



RAAF BASE DARWIN

BASE AIRCRAFT NOISE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The authority to issue Base Plans is given to the SADFO through the Joint Directive 08/2022 - Implementation of the Joint Framework for Base Accountabilities.

The SADFO is authorised to issue orders (including commands) to all ADF members of Resident Units (RUs), or other personnel present on base. The SADFO is also authorised to issue directions to all Defence APS employees and other persons who are permitted to enter and be present on the base (including contractors and civilian personnel).

Wing Commander Lauren Guest CSC
Senior ADF Officer (SADFO)
RAAF Base Darwin

30 May 2025

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Amendment / Review Certificate

Date	Reason For Changes	Issue No
Jul 19	Initial Plan	1
May 21	Annual Review – addition of Enclosure 1	2
Jan 23	Annual Review – changes to Enclosure 1	3
May 25	Annual Review – changes to Enclosure 1	4

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RAAF BASE DARWIN BASE AIRCRAFT NOISE MANAGEMENT PLAN

References

- A. [En Route Supplement Australia](#) (ERSA) – Darwin pages
- B. [Air Force Aircraft Noise Management 2018 – 2023](#)
- C. [AC SI \(OPS\) 03-11](#) – Aircraft Noise Management
- D. [ACAUST Statement of Operating Intent for RAAF Base Darwin](#)
- E. [RAAF DAR SI \(OPS\) 03-02](#) – Aircraft Engine Ground Maintenance Running
- F. [Approval – Flying Operations of the F-35A Lightning II \(EPBC 2010/5747\)](#)

Introduction

1. Aircraft noise is an unavoidable consequence of Air Force operations and training. The impact of aircraft noise affects communities in different ways. Air Force has an obligation to reduce the effects of aircraft noise on local communities to the maximum extent possible, whilst achieving operational and training outcomes for Government. Consequently, aircraft noise is managed locally by personnel who know and understand community concerns.
2. The Base Aircraft Noise Management Plan (BANMP) informs and aims to improve public understanding of aircraft noise management strategies for the Darwin Aerodrome. Situated close to the Darwin City Centre, RAAF Base Darwin is an operating base for Australian Defence Force (ADF) and Marine Rotation Force-Darwin (MRF-D) aircraft and a key ADF operational mounting airbase for the Asia/Pacific region. It has one of the busiest operational tempos of any base, typically hosting over 35 x ADF operations, exercises and activities annually, including the multi-nation Talisman Sabre and Pitch Black exercises.
3. Darwin International Airport (DIA) is located on the northern side of RAAF Base Darwin and all civilian Regular Public Transport (RPT) and approved operator aircraft are required to comply with the requirements of Reference A. All noise related RPT complaints are managed by Air Services Australia's [Noise Complaints and Information Service](#) (NCIS)¹.
4. The primary users of RAAF Base Darwin are Air Force flying squadrons however, the base experiences high numbers of visiting and transiting international military fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

Background and Scope

5. The BANMP has been raised in compliance with the Air Force Aircraft Noise Management Strategy, Reference B and C. The BANMP applies to all flying and ground operations involving Air Force aircraft, civil-registered aircraft leased by the Air Force, Defence contracted aircraft operated by external service providers, and foreign military aircraft operating from RAAF Base Darwin.

¹ Aircraft noise enquires or complaints about non-military aircraft should be directed to Airservices Australia's Noise Complaints and Information Service (<https://www.airservicesaustralia.com/community/environment/aircraft-noise/about-making-a-complaint/>)

Standard Flying Operations

6. The primary mission of RAAF Base Darwin is to operate as a permanent Main Operating Airbase providing ongoing airbase support to enable the generation and sustainment of airpower capability for forward-based and transiting ADF aircraft as identified in Reference D. While not permanently hosting resident Air Force flying squadrons, RAAF Base Darwin provides support to continuous single and joint Service exercise programs, current operations, and yearly rotations of the United States Marine Corps.

7. RAAF Base Darwin and DIA operates as a 24/7 airfield with aircraft frequently arriving outside a nominal 16-hour window (0600-2200 h). During busy exercise periods, visiting Squadrons can request permission to conduct noise-creating activities. Engine runs are to be managed IAW Reference E. Other activities are to be managed on an as required basis with SADFO as the approving authority.

