

**Department of Defence
Annual Environmental Compliance Report
March 2022**

EPBC Act Approval 2010/5747
Flying Operations of the F-35A Lightning II

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- B. Consultation and notices.

Document Version Control

Version	Date	Approved by	Details / Reason for Change
1	March 2022	Kate Smith	Annual Compliance report due 10 March 2022.

Declaration of Accuracy

In making this declaration, I am aware that sections 490 and 491 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) make it an offence in certain circumstances to knowingly provide false or misleading information or documents. The offence is punishable on conviction by imprisonment or a fine, or both. I declare that all the information and documentation supporting this compliance report is true and correct in every particular. I am authorised to bind the approval holder to this declaration and that I have no knowledge of that authorisation being revoked at the time of making this declaration.

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Department of Defence

Date:

10 March 2022

1. Description of Activities

To conduct flying operations of the F-35A Lightning II aircraft at RAAF Base Williamtown and Salt Ash Air Weapons Range in New South Wales, RAAF Base Tindal in the Northern Territory and other secondary urban locations around Australia.

RAAF Bases Williamtown and Tindal will be the main operating bases (MOBs) where the F-35A Lightning II fleet are permanently based. The F-35A Lightning II will deploy periodically to five forward operating bases (FOBs), 14 Air Weapons Ranges (AWRs) and exercise areas located across Australia to conduct operations and training. This includes the forward operating bases at RAAF Amberley, Edinburgh and Pearce. The locations of the MOBs, FOBs and AWRs are detailed in Figure 1 of the Referral for the Flying Operations of the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter (EPBC Act 2010/5747) dated 19 November 2010.

This action was approved under the EPBC Act subject to conditions of approval issued by the (now) Department of the Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) on 10 July 2015. The Action commenced on 10 December 2018.

Condition 7 of the EPBC Act approval requires Defence to publish a report on its website within three months of every 12 month anniversary of the commencement of the action to address compliance with each of the conditions of the approval, including implementation of any management plans, reports and strategies as specified in the conditions. This approval has an expiry date of 1 June 2065.

2. Conditions of Approval

Table 1 – Compliance Table

Condition Number / Reference	Condition	Is the project compliant with this condition?	Evidence / Comments
1	Ensure, during the transition period, aircraft noise levels at sensitive receptors at RAAF Bases(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.	Compliant	The action commenced on 10 December 2018 and the transition from F/A-18 A/B Classic Hornets to F-35A Lightning II was completed in December 2021. Throughout 2021, F-35A Lightning II aircraft operated predominantly from the main operating base at RAAF Base Williamtown (WLM). F/A-18A/B Hornet aircraft finished permanent operations at RAAF Base WLM in December 2020. RAAF Base Tindal ceased F/A-18A/B Classic Hornet operations on 3 December 2021. In accordance with the approved RAAF Base Williamtown Base Aircraft Noise Management Plan (BANMP) the below had occurred: - During the transition period from 2018 to 2022, the F-35A Noise and Flight Activity Verification Program has been developed to monitor and assess aircraft noise levels during the transition from the F/A-18A/B Classic Hornets to the F-35A aircraft. Defence continues to validate the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) predicted noise and flight activity levels against actual F-35A flight data using the Defence Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System (NFPMS). This has continued throughout the five phase verification program (as described in the RAAF Base WLM BANMP) and into 2022 as F-35A aircraft numbers continue to build; and - Noise monitoring is conducted using the NFPMS, which has coverage across a wide area in the vicinity of RAAF Base Williamtown including Salt Ash Air Weapons Range operations and a number of sensitive receiver sites. There is a requirement to produce an annual compliance report (this report), and two biennial reports to comply with the Conditions of Approval for the flying operations of the F-35A Lightning II. The first biennial report assesses and compares the F-35A Lightning II noise levels with the Environmental Impact Statement for the Flying Operations of the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter predictions (among other elements of the conditions of approval). These reports were drafted at the end of the first two years of the transition period and submitted to DAWE in June 2021. The first biennial reports encompass the period December 2018 to December 2020 (inclusive). The Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020 report addresses <i>Condition 1; Condition 3.a.; 3.c., 3.e.ii.; 3.ii.i.; 3.e.ii.ii.; 3.e.ii.ii.a); b); c); d).</i> of the approval decision. The F-35A Biennial Reporting - Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System Review report addresses <i>Condition 1, Condition 3, 3.b., 3.c.i.; 3.c.ii.; 3.c.iii.; 3.c.iv.; 3.e.i.; 3.f.; 3.f.iv.</i> Please refer to Defence Aircraft Noise: Department of Defence to view the documents. The F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020 Report identified flying operations and noise level changes associated with the F-35A aircraft were generally consistent with the EIS. However, as a result of the requirement for higher departure thrust settings for safety reasons, higher than

