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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

R E P O R T

relating to

RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN, NSW -  
F/A-18 HORNET  
FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

(Third Report of 1983)

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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

(Twenty-Seventh Committee)

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EXTRACT FROM

THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
NO.13 DATED 26 MAY 1983

- 42 PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE - REFERENCE OF WORK - R.A.A.F. BASE WILLIAMTOWN, N.S.W. - F/A 18 HORNET FACILITIES:  
Mr. Hurford (Minister for Housing and Construction), pursuant to notice, moved - That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969 the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report: R.A.A.F. Base Williamtown, N.S.W. - F/A 18 Hornet facilities development.

Mr. Hurford presented plans in connection with the proposed work.

Debate ensued.

Question - put and passed.

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- Sleeping accommodation;
- Off-base married quarter accommodation; and
- Associated engineering works and services.

2. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was \$90.74m at April 1983 prices.

3. The estimated cost does not include a number of time critical facilities to the value of \$15m which the House resolved on 25 May 1983 to exempt from Committee consideration on the grounds of urgency.

4. The facilities exempted are as follows:

- 481 Squadron Avionics Workshop;
- Squadron Engine Run-up Facility;
- Extensions to Central Equipment Store;
- Security Guard and Police Dog Complex;
- F/A-18 Flight Simulator Building.

#### THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

5. The Committee received submissions and plans from the Department of Defence (Defence) and the Department of Housing and Construction (DHC) and took evidence from their representatives at a public hearing held at RAAF Base Williamtown on 21 and 22 July 1983. Prior to the hearing the Committee inspected existing facilities, a number of sites on the Base, the Salt Ash Air Weapons Range (Salt Ash Range) and RAAF housing areas at Medowie and Raymond Terrace.

6. Whilst at Salt Ash Range the Committee witnessed Mirage aircraft undertake low level straffing and practice bombing at the target area.

7. The Committee also received written submissions from a number of State and local government organisations, public interest groups and private individuals. A list of witnesses and the organisation which they represented is at Appendix A.

8. The Committee's proceedings will be printed as Minutes of Evidence. A list of exhibits is at Appendix B.

#### BACKGROUND

9. Tactical Fighter Force: The RAAF operates 3 squadrons of Mirage 111-0 fighters. No. 3 Squadron is based at Butterworth, Malaysia, No. 75 Squadron is based at Darwin, N.T., and No. 77 Squadron, is based at RAAF Base Williamtown, N.S.W. RAAF Williamtown is also the base for No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit (2OCU) which operates a number of aircraft types comprising Mirage 111-0, Mirage III-D (dual) and Macchi.

10. The three Mirage squadrons are operational fighter squadrons which exercise in a number of air-to-air and air-to-ground roles. 2OCU is a training squadron with an operational capability.

11. No. 77 Squadron and 2OCU are able to carry out operational level maintenance to their respective aircraft. No. 481 Maintenance Squadron, based at Williamtown, carries out all major maintenance on the Williamtown based Mirage aircraft.

12. Mirage Replacement: In October 1981 the Government announced the decision to purchase seventy-five F/A-18 (Hornet) aircraft from the United States of America to replace the Mirage aircraft. It is planned that two US built and one Australian manufactured aircraft will enter service with the RAAF in April 1985. The balance will enter service progressively until March 1989 when the re-equipment will be completed.

13. Phasing-in of F/A-18 Aircraft: Defence advised the Committee that key aircraft phasing-in milestones are as follows:

Preparatory work for depot level maintenance of F/A-18 commences - maintenance activities will commence with arrival of first F/A-18 aircraft	December 1984
77 Squadron takes over from 20CU the role of Mirage conversion training	January 1985
20CU commences training of F/A-18 pilots in Australia	June 1985
20CU completes re-equipment with F/A-18	mid-1986
75 Squadron, to be located in the Northern Territory, re-equipped with F/A-18	late 1986 to April 1987
3 Squadron re-equipped with F/A-18	mid-1987 to mid-1988
77 Squadron commences taking delivery of F/A-18	latter half 1988
Mirage phased out of service - maintenance by 481 Maintenance Squadron at depot level continued until aircraft phased out	end 1988
Delivery of F/A-18 completed	March 1989

14. Location of Mirage Squadrons: No. 75 Squadron has recently been relocated from Butterworth, Malaysia, to RAAF Base Darwin. The Committee understands that the squadron may eventually be permanently located at RAAF Base Tindal in the Northern Territory.

15. A decision on the eventual location of No. 3 Squadron has not been made.

16. The Committee was advised that the number of personnel associated with the relocation of No. 75 Squadron is about 380, and of these 280 are being stationed at Darwin and the balance dispersed to other RAAF units throughout Australia. By December 1983 the number of personnel remaining at Butterworth will stabilise at about 792.

17. Location and Williamtown: RAAF Base Williamtown was established during the Second World War as a base for fighter aircraft and is located about 19 kilometres (km) north-east of Newcastle. The Base occupies 534 hectares in which are contained a 2440 metre runway, operational, technical and domestic facilities.

18. The Base is located in Port Stephens Shire and is bounded by Medowie Road on the east, Cabbage Tree Drive, about 2 km from the boundary to the south and Richardson Road, about 3 km from the northern boundary.

19. Salt Ash Range: At present air to ground practice bombing and gunnery are undertaken on the Salt Ash Range, about 8 km north-east of the base. The range comprises 325 hectares of Commonwealth owned land and a further 2130 hectares of leased land. The Committee was advised that the Commonwealth proposes to acquire the leased land in the future.

20. Parachute Drop Zone: A further property associated with the Base is the parachute drop zone located about 12 km north-east of the Base. This area, comprising 284 hectares, is leased by the Commonwealth. The lease expires in 1991.

21. Urban Settlement: Principal urban settlements surrounding the Base and its associated properties include Raymond Terrace, Medowie, the village of Williamtown, Salt Ash, Mallabula, Tanilba and Lemon Tree.

22. Port Stephens Shire recorded an average increase in population of 6.2 per cent per annum in the years 1976-81, compared to a State average of 1.4 per cent per annum for the same period. Tourism, recreation and rural development have been cited as factors contributing to this significant population increase. The population increase has imposed pressures on land uses in Raymond Terrace and Medowie and has contributed to a number of residential and hobby farm sub-divisions in the surrounding area.

23. The Base is the largest single employer in Port Stephens Shire. In 1982 expenditure on salaries amounted to \$40m, and operating expenses totalled \$17.3m.

24. Units on the Base: In addition to No. 77 Squadron and 20CU the following RAAF, Defence and Army units occupy various facilities and operate on the base:

- Headquarters RAAF Williamtown;
- Base Squadron Williamtown;
- No. 4 (Forward Aircraft Control) Flight;
- No. 3 Control and Reporting Unit;
- Headquarters Operational Command Detachment E;
- Australian Joint Warfare Establishment (AJWE); and
- Parachute Training School.

25. Layout and Development of the Base: The main 2440 metre runway is orientated in a north-west to south-east direction. A number of facilities related to flying operations and domestic functions are located on either side of the runway. The main technical, domestic and administrative support facilities have

been developed in a triangular area in the eastern sector of the Base bounded by the Medowie Road, the parallel taxiway and the aircraft apron system. Technical and other facilities in immediate support of flying units have been developed around the perimeter of the apron area.

