

**MINUTES OF THE WILLIAMTOWN COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE FORUM
HELD AT PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL ON 23 MARCH 2005**

Present:

BECK Geoffrey	Head Infrastructure Division (Chair)
GRANT Bob	Director Land Planning and Spatial Information
HUNTER Ronald	Regional Manager CN-NSW
ANDREWS Helen	Senior Environmental Adviser-CNNSW
PAINE Gary WGC DR	Director Infrastructure Development Agency-AF
BARTLETT William SQNLDR	Representing Base Commander Williamtown
COUSINS Meagan	Executive Officer Land Use Planning
BALDWIN Bob MP	Member for Paterson
BAUMANN Craig Cr	Mayor Port Stephens Council
DOUGLASS Paul	Port Stephens Council
CHARD Ben	NSW Premiers Department
QUAYLE Stacey	NSW Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources
GIDDEY Graham	Newcastle Airport Limited
WEGNER Erwin	Executive Officer Land Use Assessment (Secretary)

Apology:

BINSKIN Mark AIRCDRE	CMDR Air Combat Group
WALKER Phil, Chief of Staff	Representative for Senator J. Tierney
CARR Dean WGC DR	Base CMDR Williamtown
COLLISON Jennifer	NSW Premiers Department
GREEN Julian	Newcastle Airport Limited
DORE Janet	Newcastle City Council
TURNBULL Chris	Hunter Water Corporation
THORNTON Glen	Hunter Business Chamber
COWAN Bob	Hunter Business Chamber

Introduction and opening of the meeting.

1. The Chair opened the fourth meeting of the Williamtown Community Consultative Forum (WCCF) at 11⁰⁰ am and invited members to introduce themselves. After a brief discussion, the Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

Action Items from the previous meeting

2. **Agenda Item 3: Noise Monitoring Update.** Defence presented a briefing paper on the *Aircraft Noise Monitoring - Siting of Permanent Noise Monitors* project. The paper outlined the conditions of consent arising from the Hawk Environmental Impact Statement which stipulated that Defence would conduct long term aircraft noise monitoring in the vicinity of RAAF Base Williamtown.

3. The meeting was advised that Air Services Australia had established monitors at the Williamstown Public School, the Grahamstown Public School and at the Salt Ash Public School to test the suitability of these sites for continued permanent noise monitoring. In selecting these sites for validation testing, Defence had agreed with the recommendations of Air Services Australia that the school communities were sensitive receptors and the locations met the specific criteria that had been previously identified.

4. The recommendations of Air Services Australia were that:

- a) the sites at Williamstown Public School and Grahamstown Public School be converted to permanent noise monitoring stations and the station at Grahamstown Public School be reconfigured to improve the performance of correlating noise and track data;
- b) the Salt Ash Public School monitoring station continue to collect data for at least one month following which the data will be analysed and site suitability confirmed; and
- c) the temporary noise monitors be relocated to Tanilba Bay, Medowie and one other site to gather additional baseline data for continuing analysis.

5. Following some discussion as to the rationale behind the testing, it was agreed that members would advise the Secretary of any comments that they might have on the Air Services Australia recommendations within two weeks.

Decision:

Committee members to advise the Secretary of their acceptance/comments on the Air Services Australia recommendations by 6 April 2005.

For Action:

Committee members.

6. **Agenda Item 4: Noise Attenuation at School.** Defence presented a progress report on the noise attenuation works that were being undertaken at public schools in the RAAF Williamstown area.

7. **Salt Ash Public School.** Works commenced at the Salt Ash Public School in the Sept 04 school holidays to sound attenuate the classroom and staff administrative buildings from aircraft noise intrusion. While preliminary works were completed over the Sept 04 school break, the majority was completed over the 2004/05 Christmas period to avoid disruption to school activities. All classrooms and administrative buildings are now attenuated. Further sound testing is planned to be undertaken during the June – July 05 school break. The outstanding works at the school is the provision of a new library as the existing library is deemed to be beyond economical repair. These works are currently being documented. Current planning is that they will be delivered during 2005/06 Christmas holidays, thereby minimising disruption to the school.

8. **Williamstown Public School.** This school was also identified for noise attenuation to the same degree as the Salt Ash Public School. Works are planned for next financial year

(05/06). They will be similar to those undertaken at Salt Ash and will consider heritage aspects associated with the school.

9. **Grahamstown Public School.** Defence has no works planned for this school. The school has been considered separately from the other two, as it is a newer school that was built in 1994 in full knowledge of the aircraft noise issue. This was partially addressed in the design and construction of the school with double glazing, heavy construction materials etc, but it was not air-conditioned. This was a decision made by the NSW Dept of Education and Training. The meeting was advised that the Minister for Defence had written recently to NSW Minister for Education and Training outlining the Commonwealth's position that air conditioning of the school was a NSW Government responsibility.

10. Mr Baldwin sought confirmation as to whether works had in fact been completed at the Salt Ash school over the Christmas period as he had received advice to the contrary. Meeting also discussed the situation in relation to the Grahamstown School as staff were proposing industrial action to bring attention to their cause.

Decisions:

Defence to provide out of session advice on the progress of works at the Salt Ash school.
The Premier's Department to report on the Grahamstown Public School at the next meeting.

For action:

Defence and NSW Premier's Department.

11. **Agenda Item 5: Signage SAWR Perimeter and Roads.** Defence reported that a consultant had been engaged to assist with the road signage project. Initial discussions had taken place with local and State authorities regarding approvals for the location and wording on the signage. Defence has received correspondence from Port Stephens Council agreeing to the proposal and is currently awaiting feedback from the NSW Road and Traffic Authority before proceeding.

12. Defence further advised that a contract had been awarded for the SAWR perimeter signage. The signs were currently being manufactured and will be installed at the same time the perimeter fence is erected. The scope of works includes the installation of advisory buoys in the estuary at the point of entry to Commonwealth jurisdiction. Consultations have occurred with the NSW Maritime Authority.

13. In relation to the SAWR perimeter fence, Defence advised that design process had been completed and that the preparation of the tender documentation was in the final stages of compilation. It was anticipated that tenders would be released in the near future. Subject to weather and access conditions it was expected that erection of the fencing should commence within the next month.

Decision:

The progress report was noted, and a further update would be provided at the next meeting.

For action:

Defence

14. **Agenda Item 6: Health Studies.** As noted at previous meetings, community health studies are not being pursued by NSW Health or Port Stephens Council. However, two issues of particular concern to the community are being investigated through monitoring programs.

Water Quality Monitoring: There was no update available on the water quality monitoring programs being investigated by Port Stephens Council. PSC will provide a report to the committee at the next meeting discussing current water quality programs and future plans.

Air Quality Monitoring: Defence is still continuing to develop an Air Quality Monitoring program in accordance with the Hawk EIS conditions. Some technical issues are still to be resolved. A progress report on the development and implementation of this program will be provided to the committee at the next meeting.

15. Mr Baldwin sought information on possible contamination from aircraft flying over the Williamtown/Salt Ash area, and in particular any data that might be available on Beryllium. The Senior Environmental Officer from CNNSW advised that recent advice had been provided to the Minister for Defence on the issue, including a draft reply to Mr Baldwin.

Decisions:

Defence to provide update on air quality monitoring program development at the next meeting.
Port Stephens Council to provide briefing on water quality monitoring initiatives at the next meeting.

For action:

Defence and Port Stephens Council.

16. **Agenda Item 7: Estuary Management Plan 12 Mile Creek.** Defence reported that the plan is still under development. There are a number of issues associated with access to the estuary, jurisdiction issues and resourcing management actions delaying the finalization of the plan. It was hoped that these issues will be resolved and the plan can be released to the Forum for comment within the next month. Defence, however, advised that some initiatives had already been implemented. One initiative is the monitoring the health of the estuary. A consultant has been engaged to develop the indicators and monitoring protocol with the view to commencing data acquisition in the new financial year. Defence will be consulting with Port Stephens Council and DIPNR to ensure actions meet with the objectives of local & regional estuary management plans and to facilitate data exchange.

Decision:

Defence to provide a further report at the next meeting.

For action:

Defence.

17. **Agenda Item 8: Master Plan for RAAF Base Williamtown.** Defence advised the meeting that a public version of the RAAF Base Williamtown Master Plan is under development. Current planning is that it will be available for tabling at the next WCCF meeting. It was agreed that a briefing on the Williamtown Master Plan and the Williamtown Redevelopment works would be provided to Mr Baldwin and representatives from DIPNR and Port Stephens Council by the end of May. Such arrangements to be put in place by the end of April.

Decision:

Defence to provide briefing to Mr Baldwin and representatives from DIPNR and Port Stephens Council by end of May 2005.

For action:

Defence.

18. **Agenda Item 9: State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP).** DIPNR briefed the meeting on the Lower Hunter Region Strategy that provides a local context for future land management. It proposes a framework for the management of planning issues for the next 25 years. It considers such issues as demographic changes, economic growth, proper infrastructure and the impact on the natural environment. The strategy has been in preparation since mid last year and is expected to be completed mid this year. Of particular interest to Defence was the issue of urban encroachment and the need to ensure that the future capability of RAAF Base Williamtown was not compromised.

19 It was agreed that there would be benefits in pursuing options within existing land planning frameworks for the protection of land management in and around Defence establishments.

Decision:

Agreed to pursue options within the existing land planning framework for the protection of land management in and around Defence establishments.

For action:

Defence to coordinate a meeting with DIPNR and Port Stephens Council.

20. **Agenda Item 10: Name of Forum.** Defence advised that there had been no developments to change the name of the forum from the Williamtown Community Consultative Forum to the Williamtown Consultative Forum. Defence to advise of progress at the next meeting.

Decision:

Defence to advise of progress concerning a change in name of the forum at the next meeting.

For action:

Defence

21. **Agenda Item 11: New aircraft for RAAF Base Williamtown.** Defence informed the meeting that the new Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft, a modified B737 aircraft, is planned to be phased into operation at RAAF Base Williamtown in 2007. In addition, the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) may commence operating in Australia from 2012. However, the Government has not decided on where this aircraft will be based.

Decision:

Information only. No decision required.

For action:

No action required.

New Business

22. **Waste Water Treatment Plant.** Bob Baldwin MP and the Port Stephens Council requested an update on Defence intentions concerning the wastewater treatment plant facilities located on RAAF Base Williamtown. The information was not readily available and Defence agreed to provide the appropriate advice out of session.

Decision:

Defence to provide out of session advice regarding the wastewater treatment facility to Mr Baldwin MP and the Port Stephens council.

For action:

Defence.

23. **Defence Point of Contact (POC).** The Chair advised that the following Defence officers are the prime POC for issues associated with the WCCF:

Defence Point of Contact (POC) list has been removed as they are no longer current. For current Defence POC refer to latest WCF Minutes.

24. **Senate representative on the WCCF.** The meeting discussed the need to have a new senate representative appointed to the WCCF given that Senator John Tierney is retiring. Meeting agreed that Defence to pursue the matter.

Decision:

Defence to pursue a replacement for Senator John Tierney on the WCCF.

For action:

Defence.

25. **Minutes of Meeting.** Meeting discussed the importance of the timely receipt of meeting minutes. It was agreed that minutes of this meeting would be circulated for comments within two weeks.

Decision:

Defence to circulate meeting minutes for comment by 6 April 2005.

For action:

Defence.

26. The Chair closed the meeting at 12³⁰ pm.

Geoffrey Beck
Chair

Erwin Wegner
Secretary