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			predicted noise levels are associated with these operations. The higher noise levels therefore warrant the development of corrective measures in accordance with this Condition. In accordance with the RAAF Base WLM BANMP, Defence is in the process of evaluating the corrective measures to be developed and implemented. Ongoing monitoring of particular departure profiles will be conducted during 2022 and standard operating procedures are to be finalised in early 2023 as per the approved RAAF Base WLM BANMP Enclosure 1 F-35A Noise and Flight Activity Verification Program. Please see Defence Aircraft Noise: Department of Defence for the RAAF Base WLM BANMP Enclosure 1 – link https://defence.gov.au/AirCraftNoise/_Master/Docs/Environment/F35/RAAF-Base-Williamtown-Base-Aircraft-Noise-Management-Plan-Enclosure1.pdf This condition is also supported by actions taken to satisfy conditions 2, 3 and 4.
2	Implement the management and mitigation measures outlined at MO1 to M36 of Appendix M of the Environmental Impact Statement and at SO1 to SO8 of Annex A.	Compliant	The requirements identified in the management and mitigation measures outlined in MO1 to M36 of Appendix M of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and at SO1 to SO8 of Annex of the EIS are being implemented on an ongoing basis (Attachment A). This condition is also supported by actions taken to satisfy conditions 1, 3 and 4.
3	Prepare and implement Aircraft Noise Management Plan(s), as described in the Aircraft Noise Management Strategy, at RAAF Base(s), as described in the Aircraft Noise Management Strategy, at RAAF Base(s) to minimise noise disturbance at sensitive receptors from the flying operations of the F-35A Lightning II aircraft. The plan(s) must include, but not be limited to, the following measures: a) Comparison of actual flight activity of F-35A Lightning II aircraft with those predicted in the Environmental Impact Statement; b) A review of existing noise management programmes; c) Monitoring, to validate predicted noise impacts to sensitive receptors at RAAF Base Williamtown (including Salt Ash Air Weapons Range), RAAF Base Tindal and RAAF Base Townsville. This must include, but not be limited to: i. An investigation of alternative noise measurement and analysis methods; ii. Utilisation of Noise and Flight Path Monitoring Systems (where installed), to provide ongoing noise information, and the development of a noise	Compliant	The action commenced on 10 December 2018. RAAF is in the 4th stage of a five stage F-35A Noise and Flight Activity Verification Program developed for the RAAF Base WLM BANMP. Details of the five stages are provided in Table 1 of Enclosure 1 of the RAAF Base WLM BANMP. The RAAF Base WLM BANMP was approved by the Department of Environment and Energy, now known as the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) Delegate on 3 December 2018. The RAAF Base WLM BANMP includes relevant elements of Condition 3 measures, and the biennial reporting covers off on remaining elements of Condition 3 noted below. Base Aircraft Noise Management Plans (BANMPs) for other RAAF Bases have been prepared as part of the Air Force Aircraft Noise Management Strategy and progressively uploaded to the Defence Noise website during 2021. BANMPs were prepared for RAAF Bases prior to F-35A exercises and operations in each location. The documents were submitted to DAWE on completion. The BANMPs can be located on the Defence Aircraft Noise website see link – Defence Aircraft Noise: Department of Defence. BANMPs included measures to align with Condition 3 where applicable. Activities undertaken to inform the BANMPs, and with Condition 3 measures include: 3a: As documented in the approved RAAF Base WLM BANMP, the first biennial noise report F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020 included comparison of flight activity with EIS predictions. See Pages 15 – 39, Sections 4 to 4.8.2. Flight activity for the period December 2018 – December 2020 is less than predicted in the EIS primarily due to the decreasing F/A-18A/B Classic Hornet aircraft numbers, and the gradual increase of F-35A aircraft introduced into the RAAF.

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	measuring system at RAAF Base Tindal; iii. Comparison of actual measured F-35A Lightning II aircraft noise levels with those predicted in the Environmental Impact Statement; and iv. Biennial review of noise monitoring locations, unless agreed with the Minister. d) If actual measured F-35A Lightning II aircraft noise levels, and flight activity exceed those predicted in the Environmental Impact Statement then corrective action be developed and implemented at RAAF Base(s) and forward operating RAAF Base(s), until an appropriate assessment of noise levels and flight activity has been reached, as agreed with the Minister. e) Reporting, to ensure clear and timely public access to noise levels and flight activity monitoring data. This must include, but not be limited to: i. Conducting a biennial evaluation of the effectiveness of flight activity monitoring and programmes at RAAF Bases(s) until agreed in writing by the Minister; ii. Biennial publication on the Defence Aircraft Noise website of: i. noise levels and flight activity monitoring data of the F-35A Lightning II aircraft; and ii. a comparison of actual noise levels and flight activity of the F-35A Lightning II with those predicted in the Environmental Impact Statement. This must include, but not be limited to: a) noise management measures; b) days and hours of operation; c) flight paths used to reduce noise; and d) frequency and type of activities that occur at Salt Ash Weapons Range. iii. Annual review and update of the Aircraft Noise Management Plan for the first three years following the commencement of the action, and then biennially, unless agreed in writing by the Minister. f) Consultation activities, to ensure adequate communication with stakeholders, including local residents and relevant authorities. Consultation activities must include, but not be		3b: A review of existing noise management programmes at RAAF Base WLM was conducted as part of the biennial review - F-35A Biennial Reporting - Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System Review Pages 9-12; Section 3.1 to 3.1.5. In summary, the report assessed the suitability of noise management programmes for addressing community impacts due to noise associated with F-35A aircraft operations were evaluated and considered appropriate for the following reasons: - Defence's policies and systems are comprehensive and contain the necessary elements to effectively manage F-35A aircraft operational noise; - Each element of Defence's policies and systems is appropriately documented, integrated and communicated at different organisational levels to support the management of F-35A aircraft noise levels; - There are mechanisms that aim to limit the occurrence of noise events, minimise noise levels when they do occur where practical, and register and investigate complaints to identify further opportunities to reduce aircraft noise; - The systems in place are dynamic (i.e. reviewed and updated regularly) and effective at resulting in changes to reduce community noise impacts; - F-35A aircraft noise mitigation measures are consistent with those nominated by other international air forces that operate the aircraft; - The noise management programmes are proportionate to the requirements to manage F-35A aircraft noise levels, and include review processes to enable management measures to be adjusted; and - The number of complaints for RAAF Base Williamtown and SAAWR have been relatively consistent over the past eight years, and less than half compared to 10 years ago, providing further support that existing noise management programmes, including the review and update processes are appropriate. Further information can be sourced from the report Pages 9-25; Section 3.1-3.6. 3c: The first biennial report, F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020 included monitoring data to validate predicted noise at sensitive receptors. Refer to link: Defence Aircraft Noise: Department of Defence i. The F-35A Biennial Reporting - Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System Review included an investigation of alternative noise measurement and analysis methods. For reference go to Pages 36 - 52, section 4.3 – 4.3.6. The review indicated current system was a sophisticated and modern system – designed as a fit for purpose model required for monitoring noise for military fast jets. ii. RAAF Base WLM NFPMS produces monthly reports, and annual reports to provide ongoing noise information to local residents. Defence has reported NFPMS data to local communities since 2005. In 2013, Defence introduced an innovative webpage reporting system to replace paper-based reporting. Noise monitoring terminals have been installed at RAAF Bases Tindal and Darwin over