26. The existing building area does not really present opportunities for further development. For example, a number of technical facilities are located where aircraft noise is unacceptably high. There is insufficient developable land for further domestic buildings. Sufficient space could be made available by relocating structures used by the Parachute Training School, located near barrack block accommodation, to another site.

27. Civil Aviation: The Williamtown/Newcastle area is served by a number of airlines serving commuter routes. A civil air terminal building and associated taxiway and apron are located near the south eastern corner of the RAAF base.

28. In 1981 the terminal handled more than 90,000 passengers from 10,200 aircraft movements.

29. Civil air operations at Williamtown are governed by a Joint User Agreement between the Department of Defence and the Department of Aviation with the latter as the tenant.

#### THE NEED

30. The Committee sees the scope of this section encompassing two separate issues. First, the Committee must satisfy itself that RAAF Base Williamtown is the most suitable location at which to base F/A-18 aircraft. This assessment should encompass not only a consideration of possible suitable alternative sites but also an assessment of additional social and physical infrastructure requirements and impacts such as aircraft noise on the

community surrounding Williamstown and the Salt Ash Range. Measures designed to ameliorate significant deleterious impacts consequently require careful examination.

31. Secondly, the Committee must satisfy itself that a need for new buildings to rectify perceived and demonstrated deficiencies in existing buildings imposed by the phasing in of the F/A-18 and the phasing out of the Mirage does exist.

#### SITE SELECTION

32. The Committee was advised that studies of many possible locations for the Tactical Fighter Force had been undertaken by Defence in the period 1978 to 1980. The studies addressed the location of flying units and depot level maintenance facilities and were examined by high level committees in Defence. A total of 57 possible locations was considered.

33. The Committee was advised that the estimated cost of constructing facilities at a new base to accommodate two operational squadrons, an operational conversion unit, a maintenance squadron, base support and married quarters would be in the order of \$450m for a location in eastern or southern Australia. The cost dissection, provided by Defence, is as follows:

	\$m
Flying Squadron Facilities	100
Base Support Facilities (including engineering services)	200
Aircraft pavements	50
Married quarters	60
Land Acquisitions (in undeveloped area)	10
Telecommunications and Navigation Aid Facilities	10
Contingencies	<u>20</u>
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>450</u></b>

34. Options of developing other existing RAAF bases were also considered. Amongst the locations on the short list considered for flying units were Tindal, Darwin, Townsville, Amberley, Dubbo, Woomera and Williamtown.

35. The only viable alternative locations for depot level maintenance facilities appeared to be Williamtown or Richmond. At Richmond more married quarters would be required whereas at Williamtown more expenditure on technical facilities would be required.

36. The Committee recognises that there are advantages in locating depot level maintenance facilities with flying squadrons.

37. Defence provided the Committee with comparative costs of providing the same F/A-18 flying support facilities, now planned at Williamtown, at Townsville and Nowra. These comparisons are as follows:

	<u>Townsville</u>	<u>Nowra</u>
	\$m	\$m
Technical facilities	50	50
Support facilities	60	50
Aircraft Pavements	40	40
Engineering Services	30	15
Land Acquisition	2	2
Single accommodation	12	10
Married quarters	60	60
TOTAL	<u>254</u>	<u>227</u>

38. The estimated cost of providing facilities at RAAF Williamtown, the subject of this reference, is \$105.74m at April 1983 prices.

39. The development of RAAF Williamtown for two tactical fighter force flying units, an operational conversion unit, depot level maintenance facilities and other support services appears to be the least expensive and most suitable option for the following reasons:

- residual value of existing Base facilities;
- location of RAAF Williamtown relative to the availability of other RAAF support functions;
- proximity of weapons ranges;
- availability of air space; and
- availability of industrial and community support.

40. Committee's Conclusion: Location of the Tactical Fighter Force at RAAF Base Williamtown offers cost advantages over possible alternative locations.

#### AIRCRAFT NOISE

41. The most socially contentious aspect of remaining at Williamtown centres on the impact of aircraft noise on the surrounding area. Other equally important social and environmental impacts are discussed in other parts of this report.

42. The main noise generated at the Base and around the Salt Ash Range results from the operation of aircraft for training purposes, including take off and landing, circuit training, taxiing, flight line activity and ground run-up for test purposes.

43. Noise Exposure Forecast System: The Draft Environmental Report on the introduction of the F/A-18 and its proposed location at RAAF Williamtown provided an assessment of the number of houses in noise affected areas around the Base and near the Salt Ash Range. The Noise Exposure Forecast (NEF) system was employed to assess the extent of the noise impact.

44. The NEF system has been referred to by the Committee in previous reports dealing with proposals to upgrade civil and military airports. The NEF technique is a scientific measure of noise exposure levels around airports which can be used to assess average community responses to aircraft noise and for land use planning around airports. The NEF system employed in Australia has recently been refined following an extensive survey of reactions of communities near airports undertaken by the National Acoustics Laboratory (NAL) for the Department of Aviation and the Department of Defence.

45. Under the Australian NEF (ANEF) system noise exposure levels are calculated in ANEF units which take into account the following factors of aircraft noise:

- the intensity, duration, tonal content and spectrum of audible frequencies of the noise of aircraft take-offs, approaches to landing and reverse thrust after landing;
- the forecast frequency of aircraft types and movements on the various flight paths; and
- the average daily distribution of aircraft take-off and landing movements in both daytime and night-time hours.

46. NEF charts of airports and their surrounding areas show noise exposure contours of 25, 30 and 40 ANEF units. These contours define land areas affected by aircraft noise, increasingly so with increasing ANEF values.

47. The ANEF refers to forecast noise based on a number of assumptions and relates to a future situation, whilst the Noise Exposure Index (NEI) which is based on historical data, usually a twelve month period, relates to the current situation.

48. It is generally accepted that the results of the NAL study shows that noise outside the 20 ANEF contour is not of significant concern. Within the 20-25 ANEF contours noise exposure begins to emerge as an environmental problem, whilst above 25 ANEF noise exposure becomes progressively more severe.

49. The dose/response relationship, included in the NAL report, provides an indication of the extent to which residents living within specified ANEF contours are affected by aircraft noise. For example, the percentage of persons living within the 20-25 ANEF contours "seriously affected" by aircraft noise ranges from 10-17 per cent whilst 45-55 per cent of persons are "moderately affected".

50. According to the Department of Aviation the NAL report provides substantial evidence to support the use of the 25 ANEF as the appropriate criterion for residential land use. In other words residential development within the 25 ANEF and the 30 ANEF would not be appropriate. Land use compatibility advice for areas in the vicinity of Australian Airports, given by the Department of Aviation, applicable to new development on undeveloped land is that most urban type development is permissible outside the 20 ANEF contour; within the 20-25 ANEF contours residential development is conditionally acceptable and is not recommended in higher values.

51. Aircraft Noise around Williamtown and Salt Ash: The Draft Environmental Report contains a report on the impact of aircraft noise on the Base and the surrounding community. Maps prepared by Defence showing relevant NEI, and ANEF contours for 1990 are included in that report. The ANEF contours for 1990, based on the operation of the F/A-18 allow for 5 per cent of take-offs using after burners and about 10 per cent night movements after 7.00 pm.