RAAF Base Darwin Noise Minimisation

8. Visiting ADF Squadrons are to ensure fly neighbourly practices are adhered to where possible while operating out of RAAF Base Darwin. Annex A outlines the Air Force Fly Neighbourly Policy. All ADF Squadrons are to operate with a view to minimising impact on the Darwin Community while operating in the region. Reference A details local procedures for noise minimisation.

9. **Initial and Pitch.** Initial and Pitch is at SADFO discretion; this is usually only approved during daylight hours. For activities involving fast jet aircraft, 452 Squadron (452SQN) Darwin Flight (ATC Tower) will provide a brief on arrival and departure procedures. The Aeronautical Information Package Supplement (AIP SUP) if issued, will provide further guidance.

10. **Aircraft engine ground maintenance operations.** Post-aircraft maintenance may require engine ground testing across all power settings. This particular type of testing is performed during the day wherever possible, but may at times be during the evening for operational reasons. Reference E details the specifics around aircraft engine ground maintenance operations. The following provides a short breakdown the specifics:

a. Approval for engine runs between 2200-0700 h are at the discretion of the RAAF DAR Assistant SADFO (A/SADFO) or delegate. Approval is normally only to be given where the aircraft is required for a mission the following day, and no opportunity exists for engine testing after 0700 h the following day. The standing requirements outlined in Table 1 are to be adhered to if approval is given.

Time	West of Runway 18/36		East of Runway 18/36		
	Piston/Turbo Prop	Jet (Fast and Heavy)	Jet (Heavy)	Jet (Fast)	Piston/Turbo Prop
0700-2200h	Max 50%	Idle only	Max 80%	80% Ordnance Loading Areas 50% on other aprons	100%
2200-0700h	No	No	Idle Only	Idle Only	Idle Only

Table 1: Standing Requirements for aircraft engine ground maintenance operations

- b. Engine runs are to be conducted for a maximum of 15 minutes at a time. The 15 minute limit is per aircraft. A break of at least 15 minutes is required between successive engine runs for the same aircraft. Where an engine run is expected to exceed 15 minutes duration, prior approval is to be sought.

11. **F-35A Lightning II.** F-35A Lightning II flying operations in Australia are subject to the conditions set out in Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) approval 2010/5747, Reference F. Enclosure 1 contains details on the status of compliance with approval Condition 3 of Reference F.

Major Exercises

12. RAAF Base Darwin and 13 Squadron (13SQN) support a number of major exercises annually, including Pitch Black, Diamond Storm, Talisman Sabre and Kakadu. Participants for each exercise will be briefed on the fly neighbourly policies and practices for RAAF Base Darwin during Reception and Integration phases to the Base. This information is provided by 13SQN to the Task Unit Headquarters (TUHQ) A1 for inclusion in briefs.

Regional Flying Operations

13. 1 Aviation Regiment (1AVN) operate the Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH) at Robertson Barracks. Robertson Barracks is located approximately 15 kilometers from RAAF Base Darwin. Enquires and complaints regarding ARH operations are to be forward to 1AVN Operations Cell at 1avn.ops@defence.gov.au.

Working with Community

14. Residents should consider the [Australian Noise Exposure Forecast \(ANEF\)²](https://www.defence.gov.au/AircraftNoise/_Master/Images/ANEF_Darwin/ANEFDarwinEndorsed.JPG) map for RAAF Base Darwin and DIA, which provides information about aircraft noise exposure. ANEF maps provide a forecast of anticipated noise for a future period, for that location. The ANEF does not show every flight path and homeowners with properties outside of the ANEF

² Webpage link [https://www.defence.gov.au/AircraftNoise/_Master/Images/ANEF_Darwin/ANEFDarwinEndorsed.JPG]

map zones may still experience aircraft noise.

15. **Communication.** RAAF Base Darwin communicates regularly with the local council and community about on base operations in a variety of formal and informal means. Base Executives attend the DIA Community Consultation Group (CCG) forums held three times a year.

16. The CCG is an important mechanism for local interaction and discussion in relation to aircraft noise and to provide updates to community members present. The [RAAF Base Darwin website](#) provides further information.