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	limited to: i. Regular review of communication arrangements with affected stakeholders and communities; ii. Clear and timely notification of information regarding varied flight activity and future plans, which may impact stakeholders, but not limited to: i. days and hours of operation; ii. flight paths; and iii. higher noise events. iii. continued participation at community forums; and iv. development of a concise location specific package of key information related to noise levels and flight activity monitoring data that addresses community concerns in an easily understandable manner for the lay person. g) Complaint Handling and Resolution, to ensure enquiries and complaints about F-35A Lightning II aircraft flying operations are received, recorded, reported, responded to and resolved, as defined in the Aircraft Noise Management Strategy. The plan must be submitted to the Department for approval. The approval holder must not commence the action unless the Minister has approved this plan.		the period Nov 2021 to January 2022. The NFPMS data is used to produce monthly, and annual noise reports for flying operations for RAAF Base TDL and WLM. Further information can be sourced through the interactive webpage reporting system – see link: Defence Aircraft Noise: Department of Defence. iii. Comparisons were conducted and documented in the first biennial noise report F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020. The details can be found at Pages 48-50, Section 5 to 5.1.4 and Appendix E. The findings of F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020 indicate that flying operations and noise level changes associated with the F-35A aircraft are generally consistent with the EIS. Further comparisons of actual noise measurements versus the EIS will be conducted throughout 2021-22. The results will be addressed in the second biennial report to be presented to DAWE in June 2023. This will combine the data/results gathered as part of the F-35A Noise and Flight Activity Verification Program, an important part of the RAAF Base WLM BANMP 2018, and included in 2019, 2020, 2021 reviews. iv. Noise monitoring locations were reviewed in F-35A Biennial Reporting - Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System Review go to page 38, Section 4.3.4. There were no recommendations for changes to the siting of noise monitoring locations, beyond provision of mobile noise monitors in specific locations if required. 3d: Air Force has conducted considerably less flying activity since the introduction of the F-35A at RAAF Base WLM than identified in the EIS. This will be the case until squadrons reach full capacity by the end of 2023. The first F-35A aircraft arrived at RAAF Base Tindal on 3 December 2021. Aircraft will gradually be introduced until the end of 2023. The findings of F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020 indicate that flying operations and noise level changes associated with the F-35A aircraft are generally consistent with the EIS. However, as a result of the higher departure thrust settings required for safety reasons, the higher than predicted noise levels associated with these operations warrant the development of corrective measures in accordance with Condition 1 of the approval decision. Air Combat Group (ACG) has been trialling alternative departure procedures at RAAF Base WLM from mid-2019. The aim of the trials, conducted in accordance with the RAAF Base WLM Aircraft Noise Management Plan F-35A Noise and Flight Activity Verification Program, is to identify procedures that do not compromise the safe operation of the F-35A aircraft, the safety of the public and aircrew, and minimise noise at sensitive receivers, while still achieving training and operational requirements. The noise test program was designed to be carried out from the first flying operations of the F-35A aircraft in Australia as from January 2019 through to December 2022. In 2021, ACG moved into Phase 4 of the verification program, which involved continued monitoring and comparison at RAAF Base WLM and Salt Ash Air Weapons Range. Building on the information gained as a result of the extensive noise verification program at RAAF Base WLM, in 2022 Defence will provide this data into the 2021-22 Biennial Reports. Utilising this data, ACG will seek to finalise the operating procedures designed to minimise aircraft noise as much as possible without comprising