52. In relation to noise forecasts for areas around the Base and Raymond Terrace, the report says that the 1990 ANEF contours are wider and slightly shorter than NEI contours. Consequently, the shorter ANEF contours will mean that a proposed residential development on the eastern outskirts of Raymond Terrace, whose construction has just commenced, will fall totally outside the 25 ANEF contour and another development in the area will be further outside the 25 ANEF than it is outside the 25 NEI.

53. One of the characteristics of the 25 ANEF contour relating to operations around the Base is that it will extend about 1.5 km south-east of the present 25 NEI contour. This extension is due to circuit training which will be carried out there. In addition, the ANEF contours show that all of the village of Williamtown will fall within the 1990 25 ANEF contour. Comparisons of the number of houses and public buildings in Williamtown village affected by existing and forecast noise, given in the Draft Environmental Report, are as follows:

Williamtown Residences Affected

NEF/ANEF	NEI	1990 ANEF
25-30	23	30*
30-35	20	29
35-40	4	8
40+	3	3
TOTAL	50	70

(\* plus Williamtown Public School and Church)

54. The 1990 25 ANEF contour around Salt Ash Range embraces a significantly larger area than the 25 NEI. The 25 ANEF contour, at its widest point from the 25 NEI, is extended more than 2.5 km further south. There will be a relatively large increase in the number of residents within the 25 ANEF contour as a result.

Comparisons of the number of residences affected around Salt Ash Range, given in the Draft Environmental Report, are as follows:

Salt Ash Residences Affected

NEF/ANEF	NEI	1990 ANEF
25-30	17	48
30-35	-	23
TOTAL	17	71

55. The report states that the additional residences affected in 1990 include almost all of Parkland Estate in the 30-35 ANEF zone and the remainder of Parkland Estate and some of Lemon Tree Passage and Nelson Bay Roads in the 25-30 ANEF zone. Parkland estate is a small acre rural type development immediately to the south of the Salt Ash Range; it is immediately beneath the approach to the target area.

56. Under existing utilisation of the Salt Ash Range the number of residences within the 25-30 NEI contours is relatively small and there are no residences within the 30-35 NEI contours. (The location of the 35 NEI/ANEF contour at Salt Ash is not shown on the maps in the Draft Environmental Report prepared by Defence.)

57. Local Reactions: Witnesses who appeared before the Committee at the public hearing, claiming to represent Williamtown and Salt Ash residents, were divided over the acceptability of existing and forecast noise levels.

58. On the one hand Williamtown residents stated that following a number of assurances from the Officer Commanding RAAF Williamtown, they tolerated the noise problem with forbearance and had no basic objection to increased activity and further development of the base. They were seeking a sensible co-existence with the RAAF.

59. Representatives of residents living around Salt Ash Range found noise levels, especially from low flying aircraft, to be intolerable. They believed the introduction of F/A-18 aircraft would compound the noise problem. In these circumstances and in terms of social equity the most reasonable course to be adopted would be to move the range further west or relocate it elsewhere. Residents stated the potential of developable land is being and will continue to be unrealised for as long as the range remains in its present location.

60. A survey of residents living in the vicinity of Salt Ash Range, carried out by the residents, indicated that a high percentage of respondents were not aware of the potential or actual noise problem at the time of land purchase. They felt let down by local government in not protecting their interest.

61. A third group submitted that had proper land use planning and zoning of the area around Salt Ash Range been carried out in the first place, the present problem of noise would not have arisen. It was stated that to relocate the range in the interests of reducing noise around Salt Ash would not only transfer the noise problem to another community but would be an unjustifiable impost on taxpayers. In the light of past experience it would be more prudent now not to further compound the noise problem and to develop and rigidly enforce land use zonings of the area around Salt Ash falling at the very least within the 25 ANEF which are compatible with the existence of the range and which reflect land use planning advice implicit in the ANEF system. That is, in the 20-25 ANEF contours some people may find that land use is incompatible with residential use and that land use planning authorities may consider that the incorporation of noise control features in the construction of residences is appropriate; residential land use within the 25 ANEF is not compatible.

62. Use and Relocation of Salt Ash Range: The main area of complaint about operations involving the use of Salt Ash Range appears to be the incidence and associated noise from low flying aircraft. It was stated in evidence that during 1982 8,915 sorties had been authorised by the RAAF for Williamstown units. Of these, 2,401 (26.9 per cent) had been authorised for some low flying in the vicinity of Salt Ash. More than 1000 low flying sorties occurred on deployment away from Williamstown.

63. Witnesses from Defence stated that the practicalities of relocating Salt Ash Range had been given thorough consideration. The danger areas of a number of alternative sites in the surrounding area, advanced by other witnesses, were found to encroach on existing roads. To use other existing RAAF or Army ranges in the vicinity of Williamstown would require an extension to the length of pilot training courses and would involve considerable additional recurrent expenditure. For example, operations at the Singleton Army Range would require the length of pilot training courses to be extended by 25 per cent and involve an additional expenditure of \$616,800; to operate at the Evans Head Range would lengthen courses by 50 per cent and cost an extra \$3.85m.

64. A relocation of the range further afield would encounter the wider question of relocating the Base itself. Based on advice from Defence the Committee has already agreed that the relocation of the Base could not be justified on cost grounds given the advantages in terms of the value of existing infrastructure at Williamstown.

65. Urban Development Around Salt Ash: The village of Salt Ash, about 2 km south of Salt Ash Range existed before the range was proclaimed in 1953. The number of houses and buildings in the vicinity of the range and within or in close proximity to the now critical NEF contours would have been relatively few.

66. According to the Final Environmental Impact Statement prepared in response to public comments to the Draft Environmental Report, in January 1975 the RAAF altered the weapon delivery patterns that were in use at that time in an attempt to lessen the impact of noise on those residences already in existence in the approaches to the range.

67. Evidence presented at the public hearing shows that a significant increase in the number of houses in the immediate vicinity of Salt Ash Range commenced in 1975, following approval being given for Hideaway and Parkland Estates.

68. The chronology of events from the proclamation of Salt Ash Range, approval of the two sub-divisions, warnings from the RAAF and Defence of the potential noise problem and the extent to which the problem was recognised and reflected in local land use planning is at Appendix C.

69. The chronology shows that in the past, from the Commonwealth point of view, there were inadequate land use controls applicable to ensure noise compatible development around Salt Ash. This situation applies equally to other civilian airports at major capital cities and is not exclusive to Salt Ash.

70. The Shire Council advised the Committee that when definite plans are available in relation to the noise forecast for the F/A-18, Council will consider the matter of zoning or any appropriate matter that could be considered relevant.

71. It should be recognised that the nature of noise exposure predictions prevents the contours being exactly defined. The predictions are based on a number of assumptions. For example, the Final Environmental Impact Statement contains a map showing the extent of the 25 NEF contour for 1985 provided in 1976, the 25 NEF contour for 1985 takes in a considerably larger area than

the 25 NEI and the 1990 ANEF contour, extending as far east as Tanilba and south as far as the shoreline. The assumptions on which the NEF were based and which Defence referred to the Council in 1976 were not stated. Likewise, the assumptions on which the 1990 ANEF contours are based, which were shown in the Draft Environmental Report and the Final Environmental Impact Statement, are not stated. The variations in the two forecasts illustrate that land use planning to take account of forecast noise levels prepared on the basis of apparently widely divergent assumptions is difficult.