17. RAAF Base Darwin has minimal organic Public Affairs capability. For large scale exercises, external Public Affairs support is used to improve public awareness and messaging. Non-routine flying operations are advised via media releases and social media.

Noise Complaints

18. RAAF Base Darwin manages noise complaints from the public in accordance with Reference C. Complaints regarding Air Force aircraft noise can be made via:

- a. The Defence switchboard on 1300 333 362 and ask to be connected to RAAF Base Darwin.
- b. Online by the [aircraft noise enquiry or complaint form](#)
- c. Mail:

Defence Aircraft Noise Management
R8-03-030
Russell ACT 2601

19. On receipt of a noise complaint, a Defence member will initiate an investigation to determine the occurrence and likely operating Squadron. Contact will be made to the complainant to provide information on the nature of the operations to the query. Complaints relating to civilian aircraft will be directed to [Airservices Australia NCIS](#).

20. To assist with the investigation, the date and time, location, and a description of the event that prompted the enquiry or complaint should be clearly articulated. Following the guidelines of Defence Noise Management process, an initial response should be provided within two working days. If the complaint requires further investigation, the aim is to resolve the case within 28 working days.

21. Military aircraft noise complaints are generally taken by RAAF Base Darwin Air Base Operations Center (ABOC), documented on webform OA039, and reviewed by the 13SQN Operations Officer. Should the complaint originate from an aircraft involved in an exercise being conducted from RAAF Base Darwin, the TUHQ (if established) will manage the complaint. Annex B contains a flow chart illustrating the Noise Complaint

management process. All completed investigations are forwarded to Air Force Headquarters Staff Officer Aircraft Noise Management Canberra via Headquarters Air Command for further vetting.

22. 13SQN Executive review noise complaints on a regular basis including at the conclusion of a large exercise. Trends are reported back to exercise planners as required.

23. Further details on the aircraft noise complaint process can be found on the [Defence Aircraft Noise](#) website.

24. If a complainant is unsatisfied with how their aircraft noise complaint has been handled, the complainant may seek an independent review by the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO). The ANO will only review aircraft noise complaints that have already been submitted to the Department of Defence. Further information on the ANO including the ANO Charter and other policies can be found on the [ANO website](#).

25. A complaint investigation can be submitted to the ANO via:

- a. The ANO's [online complaint form](#)
- b. Toll free phone number 1800 266 040
- c. Email ano@ano.gov.au
- d. Mail:

Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
GPO Box 1985
Canberra City
ACT 2601

Review and Update Process

26. This document will be reviewed annually.

27. The document will be made available on the [RAAF Base Darwin](#) webpage of the [Defence Aircraft Noise website](#).

Annex:

- A. Air Force Fly Neighbourly Policy.
- B. Noise Complaint Management Process.

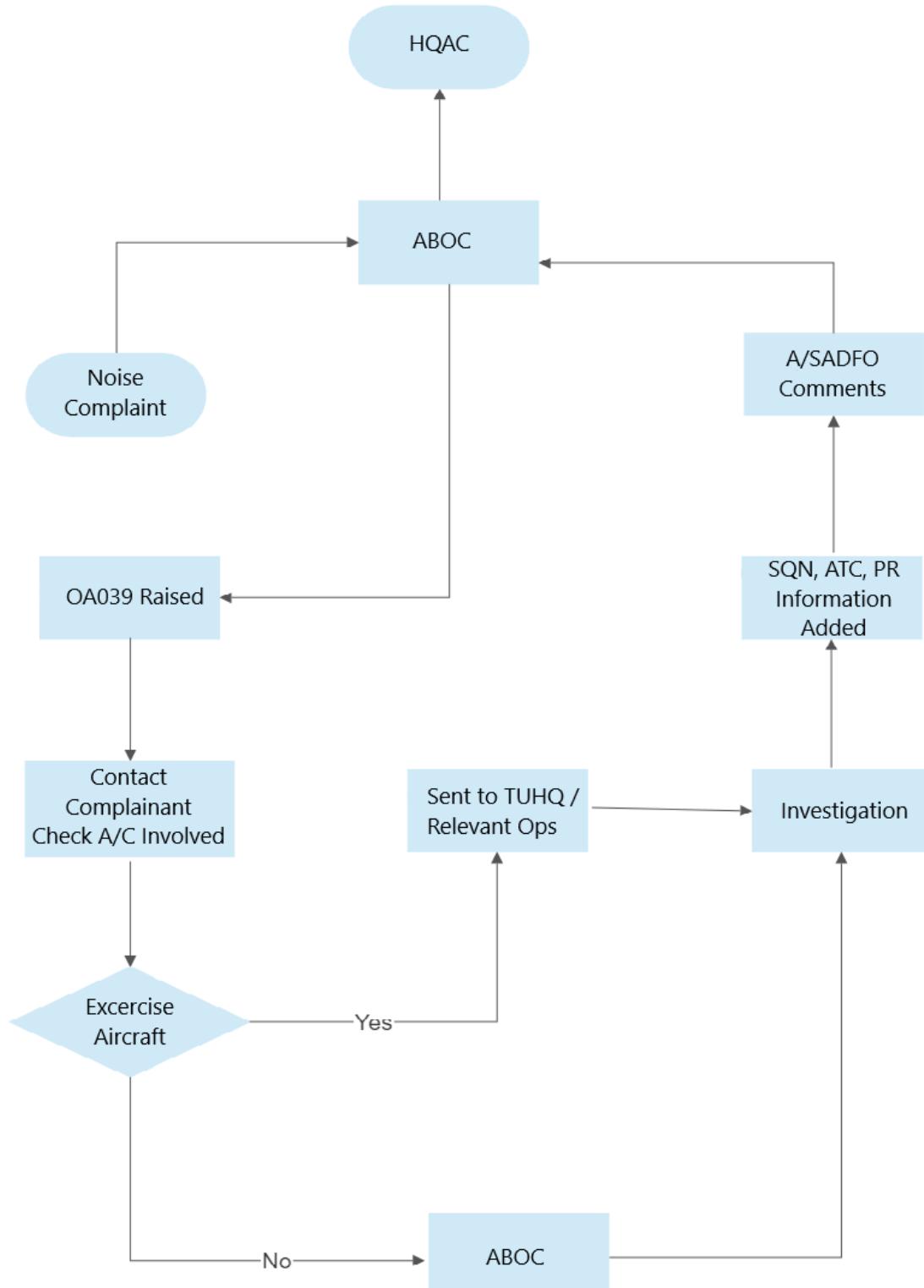
Enclosure:

1. RAAF Base Darwin – Compliance with Condition 3 of EPBC Approval 2010/5747

AIR FORCE FLY NEIGHBOURLY POLICY

1. Air Force is working with local communities near airbases, training areas and air weapons ranges to reduce noise impacts whilst balancing operational and training requirements.
2. Air Force commits to undertake flying operations in a manner which is considerate of our local communities, whilst maintaining safe operation of our aircraft and achieving the required levels of capability. Guided by these principles Air Force will:
 - a. Comply with published airfield noise abatement procedures.
 - b. Use appropriate runway length for departures to maximise height over local communities.
 - c. Minimise the use of afterburner on fast jets during take-off and minimise noise during climb out.
 - d. Limit the speed of aircraft over populated areas.
 - e. Minimise flight over residential areas and other noise sensitive buildings such as hospitals, schools and farming communities.
 - f. Avoid low flying over known noise sensitive areas such as livestock yards minimise flying late at night or early in the morning.
 - g. Include aircraft noise awareness in pilot training and familiarization.
 - h. Notify local communities of major exercises or other non-routine training and flying activities such as flying displays.
3. To further minimise noise at some bases Air Force will:
 - a. Limit continuous circuit training at night and on weekends and public holidays
 - b. Use satellite airfields for repetitive aircraft circuits.
 - c. Vary flight paths to share noise.
 - d. Consider continuous descents to reduce noise.
 - e. Implement local engine run-ups procedures.
 - f. Minimise jet or turbo prop engine testing at night.
4. For further information, please see the [Defence Aircraft Noise](#) website.

NOISE COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT PROCESS



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ENCLOSURE 1 TO
BANMP**Table E-1: RAAF Base Darwin – Compliance with Condition 3 of EPBC Approval 2010/5747**

Condition	Condition requirement	Response
3	Prepare and implement Aircraft Noise Management Plan(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:	<p>Base Aircraft Noise Management Plans (BANMPs) have been prepared as part of the Air Force Aircraft Noise Management Strategy. The plans have been uploaded to the Defence Noise website since 2021. BANMPs were prepared for RAAF Bases prior to F-35A exercises and operations in each location. The documents were submitted to DAWE (now Department of the Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water (DCCEEW) on completion. The BANMPs can be located on the Defence Aircraft Noise website at https://www.defence.gov.au/about/locations-property/aircraft-noise</p> <p>BANMPs include measures to align with Condition 3 where applicable. Activities undertaken to inform the BANMPs, and with Condition 3 measures include:</p>
3.a	Comparison of actual flight activity of F-35A Lightning II aircraft with those predicted in the Environmental Impact Statement;	<p>F-35A Lightning II flying activity began at RAAF Base Darwin in 2021.</p> <p>The second biennial F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity Report published in July 2023 collates information regarding flying activity and noise measurements from December 2020 to December 2022. See Related Documents section on the website at: https://www.defence.gov.au/about/accessing-information/environmental-compliance-reports/flying-operations-f35a-aircraft</p> <p>Measured data was recorded for 1 January 2021 through to 4 October 2022 where NFPMS information was available.</p> <p>There is a limited data set available due to the limited operations conducted at RAAF Base Darwin.</p> <p>The 2023-24 F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity Biennial report to be published in July 2025 will provide updated information. As a forward operating base, RAAF Darwin will only host F-35A aircraft for limited amounts of time in any one</p>

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Condition	Condition requirement	Response
		year.
3.b	A review of existing noise management programmes	<p>The F-35A Biennial Reporting - Review of F-35A Aircraft Noise Management and Reporting – 2018-2020 included a review of existing noise management programs.</p>
3.c	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">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 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; andiv. Biennial review of noise monitoring locations, unless agreed with the Minister.	<p>The second biennial F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity Report published in July 2023 collated data on flying activity and noise measurements from December 2020 to December 2022. See Related Documents section on the website at: https://www.defence.gov.au/about/accessing-information/environmental-compliance-reports/flying-operations-f35a-aircraft.</p> <p>i. The F-35A Biennial Reporting - Review of F-35A Aircraft Noise Management and Reporting. See Related Documents section on the website at: https://www.defence.gov.au/about/accessing-information/environmental-compliance-reports/flying-operations-f35a-aircraft - included an investigation of alternative noise measurement and analysis methods. For reference go to Pages 36 - 52, section 4.3 – 4.3.6.</p> <p>ii. RAAF Base Darwin NFPMS produces monthly reports Additional information can be requested via a web form. Defence has reported NFPMS data to local communities since 2005 see link https://www.defence.gov.au/about/locations-property/aircraft-noise/noise-monitoring-and-reporting.</p> <p>iii. Noise comparison were identified in the second biennial F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity Report December 2020-2022, however the report indicates due to low numbers of aircraft flying operation there were not enough events to allow for robust statistical analysis of measurement data at that stage.</p> <p>iv. Noise monitoring locations were reviewed in F-35A Aircraft Noise Management and Reporting - See Related Documents section on the website at: https://www.defence.gov.au/about/accessing-information/environmental-compliance-reports/flying-operations-f35a-aircraft</p>

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Condition	Condition requirement	Response
		<p>reports/flying-operations-f35a-aircraft 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.</p>
3.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.	<p>The findings of F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity December 2020 - December 2022 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, are higher than predicted noise levels associated with these operations.</p> <p>Air Combat Group (ACG) trialled alternative departure procedures at RAAF Base WLM from mid-2019 to December 2022. 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, was to identify departure procedures that minimised noise at sensitive receivers but not compromise safe operations of the F-35A aircraft, the safety of the public and aircrew, while still achieving training and operational requirements. Utilising this data, ACG finalised operating procedures designed to minimise aircraft noise as much as possible without comprising operations or safety throughout 2023/24.</p> <p>This departure profile may be replicated where it may be beneficial for sensitive receivers at RAAF Base Darwin and forward operating bases around Australia where applicable.</p> <p>The details of the 2021-22 noise monitoring for RAAF Base Darwin were outlined in December 2020-2022 biennial report published in July 2023. The report indicated due to low numbers of aircraft flying operations there were not enough events to allow for robust statistical analysis of measurement data.</p>
3.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	3.e.i. The F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity Report December 2020-2022 was published in July 2023, and July 2021. See Related Documents section on the

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Condition	Condition requirement	Response
	<p>effectiveness of flight activity monitoring and programmes at RAAF Base(s) until agreed in writing by the Minister;</p> <p>ii. Annual publication on the Defence Aircraft Noise website of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. noise levels and flight activity monitoring data of the F-35A Lightning II aircraft; andii. 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:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. noise management measures;b. days and hours of operation;c. flight paths used to reduce noise; andd. frequency and type of activities that occur at Salt Ash Weapons Range. <p>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.</p>	<p>website at: https://www.defence.gov.au/about/accessing-information/environmental-compliance-reports/flying-operations-f35a-aircraft</p> <p>3.e.ii. The F-35A Noise and Flight Path Activity Report December 2020-2022. Found in Related Documents section on the website at: https://www.defence.gov.au/about/accessing-information/environmental-compliance-reports/flying-operations-f35a-aircraft pages 71 – 74 provide details on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Aircraft noise levels - Appendix H pages 142-143ii.a. noise management measures – section 4.10 Pages 54-57ii.b. days and hours of operation – section 5.4 page 72ii.c. flight tracks - section 4.8 pages 40, 45-48ii.d. N/A <p>3.e.iii. The RAAF Base Darwin BANMP is available on the Defence website at https://www.airforce.gov.au/about-us/bases/raaf-base-darwin. Base NMPs have been progressively developed in accordance with the RAAF Aircraft Noise Management Policy.</p>
3.f	Consultation activities, to ensure adequate communication with stakeholders, including local residents and relevant authorities. Consultation activities must	3.f.i. RAAF Base Darwin Senior Australian Defence Force Officer (SADFO) role is to manage whole-of-Defence matters including Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC), community engagement and stakeholder engagement with

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Condition	Condition requirement	Response
	<p>include, but no be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">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, including but not limited to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. days and hours of operation;ii. flight paths; andiii. higher noise events.iii. continued participation at community forums; andiv. 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.	<p>local residents and local and territory authorities. SADFO RAAF Base Darwin does this by attending the Darwin International Airport Community Consultation Group, which sets out the process for improvements and changes (https://www.darwinairport.com.au/corporate/consultation). In addition, Air Force continuously improves its communication arrangements to ensure current and up-to-date information is provided to the community.</p> <p>3.f.ii. F-35A operations in Darwin will be for routine Exercises and Operational requirements and necessary Raise Train and Sustain activities.</p> <p>FEG-based media releases and community engagement activities are conducted to promote F-35A Exercises and deployments to RAAF Base Darwin. Large Scale deployments will have dedicated community engagement activities well in advance of the exercise. This includes community engagement activities and flying program notifications to local residents.</p> <p>Small-scale exercises and deployments to RAAF Bases Darwin will be accompanied by public affairs activities such as media releases</p> <p>RAAF Base and flying program notifications will be conducted as part of standard ops to inform the public of flying activities.</p> <p>3.f.iii. SADFO or representative attends Darwin International Airport Community Consultation Group (CCG).</p> <p>3.f.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 https://www.defence.gov.au/about/locations-property/aircraft-noise/noise-monitoring-and-reporting.</p> <p>Any information published will be developed with operational security issues considered</p>
3.g	Complaint Handling and Resolution, to ensure enquiries and complaints about F-	Complaint Handling and Resolution is conducted in accordance with Air

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Condition	Condition requirement	Response
	35A Lightning II aircraft flying operations are received, recorded, reported, responded to and resolved, as defined in the Aircraft Noise Management Strategy	Command Noise Management System and applicable Paragraphs in this BANMP.
3 (condition end note)	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	<p>The BANMPs were approved by the Department of Environment and Energy (now) Department of the Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water (DCCEEW) Delegate upon completion of the first NMP beginning with RAAF Base WLM on 3 December 2018. All BANMPs have undergone subsequent documented reviews on an annual basis. The RAAF Base Darwin BANMP is available on the Defence website at https://www.airforce.gov.au/about-us/bases/raaf-base-darwin.</p> <p>This condition is also supported by actions taken to satisfy conditions 1, 2 and 4 of EPBC Approval 2010/5747</p>