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			operations or safety where required and replicate this departure profile where relevant such as at RAAF Base TDL; and other forward operating bases where applicable. Flying activity and noise levels will be monitored throughout 2022 to assess the success of the revised departure profile in minimising noise within safety and operational constraints. The details of the 2021-22 noise monitoring will be assessed in the next scheduled biennial reports due to be published in July 2023. 3e: i. The F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020 was published in July 2021. The report includes sections evaluating the effectiveness of flight activity monitoring and programmes at RAAF Base WLM. See page 46, section 4.10). ii. The NFPMS interactive noise level and flight activity monitoring website in addition to annual reports. Please see link - Defence Aircraft Noise: Department of Defence. F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020 covers the requirements of this condition. iii. The first RAAF Base Williamtown BANMP review was conducted and updated on 6 December 2019; reviewed and updated 2 December 2020; reviewed and updated on 6 December 2021. The RAAF Base Williamtown BANMP is available on the Defence website at Defence Aircraft Noise: Department of Defence. The next review is conducted on annual basis; planned for 2022. 3f: i. & ii. Defence has prepared a Community Engagement and Information Provision Plan (CEIP) for RAAF Base Williamtown. The CEIP was promulgated on 9 December 2018 and was reviewed by the Williamtown Advisory Group in October 2019, and October 2020. The CEIP was uploaded to the Defence website by 10 December 2018. The CEIP remains current and unchanged. Reviewed in 2020. RAAF Base Williamtown Community Engagement and Information Plan – Nov 2018 - https://defence.gov.au/AirCraftNoise/Environment/F35EIS.asp#:~:text=RAAF%20Base%20Williamtown%20Community%20Engagement%20and%20Information%20Plan%20%E2%80%93%20Nov%202018. iii. As documented in the CEIP, Defence regularly engages with communities on communication arrangements, including clear and timely notification regarding varied flight activity. Further detail on consultation activities is available in Attachment B. iv. Defence maintains location-specific information about F-35A Lightning II EIS predictions on the Defence website. Defence also provides access to aircraft noise levels and flight activity monitoring data on the Defence website. See Defence Aircraft Noise : Department of Defence. 3g: Defence maintains a robust complaint handling system under Enclosure 1 of the RAAF Base Williamtown BANMP. Complaints are recorded as advised in the RAAF Base Williamtown BANMP and in accordance with the RAAF Aircraft Noise Management Strategy.

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			The RAAF Base Williamtown Base Aircraft Noise Management Plan (BANMP) was approved by the Department of Environment and Energy (now Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) Delegate on 3 December 2018 and has undergone subsequent documented reviews on an annual basis. The BANMP can be found at: Defence Aircraft Noise: Department of Defence This condition is also supported by actions taken to satisfy conditions 1, 2 and 4.
4	Prepare and implement a Fauna Management Plan. This plan must include, but not be limited to: a. Establishing a baseline measurement of noise levels at environmentally sensitive locations prior to the flying operations of the F-35A Lightning II aircraft; b. Measurement of noise levels at environmentally sensitive locations during the flying operations of the F-35A Lightning II aircraft; c. If measured F-35A Lightning II aircraft noise levels exceed the baseline measurement of noise levels at environmentally sensitive locations prior to the flying operations of the F-35A Lightning II aircraft, then corrective measures must be developed and implemented until an appropriate assessment of noise impacts is reached, as agreed with the Minister; and d. Reporting the results of noise level measurements to ensure data is publically available. The plan must be submitted to the Department for approval. The approval holder must not commence the action unless the Minister has approved this plan.	Compliant	The Fauna Management Plan (FMP) was approved by the DAWE Delegate on 10 March 2016 and includes all elements of Condition 4 measures. Activities undertaken to implement the FMP in conformance with Condition 4 include: 4a: Baseline measurement of noise levels at environmentally sensitive locations was completed prior to the flying operations of the F-35A Lightning II. Locations were selected in accordance with FMP siting requirements. The baseline measurement of noise levels was conducted during from 2 November 2018 to 23 January 2019. The baseline noise level and fauna observation report was completed in March 2019 and submitted to DAWE on 19 April 2019. 4b: Transition Period measurements of noise levels at environmentally sensitive locations were undertaken during September to November 2019. The F-35A Aircraft Noise Effects on Fauna – Impact Assessment Results Report is available on the Defence website see link F-35A Aircraft Noise Effects on Fauna – Impact Assessment Results Report. 4c: As documented in the Fauna Management Plan, the Impact Assessment Results Report assessed whether F-35A Lightning II noise levels exceed the baseline measurements. No issues were identified to specific animal populations. As a result of the ongoing noise verification trials, Defence will consider the results as part of evaluating whether any corrective measures must be developed and implemented once the transition period is complete in 2023. F-35A Noise and Flight Activity Verification Program reporting will inform this assessment. 4d: Defence published the Fauna Management Plan to the Defence website in March 2018. The F-35A Noise effects on fauna – Baseline Report April 2019 was published on 5 March 2020. The F-35A Noise Effects on Fauna – Impact Assessment Results report was published on 6 March 2020. The Fauna Management Plan (FMP) was approved by the DAWE Delegate on 10 March 2016.
Administrative conditions			
5	Within 10 days after the commencement of the action, the person taking the action must advise the Department in writing of the actual date of commencement.	Compliant	Commencement of the action occurred on 10 December 2018. On 14 December 2018 DAWE Acknowledged receipt of notification that the actioned commenced.
6	The person taking the action must maintain accurate records substantiating all activities associated with or relevant to the conditions of approval, including measures taken to implement the management plans, reports and strategies required by this approval,	Compliant	Records are maintained in accordance with Commonwealth record keeping policy using the Defence information management system, known as Objective.

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	and make them available upon request to the Department. Such records may be subject to audit by the Department or an independent auditor in accordance with section 458 of the EPBC Act, or used to verify compliance with the conditions of approval. Summaries of audits will be posted on the Department's website. The results of audits may also be publicised through the general media.		
7	With three months of every 12 month anniversary of the commencement of the action, the person taking the action must publish a report on its website addressing compliance with each of the conditions of this approval, including implementation of any management plans, reports and strategies as specified in the conditions. Documentary evidence providing proof of the date of publication and non-compliance with any of the conditions of this approval must be provided to the Department at the same time as the compliance report is published. The person taking the action must continue to publish the annual report until such time is agreed in writing by the Minister.	Compliant	Commencement of the action occurred on 10 December 2019. The first annual compliance report covers the period 10 December 2018 to 9 December 2019. The second annual compliance report covers the period 10 December 2019 to 9 December 2020. The third annual compliance report covers the period 10 December 2020 to 9 December 2021.
8	Upon the direction of the Minister, the person taking the action must ensure that an independent audit of compliance with the conditions of approval is conducted and a report submitted to the Minister. The audit must not commence unless independent auditor must be approved by the Minister prior to the commencement of the audit. Audit criteria must be agreed to by the Minister and the audit report must address the criteria to the satisfaction of the Minister.	Not applicable	To date, no requests for an audit have been received.
9	The approval holder may choose to revise a management plan approved by the Minister under conditions 3 and 4 without submitting it for approval under section 143A of the EPBC Act, if the taking of the action in accordance with the revised plan would not be likely to have a new or increased impact. If the approval holder makes this choice they must: i. notify the Department in writing that the approved plan has been revised and provide the Department with an electronic copy of the revised plan; ii. implement the revised plan from the date that the plan is submitted to the Department; and iii. for the life of this approval, maintain a record of the reasons the approval holder considers that taking the action in accordance with the revised plan would not be likely to have a new or increased impact.	Compliant.	Following annual review in accordance with Condition 3 the RAAF Base Williamtown BANMP revised or updated, submitted to the Department of the Environment and uploaded to the Defence Aircraft Noise website by: 6 December 2019 2 December 2020 6 December 2021.
10	The approval holder may revoke their choice under condition 9 at any time by notice to the Department. If the approval holder revokes the choice to implement a revised plan, without approval under section 143A of the Act, the plan approved by the Minister	Not applicable	Noted.

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	must be implemented.		
11	If the Minister gives a notice to the approval holder that the Minister is satisfied that the taking of the action in accordance with the revised plan would be likely to have a new or increased impact, then: i. Condition 9 does not apply, or ceases to apply, in relation to the revised plan; and ii. The approval holder must implement the plan approved by the Minister. To avoid any doubt, this condition does not affect any operation of conditions 9 and 10 in the period before the day the notice is given. At the time of giving the notice the Minister may also notify that for a specified period of time that condition 9 does not apply for one or more specified plans required under the approval.	Not applicable	Noted.
12	Conditions 9, 10 and 11 are not intended to limit the operation of section 143A of the Act which allows the approval holder to submit a revised management plan to the Minister for approval.	Not applicable	Noted.
13	If, at any time after ten years from the date of this approval, the person taking the action has not substantially commenced the action, then the person taking the action must not substantially commence the action without the written agreement of the Minister.	Compliant	Commencement of the action occurred on 10 December 2018.
14	Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Minister, the person taking the action must publish all management plans, reports or strategies referred to in these conditions of approval on their website. Each management plan or report must be published on the website within one (1) month of being approved.	Compliant	The following management plans and reports have been published to the Defence website within the specified timeframe: • RAAF Base Williamtown Base Aircraft Noise Management Plan 2018. • RAAF Base Williamtown Base Aircraft Noise Management Plan Update 2019. • RAAF Base Williamtown Base Aircraft Noise Management Plan Update 2020. • F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020. • F-35A Biennial Reporting - Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System Review • RAAF Base Darwin Base Aircraft Noise Management Plan. • RAAF Base Townsville Base Aircraft Noise Management Plan. • RAAF Base Tindal Base Aircraft Noise Management Plan. The following management plans and reports were not published to the Defence website within the specified timeframe: • Fauna Management Plan 2016 published 26 March 2018. • Fauna Management Baseline report published 5 March 2020. All management plans and reports listed above are now available on the Defence website. Defence Aircraft Noise: Department of Defence
15	Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Minister, the person taking the action must provide a copy of each approved management plan or report referred to in these conditions of approval to members of the public upon request. Copies must be provided within a reasonable time of the request.	Compliant	Defence has made copies of each management plan and report to date available for download from the Defence website and to members of the public on request.

3. Correcting Non-Compliances

Nil non-compliances were identified for the approved action.

4. New Environmental Risks

There were no new environmental risks observed for the approved action.

2021 Annual Compliance Report - Attachment A				
	Criterion #	Indicator #	Indicator	Response
	2-M01		Schedule operations on weekdays, where possible (training flights on weekends and public holidays will not generally occur). [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through application of the RAAF Base Williamtown Aircraft Noise Management Plan (BANMP). Various BANMPs have been developed prior to F-35A operations at those locations and uploaded to the Defence Aircraft Noise website – see link Defence Aircraft Noise : Department of Defence – Noise Management Plans.
	2-M02		Schedule the majority of aircraft movements generally between 7.00 a.m. and 10.00 p.m. (11.00 p.m. during daylight saving). [WLM]	Condition met through application of the RAAF Base Williamtown Aircraft Noise Management Plan (BANMP). Details can be found on the Defence Aircraft Noise website – see link Defence Aircraft Noise : Department of Defence – Noise Management Plans.
	2-M03		Comply with flight path requirements as specified in the Defence policies. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through application of the RAAF Base Williamtown Aircraft Noise Management Plan (BANMP). Various BANMPs have been developed prior to F-35A operations at those locations and uploaded to the Defence Aircraft Noise website – see link Defence Aircraft Noise : Department of Defence – Noise Management Plans.
	2-M04		Follow the Air Combat Group Fly Neighbourly Policy guidelines where training and operational requirements and flight safety circumstances allow. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through application of the RAAF Base Williamtown Aircraft Noise Management Plan (BANMP). Various BANMPs have been developed in accordance with the Air Force Noise Management Strategy prior to F-35A operations at those locations. Air Combat Group (ACG) continues to apply principles of the ACG Fly Neighbourly Policy at these locations.
	2-M05		Limit night flying at SAAWR to the minimum required to achieve operational and training targets. [WLM]	Condition met through application of the RAAF Base Williamtown Aircraft Noise Management Plan (BANMP). Details can be found on the Defence Aircraft Noise website – see link Defence Aircraft Noise : Department of Defence – Noise Management Plans.
	2-M06		Comply with noise complaint handling procedures as specified in Defence instructions. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through application of the RAAF Base Williamtown Aircraft Noise Management Plan (BANMP). Various BANMPs offer a consistent approach to complaint handling procedures in accordance the Air Force Aircraft Noise Management Strategy, and is adopted across all Base noise management plans.

	2-M07	Adopt a 60% thrust setting during climb, as a standard procedure where training and operational requirements and flight safety circumstances allow. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	In preparation for the commencement of F-35A operations at Williamtown, Air Force adopted a 60% Engine thrust required (ETR) setting as a planned standard procedure, as documented in the approved RAAF Base Williamtown BANMP of December 2018. In early 2019, shortly after commencement of the first F-35A operations at Williamtown, it became clear that the F-35A cannot safely depart the airfield in 60% ETR setting. In late 2019, after 10 months of trialing various departure profiles, Air Force concluded that flight safety is compromised and a safe departure profile cannot be achieved at 60% ETR setting. Throughout 2020/21 transition period, Air Force trialed F-35A departure profiles aiming to develop suitable profiles to minimise the impacts of aircraft noise, whilst ensuring training requirements, operational requirements and safe operations of the aircraft were achieved. The first biennial noise report, F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020 published in July 2021 assessed the implications of the first stage of the trials, including comparisons with EIS predictions for the years 2019 and 2020. Throughout 2021, Air Combat Group who operates the F-35A Lightning II aircraft, continued to carry out and assess specific departure profiles to provide the best options and balance for minimising the impacts of aircraft noise, whilst ensuring training and operational requirements and safe operations are maintained. In 2022, Air Force intends to fly these specific profiles and conduct ongoing noise monitoring to assess the success of this corrective measure in accordance with Condition 1 and Condition 3. The outcomes of the trials – stage four of the five stage Noise and Flight Activity Verification Program - will be published in the next biennial reports due in July 2023. Defence has had limited ability to engage face-to-face with local communities on these matters, due to restrictions associated with COVID-19 but has kept residents up to date via written communication on these matters.
	2-M08	Limit afterburner take-offs to only those that are required for training, operational and safety reasons. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	In accordance with condition 3, F-35A Noise Test Plan requirements, Air Force continues to trial a departure profile which involves the use of afterburner for departures to the northwest (runway 30). The intent is achieve the maximum distance between F-35A aircraft and Raymond Terrace and Medowie communities below. For departures on runway 12, F-35A aircraft will take-off in military power on most occasions unless afterburner is required for training, operational and safety reasons. In 2022, Air Force intends to fly these specific profiles and conduct ongoing noise monitoring to assess the success of this corrective measure in accordance with Condition 1 and Condition 3. The outcomes of the trials – stage four of the five stage Noise and Flight Activity Verification Program - will be published in the next biennial reports due in July 2023.

	2-M09	Implement and maintain an airfield emergency plan. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through Aerodrome Emergency Plans implemented to fulfil Defence Aviation Safety Manual requirements.
	2-M10	Maintain emergency base response kit. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through Aerodrome Emergency Plans implemented to fulfil Defence Aviation Safety Manual requirements.
	2-M11	Provide periodic training in support of the airfield emergency plan. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through Aerodrome Emergency Plans implemented to fulfil Defence Aviation Safety Manual requirements.
	2-M12	Maintain an emergency operations centre for use as required. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through Aerodrome Emergency Plans implemented to fulfil Defence Aviation Safety Manual requirements.
	2-M13	Maintain aircraft accident emergency response teams. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through Aerodrome Emergency Plans implemented to fulfil Defence Aviation Safety Manual requirements.
	2-M14	Maintain command and control interface with civil authorities during incidents. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through Aerodrome Emergency Plans implemented to fulfil Defence Aviation Safety Manual requirements.
	2-M15	Manage incidents through command and control interface. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through Aerodrome Emergency Plans implemented to fulfil Defence Aviation Safety Manual requirements.
	2-M16	Conduct periodic crash training exercises with Defence and civil authorities to practice and test command and control procedures. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through Aerodrome Emergency Plans implemented to fulfil Defence Aviation Safety Manual requirements.
	2-M17	Modify habitat and attractants on or in the vicinity of the base to reduce nesting and roosting of bird species at high risk of bird strike. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act No. 80 1972</i> (NSW) and supporting documentation.
	2-M18	Modify wildlife behaviour through dispersal, harassment and other means of behaviour disruption to prevent roosting of bird species near runways. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act No. 80 1972</i> (NSW) and supporting documentation.

	2-M19	Reduce or otherwise alter water catchments and areas that pond on-base to minimise roosting of birds. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act No. 80 1972</i> (NSW) and supporting documentation.
	2-M20	Maintain grass height on-base to deter foraging and nesting around runways. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act No. 80 1972</i> (NSW) and supporting documentation.
	2-M21	Disperse birds from runway areas through harassment and annoyance routines. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act No. 80 1972</i> (NSW) and supporting documentation.
	2-M22	Monitor and document bird and bat movements, behaviour, dispersal techniques and strikes to measure the impacts and performance of mitigation measures. [WLM, TDL, DAR, TVL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act No. 80 1972</i> (NSW) and supporting documentation.
	2-M23	Minimise bird nesting, roosting and habitat areas of high-risk bird species in accordance with the Bird and Wildlife Operational Management Plan. [WLM]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act No. 80 1972</i> (NSW) and supporting documentation.
	2-M24	Minimise available food sources and foraging opportunities for birds and wildlife on base in accordance with the Bird and Wildlife Operational Management Plan and Airfield Fauna Hazard Reduction Strategy. [WLM]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act No. 80 1972</i> (NSW) and supporting documentation.
	2-M25	Minimise available food sources and foraging opportunities for birds and wildlife on base in accordance with the Wallaby and Wildlife Management Plan. [TDL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, supporting documentation.

2-M26		Conduct controlled burning at the beginning of the dry season to clear grassland to discourage black kites from foraging on the airfield. [TDL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, and supporting documentation.
2-M27		Prune and clear flying fox roost trees and replace with trees and shrubs in accordance with the Flying Fox Management Plan and Vegetation Replacement Management Plan. [TDL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, and supporting documentation.
2-M28		Minimise available food sources and foraging opportunities for birds and wildlife on base in accordance with the Wildlife Hazard Management Plan. [TVL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, and supporting documentation.
2-M29		Minimise available food sources and foraging opportunities for birds and wildlife on base in accordance with the Bird and Animal Hazard Management System. [DAR]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, and supporting documentation.
2-M30		Abide by the no-fly zone over Cabbage Tree Island and Boondelbah Island during Gould's petrel breeding season. Under the no fly zone, F-35A aircraft will have altered flight paths to avoid flying close to, or above the islands. [WLM]	A Hazard and Noise Database (HAND) identifies "no fly" zones over Cabbage Tree Island and Boondelbah Island within one nautical mile horizontal and 2000ft vertical noise avoid over the islands. The HAND informs aircraft navigation systems. An analysis was conducted in the F-35A Noise and Flight Activity Dec 2018 – Dec 2020 Report. The report concluded that the Defence Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System (NFPMS) radar data indicated hundreds of civilian and military flights occurred in the vicinity of the islands over the two year period. Radar data indicated military aircraft avoid the islands all year round with two incursions into the no fly zone ie under 2000ft, and within 1nm of the islands during breeding season. An explanation for this could be ATC directions or avoidance of other aircraft. For further information go to Defence Aircraft Noise: Department of Defence Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2018 - December 2020 page 43, Figures 17 & 18.
2-M31		Maintain habitat and infrastructure on the base to discourage the proliferation of fauna, including conservation significant species, in accordance with the Bird and Wildlife Operational Management Plan (Avisure, 2009).	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act No. 80 1972</i> (NSW) and supporting documentation.

			[WLM]	
	2-M32		Maintain habitat and infrastructure on the base to discourage the proliferation of fauna, including conservation significant species, in accordance with the Wallaby and Wildlife Management Plan produced by HLA Envirosciences, 2007 and the Flying Fox Management Plan (Defence, 2012). [TDL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, and supporting documentation.
	2-M33		Maintain habitat and infrastructure on the base to discourage the proliferation of fauna, including conservation significance species, in accordance with the Wildlife Hazard Management Plan produced by Townsville Airport, 2013. [TVL]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, and supporting documentation.
	2-M34		Maintain habitat and infrastructure on the base to discourage the proliferation of fauna, including conservation significance species, in accordance with the Bird and Animal Hazard Management System produced by Darwin International Airport (2011). [DAR]	Condition met through implementation of Wildlife Hazard Management Plans prepared with reference to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) – Manual of Standards (MOS) Part 139 – Aerodromes Section 10.14; Bird and Animal Hazard Management, Defence Safety Manual, and supporting documentation.
	2-M35		Liaise with relevant land use planning agencies and authorities in the areas in which the F-35A aircraft operates. [WLM, TDL, TVL, DAR]	Defence maintains a Directorate tasked with providing input to planning schemes and responds to development applications Australia-wide, including in the areas in which the F-35A aircraft operates.
	2-M36		Consult with key stakeholders regarding flying operations, compliance with approved flight paths and operational controls, and future plans. [WLM, TDL, TVL, DAR]	Defence continues to consult stakeholders regarding flying operations, compliance with approved flight paths and operational controls, and future plans, including: Williamtown Advisory Group (up to two meetings each year), Darwin International Airport Community Consultation Group (three meetings each year), Amberley Consultative Group (up to five meetings each year), Townsville Community Aviation Consultation Group.
	2-S01		Implement an Aircraft Noise Management System that will require each RAAF Base or Force Element Group to develop an aircraft noise management plan.	Condition met through application of RAAF Base Williamtown Aircraft Noise Management Plan (BANMP) 2018. Subsequent Base NMPs have been developed prior to F35A operations at those locations.

	2-S02		Maintain a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO) to independently review F-35A aircraft noise management and complaint handling.	Defence agreed an MOU with the ANO in January 2015. The MOU remains current.
	2-S03		Introduce new noise abatement procedures for RAAF Base Williamtown in October 2014.	Noise abatement procedures were implemented at RAAF Base Williamtown in October 2014.
	2-S04		Conduct additional noise assessments at child care centres on RAAF Base Williamtown, RAAF Base Darwin, and RAAF Base Amberley.	Noise testing at childcare centres at RAAF Bases Amberley, Darwin and Williamtown took place in late August 2015. In September 2015 Defence advised parents that the initial results of noise testing research had not alleviated Defence's concerns. Given the assessed health and safety risk to children, Defence took steps to close affected centres. All three childcare centres have now been closed. See link: Defence Aircraft Noise : Department of Defence for Defence reports.
	2-S05		Investigate engineering options that would provide practical solutions to reduce the exposure of children on RAAF bases to aircraft noise.	Defence investigated engineering options for practical solutions to reduce the exposure of children on RAAF Bases to aircraft noise in January 2015. All three childcare are now closed.
	2-S06		Provide updated noise information for the F-35A aircraft as it becomes available, particularly information on the noise from cannons.	Noise information for the F-35A has been made available via the Environmental Impact Statement. Defence has not received any additional information from other sources regarding noise from the cannon since its introduction to service at WLM in 2018. F-35A use of SAAWR has been minimal since aircraft introduction in 2018. On 7-Oct-2021, two F-35As used the SAAWR, including the use of gunnery, between 2-2.30pm. There was a total of 18 passes of the SAAWR, seven of these involved the use of cannons. From the limited data set, noise monitoring terminals recorded noise from the cannons can be heard separate to the aircraft for approximately one second. The noise is no louder than the noise from the aircraft. The further away the noise monitors are located in the community, the cannon noise is not recorded separately to the aircraft. When compared with historic F/A-18A/B Hornet noise data, the noise levels for F-35A are slightly higher. The information is preliminary and further noise monitoring is required.
	2-S07		Continue publication of noise and flight path monitoring data for RAAF Base Williamtown, RAAF Base Darwin, and RAAF Base Townsville on the Defence Aircraft Noise website.	Defence continues to publish noise and flight path monitoring data for RAAF Base Williamtown and RAAF Base Townsville. Go to Defence Aircraft Noise : Department of Defence for information on the Noise and Flightpath Monitoring System.
	2-S08		Maintain and continue to participate in forums for community consultation such as the Williamtown Advisory Group and the Darwin International Airport Community Consultation Group	Defence continues to participate in a number of forums for community consultation, including the Williamtown Advisory Group and the Darwin International Airport Community Consultation Group. Senior Australian Defence Force Officers continue to organise and/or attend forums on a regular basis.

Attachment B – Consultation and Notices

Community Consultation and Engagement

Defence continues to consult stakeholders regarding flying operations, compliance with approved flight paths and operational controls and future plans. The key groups include: - Williamstown Advisory Group (2 meetings each year), Darwin International Airport Community Consultation Group (3 meetings each year), Amberley Consultative Group (up to 5 meetings each year), Townsville Community Aviation Consultation Group. Williamstown Advisory Group did not meet last year due to the necessity to manage for COVID 19. Group was kept informed via information sent out via email.

Air Force Advisories:

Air Force issues social media posts associated with all exercises and flying activities as well as posting flying activity on the Flying Operations page - <https://www.airforce.gov.au/operations/flying-operations/flying-activity>. This link is displayed at the bottom of every media release and noise mitigation/information social media post.

In addition to the ongoing advisories, public information is distributed to local residents via concentrated Public Affairs campaigns to support the extensive deployment/exercise training requirements that occur around Australia for military fast jet flying operations.

Local notifications

Local flying notifications are issued on a regular basis to local, state and federal government representatives, Williamstown Advisory Group members and local residents who live close to RAAF Base Williamstown to advise of non-routine flying activity, or specific announcements such as low passes over the Base.

In excess of 20 local advisories/updates were issued in 2021 designed to keep people informed of Base or SAAWR flying activities.

Information distributed to local residents		
Notice	Date	Topic
Media Alert x 13	Jan; Feb; May; Aug; Sept 2	F-35A Diverts RAAF Base Richmond/Canberra/Tamworth/Amberley/Warnervale/ Coffs Harbour
Media Alert x 10	Jan, Feb, Mar, April	Flypast – WLM/Wagga/ Nelson Bay/Canberra, Sydney/ Darwin/Burnie/East Sale
Media Release	May 21	Evans Head Air Weapons Range – community engagement; media; release; public notifications
Media Alert x 3	May/July 21	F-35A early arrivals – WLM
Media Release	Sept 21	F-35A SAAWR Ops - community engagement; media; release; public notifications
Media Release x 3	Oct 21	F-35A Display practice – Hawks Nest
Media Alert x 2	Oct 21	F-35A Practice Display - WLM
Media Release x 2	May 21	Exercises – Diamond Storm/Arnhem Thunder

Consultation Forums	
Forum	Date
Williamstown Advisory Group	No meetings due to COVID 19 restrictions Ongoing notifications/advisories

Evans Head Community Advisory Panel	Ongoing notifications
Darwin International Airport Community Consultation Group	4 March 2021; 29 July 2021; 4 November 2021
Amberley Community Consultation Forum	10 Mar 2020
Townsville Consultation Forum	Consultative Communities – Townsville Airport – Non-Air Force Forum no evidence of meetings held