72. It is nevertheless clear that the Council decision to permit rural residential sub-division of an area in close proximity to Salt Ash Range was ill-advised. It is not unreasonable to suggest that during the interval between commencement of Mirage operations and Council approving subdivisions (1965-1973/74), the nature of RAAF operations, use of the range and resultant noise from jet aircraft must have been common knowledge in the area. Even in 1973, without NEF maps, the approaches to the target area at Salt Ash Range were noise sensitive areas which required careful assessment in land use planning.

73. The Committee believes the Council did not make a reasonable attempt in 1973 at assessing or even addressing the existence of the range, associated aircraft noise and adjusting land use zoning accordingly.

74. Evidence presented at the public hearing indicates that the Council and the NSW Government have recently approved a residential subdivision in an area acknowledged to be within "the NEF greater than 25 unit range for the F/A-18 Fighter". (Evidence, p.294)

75. In approving the subdivision the State Government took the view that Council should make intending owners or builders aware of the operational noise levels which will be experienced in the area. According to land use compatibility advice for areas in the vicinity of airports, issued by the Department of Aviation, residential land use in the 25-30 ANEF range is not recommended.

76. The Committee is therefore concerned that even now, when aircraft noise around Salt Ash appears to be generally recognised as a problem, residential subdivision in noise sensitive areas is continuing with the approval of the State Government.

77. It was submitted that non-approval of properly presented development applications by Council could be challenged by developers in the NSW Land Court. The Committee believes if this is the case such a matter should go before the court and the Commonwealth be given the opportunity of presenting its case.

78. Noise Abatement Measures adopted by the RAAF: The matter of aircraft noise around airports and defence installations and its effects on local residents has been before the Committee on numerous previous occasions.

79. In the case of the noise critical area around Salt Ash, the impact of aircraft noise, particularly from low flying aircraft, has been reduced.

80. At the public hearing the Committee was informed that following a meeting of local residents held at Williamstown Community Hall, the Officer Commanding RAAF Williamstown advised a local residents' representative in a letter dated 15 July 1983 of his continuing concern to minimise the adverse impact of RAAF operations at Salt Ash. He advised that for some weeks operational restrictions had been imposed on squadron commanders designed to contain low level approaches to the target within the promulgated danger area. This action imposes restrictions on RAAF

operations which may lead to a deterioration in flying standards. Consequently on occasions in the future the RAAF may need to adopt more flexible procedures in order to maintain a maximum state of operational capability. The letter assured the residents' representative that these occasions would be kept to a minimum and well publicised beforehand.

81. In explaining recent restrictions to the Committee the Officer Commanding stated the restrictions mean that his commanding officers will require his authority and that he would need to be convinced of the need for additional tactical training before he would authorise any departure from them. These restrictions did not apply previously and may seriously impair training. The option of using the Singleton Army Range for tactical attack training was being pursued.

82. The Final Environmental Impact Statement states that in view of the public response to the Draft Environmental Report, the RAAF is undertaking another review of training activities in the Salt Ash area. This review may result in modifications to weapon delivery patterns aimed at minimising noise in residential areas.

83. Compensation: As to the wider issue of compensating residents affected by aircraft noise, especially residents living within the 25-30-40 1990 ANEF contours, the Committee believes that to make any implicit comments or explicit recommendations in this regard would prejudice the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation which is currently inquiring into aircraft noise. The subject of noise compensation is included in that Committee's terms of reference. Also of relevance to the development of Commonwealth policy in relation to compensation are the recommendations in the report of the Australian Law Reform Commission on Land Acquisition and Compensation which are under consideration by the Government.

84. Summary: There is a requirement for an air weapons range for training fighter pilots in air-to-ground roles to be located in close proximity to the fighter base. The Salt Ash Range meets this requirement. Studies of possible alternative sites for a relocated weapons range in the vicinity of RAAF Base Williamtown reveal that requisite danger areas would intrude on public roads. Possible sites further afield would require training courses to be extended, result in increased recurrent expenditure, and could encounter the need to relocate the Base. Relocation of RAAF Base Williamtown cannot be justified given the value of existing infrastructure at RAAF Williamtown.

85. Whilst the introduction of the F/A-18 will increase the level of aircraft noise around Williamtown village and Salt Ash Range, the RAAF advised relevant land use planning authorities of the dangers of residential development in noise sensitive areas. About 71 houses in the vicinity of Salt Ash Range will be affected by aircraft noise. The majority of these houses were constructed on small acre rural subdivisions located under the approach to the range and in close proximity to it. The majority of these houses appear to have been built since 1976. Upon learning of commencement of work on the subdivision the RAAF warned Port Stephens Shire Council of the likely noise impact to be expected from operations at Salt Ash Range. The RAAF recommended that a covenant, warning purchasers of the nature of operations at Salt Ash Range, be placed on subdivided land. The Council refused to place a covenant on the land, believing itself liable to compensation claims if it did so, and claiming that it did not have the power to do so.

86. A review of training activities at Salt Ash Range will be carried out by the RAAF to try to reduce noise impacts. Restrictions on low flying around Salt Ash Range have been imposed by the Officer Commanding RAAF Williamtown.

87. An undertaking was given by the RAAF that reviews of training activities at Salt Ash Range would be made in order to minimise noise impact on those living in the area. Succeeding Officers Commanding RAAF Williamstown should be instructed to adopt the same attitude without impairing training requirements.

88. Committee's Conclusion: RAAF Base Williamstown is the most economical location for Tactical Fighter Force aircraft. Air-to-ground weapons training should continue at Salt Ash Range. The Committee is concerned about the noise impact from aircraft using Salt Ash Range and strongly urges consultations immediately take place between local governments, the State Government and the Commonwealth to ensure that there is no further development in noise sensitive areas.

#### FACILITIES REQUIRED

89. The requirement for new facilities stems from a number of factors. First, the introduction of the F/A-18 which will be phased into service from April 1985 to March 1989. Secondly, the condition, capacity for expansion and location of existing flying unit, maintenance and other support facilities and infrastructure. Thirdly, the need to continue operating RAAF aircraft during the F/A-18 phase-in period. Fourthly, the additional personnel required during the transition from Mirage to F/A-18 and after the Mirage has been phased out of service.

90. Maintenance Squadron: Whilst some depot level maintenance of F/A-18 aircraft will be carried out by industry, the re-equipment program requires that F/A-18 related maintenance facilities become available on the Base for 481 Maintenance Squadron from late 1984 to mid-1988. During this period the squadron will continue to be responsible for carrying out depot level maintenance on Mirage aircraft. The existing Mirage technical support facilities could not be made available for the

F/A-18. The main existing squadron facilities are located around the western apex of the triangular building area, and comprise five hangars and a number of smaller buildings.

91. This area cannot be developed for additional facilities required for the F/A-18. As a result the Committee agrees that there is a need for new facilities for depot level maintenance for F/A-18 and for depot level maintenance on Mirage aircraft to continue in existing facilities.

92. After the Mirage is phased out of service it is planned to use the redundant facilities for base support activities, many of which now occupy temporary buildings on the Base.

93. 20CU: 20CU will be the first unit to be re-equipped with F/A-18. The unit is located in facilities along the western and northern sides of the main aircraft apron area, comprising a combined headquarters and aircrew training complex, three Bellman hangars and associated technical workshop and equipment annex.

94. The Committee was advised that the existing headquarters and training complex will be adequate to meet F/A-18 training requirements for 20CU without substantial modification. However, a detailed examination indicated a new hangar and technical services facilities would be a cheaper long term option to the refurbishment of existing hangars.

95. No. 77 Squadron: No. 77 Squadron is equipped with 18 Mirage 111-O and one Mirage 111-D trainer. Squadron facilities include three Bellman hangars, constructed during the Second World War and an assortment of huts, hangar annexes and transportable cabins. DHC advised Defence that taking into account the corrosion in the Bellman hangar frames, their inability to withstand wind loadings prevailing in the area, and fire protection requirements, it would be uneconomic to refurbish

the hangars to desirable levels of operability and safety. Furthermore, the Committee was advised that refurbishment and the incorporation of sound attenuation measures in workshop annexes would be almost as costly as providing new annexes.

96. The squadron will assume responsibility for Mirage conversion aircrew training in December 1984. Delivery of the squadron's first F/A-18 is planned for April 1988.

97. Each fighter unit requires a headquarters, flight line apron, flight line administrative offices, flying clothing room, a hangar, to house four aircraft, and supporting workshops. The existing headquarters and flying clothing room are too small and cannot be economically extended.

98. No. 3 Squadron: The Government has not decided on the long term location of No. 3 Squadron, presently located in Malaysia. It is planned that the squadron will begin taking delivery of F/A-18 aircraft from mid-1987 to mid-1988. Should a decision be made to relocate the squadron in Australia, provision would need to be made for facilities to be ready in time. Defence advised the Committee that whilst the timing of the decision to relocate the squadron is not known, planning is proceeding on the basis that it would be located at Williamstown.

99. No suitable facilities are available for 3 Squadron at Williamstown at present.

100. Central Equipment Store: The Central Equipment Store has a floor area of 4300 square metres. The present floor area and associated offices is fully utilised for the storage, issue and receipt of Mirage and other equipment spares supporting the Base.

101. The introduction of the F/A-18 will increase the store inventory from 40,000 lines at present to about 111,000 lines. Following the phasing out of the Mirage the inventory will be reduced to about 85,000 lines.

102. Dangerous Goods Store: The existing dangerous goods storage area is located adjacent to the Central Equipment Store and the main aircraft apron. Dangerous goods are stored in a small brick building and a galvanised iron shed.

103. The introduction of the F/A-18 will increase the inventory of the dangerous goods store by an extra 100 lines. The Committee was advised that the existing storage facilities are too small to house the number of lines of dangerous goods to approved stock holding levels.

104. Explosives Storage Area: The explosive and weapons preparation area comprises storage, weapons and bomb preparation buildings and is situated on the north-west side of the Base.

105. The Committee was advised that 10 storage buildings must be demolished as, in accordance with current defence standards for explosives storage, they are too close together. To meet safety codes and increased explosive storage requirements, Defence advised the existing explosives storage and weapons preparation area must be extended by about 6.5 hectares to accommodate four new igloo type storage buildings. An extension of a further 51 hectares is planned to ensure that access to the area is controlled by the RAAF.

106. Base Medical Facility: The function of the base medical facility is to provide general health services to RAAF and visiting Defence personnel. The present workload is expected to rise with the planned increase in personnel numbers.

107. The facility is located in a high noise area and comprises wooden huts and corrugated iron clad buildings dating from the Second World War.

108. After examining the facility the Committee agrees that it is inadequate in size and beyond economic upgrading.

109. Security Guard and Police Dog Section: Security is important at military establishments, especially those at which sophisticated and expensive military equipment are located. The Security Guard and Police Dog Section has occupied temporary accommodation near base married quarters since 1963. Apart from the standard of existing accommodation, the location has two undesirable factors. First, the proximity of barking dogs adjacent to married quarters is a continuing nuisance to residents; secondly, the location is an impediment to a more rational realignment of Knox Knight Road which is a major road serving flying squadrons.

110. Parachute Training School: Parachute training at RAAF Williamtown began in September 1951 when a Parachute Training Wing was formed as part of the School of Land Air Warfare. The training wing was staffed by Army and RAAF personnel. The present Parachute Training School was formed in 1974 when the Army assumed full responsibility for all paratrooping and training.

111. The school has a staff of 69 personnel and consists of three wings - development wing, support wing, training wing. The role of the school is to train Defence personnel to parachute and to develop parachute doctrine and equipment. The school conducts numerous courses ranging from a basic parachute course to courses in various specialised fields.

112. The buildings occupied by the School were described to the Committee as substandard, a maintenance liability and totally unsuited to the needs of a parachute training establishment. For example, the headquarters and development wing is housed in Second World War huts and the support wing is housed in equally substandard buildings. The training wing is housed in a Bellman hangar.

113. A number of training towers and aircraft mock-ups are situated on an open grassed area adjacent to the school buildings. The Committee was advised that since 1974 the number of courses and the student throughput have increased to the point where overcrowding occurs.

114. In addition to the apparent lack of adequate training facilities, the location of the school, adjacent to the main apron area, is an impediment to this area being developed as the sites of facilities more functionally related to the apron, such as facilities required to support flying squadrons. The location of the school at its present site appears to be based on the existence of a number of buildings there when it was established rather than any functional requirements.

#### ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

115. Defence advised that requirements for married and single accommodation were assessed against the planned mature manning situation for 1989 and the standard and amount of accommodation available at present. Originally it was intended to include accommodation requirements for the Parachute Training School in the overall assessment of mature manning accommodation requirements. As explained at paragraphs 259-263 it is proposed to relocate the school away from Williamtown, thereby making additional accommodation available for the RAAF.

116. Other Ranks Accommodation: Sleeping accommodation available at present consists of 204 old style 4-man dormitories of about 33 square metres in 9 buildings and 75 single rooms of about 8 square metres.

117. The following predicted manning and living-in levels, which exclude the Parachute Training School but include 3 Squadron requirements, have been calculated by Defence:

Other Ranks Accommodation Requirements

	Predicted Manning	Predicted Living-in Requirement
Staff	1593	446 )
Under training (U/T)	16	16 )
Duty and transients	50	50

118. The four man dormitory rooms are usually occupied by two personnel. The occupancy rate for transient personnel varies and at peak periods the rooms are occupied to full capacity. This arrangement does not accord with current Services Scales and Standards of Accommodation (SSSA), and the situation will be exacerbated with the influx of additional personnel.

119. In order to assess the availability of accommodation for ORs at the mature population levels, the following standards were assessed as suitable:

- Staff and personnel under training (total 462) to be provided with accommodation "equating" to SSSA;
- Duty and transient personnel (total 50) to be housed in old style accommodation.

120. Rearrangement envisaged as a result of implementing this standard would be:

- 50 Duty and transient personnel to be accommodated in old style single rooms; with a further 25 small rooms available for peak transient demands;.

- 204 four man rooms in 9 buildings can be converted to provide 408 single rooms; and
- the shortfall of 54 rooms being provided in new accommodation.

121. Senior NCO Accommodation: Accommodation at present available comprises 125 old style single rooms in 5 buildings. Manning and living-in predictions are as follows:

Senior NCO Accommodation Requirements

	Predicted Manning	Predicted Living-in Requirement
Staff	428	43
Duty and transients		15

122. Defence plan to provide accommodation for staff (43) at current SSSA, and to house duty and transient personnel (15) in old style accommodation. The floor area of the 92 single rooms could be increased by interconnecting two adjoining rooms for one person. The number of rooms thereby created would be 46. Duty and transient personnel would remain accommodated in old style single rooms.

123. Single Officer Accommodation: Single officer accommodation, located in the eastern corner of the building area comprises:

- 3 buildings of 84 rooms to current SSSA;
- 2 buildings of 48 rooms not to SSSA;
- Total 132 rooms.

124. Manning and living-in predictions are as follows:

Officer Accommodation Requirements

	Predicted Manning	Predicted Living-in Requirement
Staff -		
Senior Officers	58	6
Junior Officers	171	49
Under training	55	55
Duty and transients	20	20
		130 Total

125. Defence plan to refurbish the two buildings of 48 rooms to approximate SSSA.

126. Housing Requirements: There are about 850 personnel who are occupying or are about to occupy married quarters (MQs). There are about 57 personnel on the waiting list for MQs. The existing gross requirement is therefore 907 which, after applying a buffer of 5 per cent (45 MQs) gives a total net requirement of 862 MQs.

127. The total stock of MQs currently held for RAAF Williamtown is 855 and as a result there is a current shortfall of seven MQs.

128. The Committee was advised that the mature manning levels will result in a requirement for 201 additional MQs, which includes provision for No. 3 Squadron, plus seven MQs to rectify the shortfall. With No. 3 Squadron, the requirement would be 73 houses.

- predicted increase in manning - 371 personnel  
(includes No. 3 Squadron)
  - 60 per cent married, 95 per cent of which  
require married quarters 212
  - less 5 per cent buffer 11
- TOTAL 201

129. Based on these assumptions Defence calculated the following requirements:

<u>Total</u>	<u>Without 3 Sqn</u> <u>Requirement</u>	<u>3 Sqn</u> <u>Requirement</u>
208	73	135

OTHER DEFICIENCIES

130. The Committee was informed that the RAAF has for many years recognised the need to replace unsatisfactory facilities. Rectification was deferred pending a decision on the Mirage replacement. The planned introduction of the F/A-18 has served as a trigger for replacing facilities whose deficiencies have been recognised as warranting rectification for a number of years.

131. Existing physical fitness, sporting and recreation facilities comprise a squash court, swimming pool, playing fields and other outdoor sport facilities. They are considered by Defence to be inadequate; for example the Base does not have a gymnasium, a converted airmen's laundry is used as a makeshift weight and exercise area.

132. The Sergeants Mess has inadequate change rooms and ablution facilities for male and female staff attached to the mess.

133. The need to upgrade some existing engineering services has been recognised for some time. Examples of deficiencies are the drainage system, the sewage treatment system and the power supply.

134. Committee's Conclusion: Existing facilities for operational squadrons, maintenance and support functions, at RAAF Base Williamtown will be inadequate to cater for the continued operations of Mirage and the introduction of F/A-18 aircraft. Deficiencies in existing accommodation should be rectified and where necessary new accommodation should be provided.

#### THE PROPOSAL

135. Master Plan: Defence has recognised the need to rationalise the functional layout of the buildings area to ensure that the effects of incompatible functions do not severely impact on each other. Defence has also recognised that a number of impediments to the rational development of the building area will need to be removed or rectified.

136. The master plan, and illustrations showing the extent and location of on-base work proposed, is detailed in Plans 1 and 2.

FIGHTER UNIT FACILITIES

137. Facilities for 3 Squadron, 77 Squadron and 20CU are proposed to be located in discrete areas along the eastern and north-western sides of the main aircraft apron. A number of Bellman hangars, which cannot be satisfactorily or economically adapted for use by squadrons equipped with F/A-18 aircraft, will need to be demolished.
138. Squadron Headquarters Buildings: It is proposed that a new headquarters building for 77 Squadron, and provision of a similar facility for 3 Squadron be located in the respective fighter unit areas shown on the master plan.
139. Each building will comprise administration offices, aircrew briefing and standby rooms, flying instructors' rooms as well as operations, technical publications and amenities areas.
140. The 77 Squadron headquarters building will be slightly larger than the building proposed for 3 Squadron to accommodate Mirage conversion training and activities associated with the photo-reconnaissance role when the Squadron is subsequently re-equipped with F/A-18 aircraft.
141. Both buildings will be concrete block load bearing structures with concrete floors and insulated metal roofs.
142. The buildings will be air conditioned and sound attenuated.
143. 20CU headquarters will remain accommodated in a permanent building, located at the northern end of the aircraft apron.
144. Hangars and Technical Facilities: Two new maintenance complexes for 77 Squadron and 20CU will replace two Bellman hangars used by each unit which are in poor condition. Provision will be made for a similar facility for 3 Squadron.

145. Each complex will comprise:

- a 2000 square metre "drive through" aircraft hangar, capable of accommodating up to six F/A-18 aircraft, with a door height of 6 metres;
- two separate workshop annexes attached to each hangar which will support hangar floor maintenance functions and house flight line offices, maintenance workshops, an aircrew debriefing area and provide parking for ground support equipment; and
- a separate technical support complex which will accommodate an armament maintenance section, briefing and training facilities, equipment maintenance workshop and staff amenities.

146. A flammable goods store building, to be located nearby, will also be part of each hangar and technical facilities complex.

147. Building 173, which is now used by the Armament Section of 481 Maintenance Squadron, will be refurbished and provide an armament maintenance area for 3 Squadron.

148. The hangars will be steel framed structures with prefinished metal wall cladding, an insulated metal roof and a concrete floor. The hangar annexes will be of load bearing concrete block masonry walls and insulated metal roofing.

149. Standard and special electrical power supplies, and compressed air will be provided.

150. Fire protection measures for the hangars will include automatic fire detection and alarm systems, closed circuit television surveillance, smoke curtains, automatic roof vents and a fire foam suppression system with rising foam nozzles set in the hangar floor.

151. Automatic wet pipe fire sprinklers will be provided in the hangar annexes.

152. F/A-18 Flight Simulator Building: An F/A-18 flight simulator will be acquired as part of the re-equipment program. A new building to house the simulator will be located adjacent to 20CU headquarters. The new building will comprise a simulator room, computer and instructor console rooms, hydraulic/pneumatic room, aircrew briefing and debriefing room, classroom and amenities.

153. A dome visual simulator area will be incorporated in the simulator room to permit the installation of an air combat manoeuvring visual system at a later date.

154. The building will be a brick masonry structure with concrete floors and insulated metal roof. Air conditioning, vacuum exhaust systems and standard and special power supplies will be provided.

155. Committee's Conclusion: Fighter unit facilities proposed for construction appear to be adequate and should be a considerable improvement on existing facilities. Construction of facilities for No. 3 Squadron at Williamtown should not commence until the Government has made a decision on the relocation of the squadron from Butterworth.

481 MAINTENANCE SQUADRON TECHNICAL SUPPORT FACILITIES

156. A new hangar complex will be constructed north west of the existing aircraft apron area. Factors which prompted its location were the availability of sufficient building space, its proximity to the main apron area and other functionally related activities such as the engine run-up facility.

157. The hangar will have a door height of six metres and a floor area of about 3000 square metres; this will enable the simultaneous accommodation of four F/A-18, one Winjeel, one Macchi and one Iroquois aircraft.

158. The hangar will have a steel frame structure clad with prefinished metal sheeting, a metal roof and a concrete floor.

159. Fire protection systems will be provided.

160. The hangar will be connected to adjacent workshops and technical support facilities by covered ways. The workshop annex will accommodate activities in direct support of the hangar floor; the technical support facility will house specialist workshops for the maintenance, overhaul and repair of aircraft components. Both annexes will have a structural steel frame, concrete block masonry walls and metal decking roofs.

161. Mechanical and electrical services to be provided in the hangar and annexes include special power supplies, compressed air, lifting equipment, air conditioning for operational requirements and heating and ventilation. Items of special equipment requiring mechanical and electrical services include laminar flow benches, hydraulic test rigs and cleaning berths.

162. The existing aircraft taxiway will be extended to provide access to the hangar complex. A new concrete apron, for aircraft movements, will also be provided.

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163. A number of buildings to house equipment and services in support of the hangar complex will be provided. These include a ground support equipment shelter, flammable liquids store and a fire pumphouse.

164. Headquarters Building: This single storey building, to be located adjacent to the maintenance hangar complex, will contain a maintenance control section and a number of offices. It will be a steel framed structure with concrete block masonry walls, insulated metal roof, and will be provided with appropriate sound attenuation and air conditioning.

165. Avionics Workshop: This building will be located adjacent to the headquarters building and will house equipment and personnel responsible for the repair and calibration of avionics systems and their components. Specific working areas to be provided include:

- ex
- four automatic test equipment stations;
  - an open plan workshop;
  - electronic warfare and electrical systems workshops; and
  - component cleaning and modular repair rooms.

166. The building will be air conditioned and special mechanical and electrical services to be provided include lamina flow benches, compressed air, ventilation, exhaust systems and special power supply.

167. Integrated Avionics System Support Facility: This facility will provide computer software support and engineering investigations of aircraft and ground support systems and will be located adjacent to the F/A-18 flight simulator building. The building will accommodate the following elements and functions:

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- software support and test sections;
- radar and electronics warfare support sections;
- stores management;
- radar equipment;
- offices and amenities.

168. The building will be of two storey brick masonry construction, with concrete floors and an insulated metal roof. Air conditioning, a laminar flow bench, compressed air and specialised electrical power will be provided.

169. The need for a two storey building arises from the radar support area requiring a radar transparent window with an unobstructed view of the western airfield.

170. Corrosion Control Facility: The proposed building will comprise a hangar, 29 metres long, 35 metres wide and 7 metres high. These dimensions will permit central nose-first parking for one aircraft. Technical support workshops and stores areas will be attached to the building.

171. The Committee was advised that the experience of overseas commercial and military operators had been incorporated in the design.

172. Impact on the environment of toxic airborne and liquid wastes and other compounds will be reduced by the installation of a conventional air filtration system and a system of floor ducts to remove liquid and solid wastes. Liquid waste will be stored in a holding tank before discharge into a trade waste treatment plant.

173. Engine Maintenance Section: The double Bellman hangar, located on the northern side of the existing aircraft apron area, will be structurally upgraded and reclad. It will be used for aircraft engine and drop tank storage.

174. The aircraft engine maintenance section will occupy a new building to be constructed adjacent to the hangar. The building will comprise an open plan engine workshop and inspection, analysis, maintenance and cleaning areas. The building structure will be a steel frame clad with prefinished metal sheeting. A gantry crane for handling aircraft engines will also be provided.

f. 175. General Engineering Section (GES) and Ground Equipment Maintenance Flight (GEMF) Complex: The proposed complex will be a T-shaped structure to be located adjacent to the engine maintenance section. Both GES and GEMF activities will be co-located to permit the sharing of administration areas and amenities. The two units will be provided with accommodation in individual wings.

176. The GES wing will comprise a maintenance shop, fitters, carpenters and welding workshops.

177. The GEMF wing will house an airfield equipment area, workshops and tool and special equipment stores.

178. The building will have a steel framed structure, concrete block masonry and prefinished metal walls and a metal roof.

179. Battery Maintenance Facility: This facility is responsible for maintaining and charging lead acid and nickel cadmium batteries which at present is carried out near the Central Equipment Store.

180. The proposed building will have a floor area of about 200 square metres and will be a steel framed structure with concrete block masonry walls and an insulated roof. It will be located adjacent to the drop tank and engine storage hangar.

181. Gases from acid battery charging will be extracted by an exhaust ventilation system.

182. Aircraft Wash Facility: A new aircraft wash facility will be located on the aircraft apron side of the drop tank and engine storage hangar. The facility will be part of a new concrete apron with falls and drainage to collect pollutants and water from aircraft washings. Washing equipment and detergents will be stored in a small concrete blockwork building.

183. Polluted water will be collected by a drainage system and discharged to the trade waste reticulation system and treated by the trade waste treatment plant.

184. Banner Preparation Building: Banners for air-to-air gunnery practice are presently stored and maintained in a temporary structure adjacent to the control tower.

185. A new banner preparation building will be constructed near the existing Base radio station adjacent to and mid-way along the southern side of the runway. The building will be used for the storage and maintenance of high and low speed aircraft target banners and will have a structural steel frame, brick walls and an insulated metal roof.

186. Stop Butt: This facility, which is required for the alignment of gun sites, is located about 300 metres north-west of the proposed 481 Squadron maintenance hangar and workshop complex. The existing reinforced concrete structure will be extended, the internal lining will be rebuilt and filled with sand.

187. Engine Run-up Facility: A new engine run-up facility will be located on a site of 5 hectares, to be acquired from the Hunter District Water Board, about 400 metres north of the existing facility. It will comprise a concrete access pavement and three run-up bays for the testing of engines. Two bays will be designed to test engines installed in aircraft and one bay will be designed for testing trolley mounted Mirage and F/A-18 engines.

188. The aircraft bays will be provided with a metal shelter; the engine test bays will be sheltered by a steel framed metal clad building.

189. Concrete walls around the facility and between the bays are aimed at reducing the effects of cross wind on engines being tested and to reduce the noise levels on surrounding areas. The rear of the facility will be provided with a blast deflector.

190. The Draft Environmental Report provides details of the magnitude of noise to be expected from engines being tested. A map of the area shows that a large portion of Richardson Road, to the north-west of the facility, will be within the 60dB(A) contour, and will extend as far as the south east corner of Medowie. The area within the 60dB(A) contour appears to be largely undeveloped.

191. Port Stephens Shire Council has indicated a willingness to consider the 60dB(A) contour as the limit for residential developments and subdivisions when exact details of the perimeter of the contour are known. Again, it should be emphasised that the noise projections are qualified; the contours over-estimate noise levels to be expected most of the time being based on worst atmosphere conditions.

192. Defence advised that the site selected for the facility took cognizance of land, proximity to maintenance activities and noise intrusion into the surrounding community and on to the Base.

193. The cost of achieving significant noise reduction by the provision of a "hush house" would be \$5-8m as compared to \$1.5-2m for the work described above.

194. In the circumstances the Committee believes the proposal is adequate. It would be prudent to monitor actual noise levels once the facility is operational to validate the forecasts and to enable the Council to adjust its land use zoning.

195. Committee's Conclusion: The proposed maintenance squadron technical support facilities whilst extensive, are justified.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE AND DOMESTIC FACILITIES

196. Central Equipment Store Extensions: It is proposed to increase the floor area of the Central Equipment Store by 3916 square metres. This increase will provide additional space for receipt and despatch sections, bulk bin storage, forward supply section, storage areas for repairable and quarantine items, metal and rubber stores, computer terminal, offices and staff amenities.

197. The extensions will be in materials similar to the existing building, with a structural steel frame, concrete floors and metal roofing.

198. The building will remain occupied throughout the construction period and temporary walls and isolation arrangements will need to be provided.

199. Dangerous Goods Store: A new dangerous goods store will be constructed in the existing Mirage engine run-up facility located in the north west sector of the main building area. Existing fixed features such as revetments, pavements and services will be used.

200. The complex will include a new amenities building which will include an area for the storage of non-flammables, a separate bunded area for drum storage, a gas cylinder store and a flammable goods store. The latter will occupy the existing run-up "igloo" structures.

201. An environmental store and compound for the storage and handling of pesticides will be located outside the revetment area.

202. The new amenities building and environmental health store will be of concrete block masonry walls and insulated metal roofing.

203. The gas cylinder store will be of reinforced concrete divided walls and will have a metal roof.

204. Base Medical Facility: A new facility, located adjacent to the existing dental building, is proposed.

205. The single storey structure will be T-shaped, containing three wings. The central wing will contain three consulting rooms with adjoining examination rooms, physiotherapy and plaster rooms, waiting and orderly rooms. The eastern wing, for in-patients, will contain two 4-bed wards, two 2-bed wards and two single bed wards, duty staff rooms and a food preparation area. The western treatment wing will comprise a pathology laboratory, X-ray room, treatment, recovery and fitness testing rooms.

206. A plant room will be attached to the western end of the treatment wing. Provision will be made for three ambulance parking bays outside the treatment wing.

207. The building will be fully air conditioned and will have load bearing masonry walls supporting a pitched metal roof.

208. Physical Fitness Centre: This building is proposed to be located adjacent to the existing squash court building, near the sports ovals at the south-eastern end of the main runway. The new building will comprise the following elements:

- gymnasium hall and store;
- four squash courts and individual activities areas;
- spectator areas;
- welfare store; and
- administration offices and lecture room.

209. The building will have a steel frame structure, brick walls to match adjacent buildings and an insulated metal roof. It will be provided with a gymnasium sports floor and appropriate electrical and mechanical engineering services.

210. Extensions to Sergeants' Mess: Extensions to accommodate mess staff change rooms will be provided to the Sergeant's Mess. The extensions will be built in character with the existing building.

211. Security Guard and Police Dog Complex: A new complex will be located in the south-west corner of the base property. Defence consider this site to be as remote as possible from high aircraft noise and where barking dogs will not disturb the occupants of domestic facilities.

212. The complex will consist of an administration building, food preparation, veterinary and storage facilities for police dogs and kennel, training and isolation compounds.

213. The administration building will be constructed of load bearing concrete block masonry walls with an insulated metal roof and concrete floor. Ventilation will be generally mechanical.

214. Ordnance Facilities: The existing explosives and weapons preparation area at the north-western corner of the base property will be extended in a westerly direction on 58 hectares to be acquired from the Hunter District Water Board. A new bomb preparation building and four "igloo" style buildings will be required on the new site.

215. The igloo style buildings will be of earth covered reinforced concrete; the bomb preparation building will be of steel construction surrounded by an earth bank revetment.

216. Committee's Conclusion: The scope and location of proposed administrative, domestic and ordnance facilities are justified and functionally adequate.

#### ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION

217. Other Ranks Sleeping Accommodation: Mature manning levels for 1989 indicate that 512 Other Ranks will require single accommodation. This total makes provision for personnel from 3 Squadron.

218. It is proposed to divide 204 four man rooms in nine existing buildings into two rooms, thereby creating 408 single occupant rooms for use by staff and personnel under training. The floor area of 13.5 square metres will exceed relevant SSSA guidelines. The larger floor area is considered by Defence to compensate for the absence of common rooms. New floor coverings, built in furniture and fittings, painting and modification and upgrading of fire escape, fire detection and protection systems, electrical and mechanical services are also proposed as part of the refurbishment.

219. The refurbishment of existing accommodation blocks, which will create 408 single rooms for staff and personnel under training, will nevertheless result in a shortfall of 54 rooms in the overall requirement of 462 rooms. The Committee was advised that new style accommodation is built in blocks of eight rooms although 16 room blocks are preferred. Therefore, within the accuracy of predicted accommodation requirements, it is proposed to construct accommodation for 48 personnel in three blocks each of 16 rooms. The new accommodation would only be provided when and if 3 Squadron is relocated to Williamstown.

220. The design of the new accommodation blocks will accord with SSSA and Services Sleeping Accommodation Design to cost targets. They will be of two storey load-bearing brick construction and materials will generally match those of existing accommodation.

221. Duty and transient personnel, numbering about 50, will be housed in old style single rooms of which there are 75. The 25 room surplus would be available for peak transient demands.

222. Senior NCO Sleeping Accommodation: Four existing SNCO sleeping accommodation blocks will be upgraded to approximate SSSA.

223. Three blocks, will have two small rooms converted to a single room by removing a wardrobe and cutting a new doorway between the two rooms. A handbasin, desk, cupboard and carpet will also be provided.

224. The fourth block will be refurbished in its current configuration and will be used by transient personnel. New carpet, handbasin, desk and cupboard will be provided in each room.

225. Officers' Sleeping Accommodation: Officer accommodation in two barrack blocks will be upgraded to bring them to about the same standard as other officer accommodation blocks on the Base. These are nevertheless below that provided for under SSSA. Defence advised that the prime deficiency is the lack of a shared shower and toilet between two officers. The proposed refurbishment will, however, avoid major structural changes to the buildings, and will comprise the provision of built-in furniture and fittings, new floor coverings and a new hand basin to each unit.

226. Committee's Conclusion: The Committee notes that considerable use will be made of upgraded accommodation blocks for single personnel. Construction of new accommodation for Other Ranks should commence after a decision on the relocation of 3 Squadron has been made.

#### HOUSING

227. The general guidelines to Defence from the Government for the provision of housing is that it should be obtained by the most economical means. Avenues open for the provision of housing are:

- through the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA);
- direct purchase/acquisition through the Department of Administrative Services;
- through the Department of Housing and Construction.

228. The project provides for the construction of 208 additional married quarters in the following scale groupings:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Bedrooms</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>3 Sqn</u>	<u>Total</u>
1B	3	13	109	122
1B	4	2	12	14
2	3	39	10	49
2	4	5	1	6
3	3	12	3	15
3	4	2	0	2
<b>Totals</b>		<b>73</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>208</b>

229. The Committee is concerned about the condition of CSHA houses and the morale of the occupants of such houses. There is clearly an abundance of CSHA housing stock available, much of which is now below current SSSA. The Committee was advised of widespread dissatisfaction amongst tenants of CSHA houses. A factor cited as causing this dissatisfaction was the level of and standard of maintenance carried out by contractors.

230. The Committee agrees with the principle that housing for Defence personnel should be obtained by the most economic means available. The nett effect of relying to a large extent on CSHA housing has led to dissatisfaction and complaints. