's response was:

- PSC have not conducted any studies in the past.
- PSC have not been contacted by the community complaining or mentioning any health issues.
- PSC have no intention of conducting any studies in the future.

Action: No further action required.

Following a query from Defence as to how the PSC addresses the water quality issues, PSC advised that would provide advice at the next meeting.

Action: PSC to report on the water quality issue at the next meeting.

In response to questions concerning the dumping of aircraft fuel by RAAF jets Defence stated that it is not RAAF practice to dump "excess" fuel as "normally excess fuel is only in an aircraft on the ground". However, in emergency situations only, any excess fuel is normally dumped at higher altitude over the sea.

Defence further informed the meeting that it was concerned about the air quality in vicinity of its bases. It was planned to instigate an air quality program for RAAF Base Williamtown. Defence also informed the meeting that it had tested peoples water tanks and found no evidence of hydrocarbon. It noted that it is extremely difficult to find any traces of aircraft fuel as it quickly elatolises therefore could not be traced easily.

Action: Defence to advise of progress with the air quality program at the next meeting.

7. Estuary Management Plan for 12 Miles Creek. Defence advised that, due to the complexity of the issue, it would endeavour to table the report at the next meeting.

Action: Defence to table the EMP plan at the next meeting.

Defence also proposed that, due to the diversity of issues covered in the EMP, it should be considered by all the RAAF Base Williamtown stakeholders, including State and Local governments.

In response to PSC's question concerning Rural Fire Services, Defence briefed the meeting on the progressive implementation of firebreaks around Williamtown and that Defence was still refining the technical details of the fire breaks with the State and Local governments.

8. Master Plan for RAAF Base Williamtown. Defence advised that, although a Master Plan for RAAF Base Williamtown had been produced, the consultant was requested to further refine it and prepare a public version. Defence would table a public version of the Master Plan as soon as it is completed.

9. State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP). DIPNR was not represented at this meeting therefore could not table the SEPP.

Action: DIPNR to table the SEPP at the next meeting.

Bob Baldwin, MP stated that the key issue was that, whilst nobody protects the Port Stephens Council (PSC) from the Land Environmental Court, once applications are approved and a development is built, people ring either the Air Force or to him complaining that PSC allowed them to build in a noisy area.

Defence suggested there would be benefit in establishing a consultative process where Defence consulted with the State government on various high level strategic level issues. The recent meeting with DIPNR was given as an example, where issues associated with the development of EPPs for Defence bases and training areas in general were discussed. It also addressed issues associated with RAAF Base Williamtown, Singleton Army Training Area and HMAS Albatross.

Action: Invite DIPNR to specifically speak on the EPP and LEP issues.

10. **Name of the Forum.** The current name of the Forum was discussed. Informal advice from the Minister's for Defence Office indicated that the Minister would endorse the change ie change from Williamtown Community Consultative Forum (WCCF) to Williamtown Consultative Forum (WCCF), yet to be confirmed.

Action: Follow up with the Minister the change to the Forum's name.

11. **New aircraft for RAAF Base Williamtown.** Defence informed the meeting that the first AEW&C aircraft is expected to operate from RAAF Base Williamtown in about 2006. It would be phased in over 18 months. The MRTT aircraft is expected in 2008 and the date for introduction of the JSF aircraft to RAAF Base Williamtown is not yet known but it

could be about 2012-2013. The JSF will replace the F/A-18 aircraft progressively squadron by squadron.

Action: The Forum will be advised of further details as they become available.

New Business Items:

12. **Proposed Lavis Lane tourism development.** Defence brought this development to the Forum's attention as an example of a significant developments, and Defence's dealing with such proposals. Newcastle Airport Limited expansion of services and its possible impact was also briefly discussed.

Action: No action required.

13. **Next meeting.** The date of the next WCCF meeting was proposed for early 2005.

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 2⁴⁵ pm.

Chair

Secretary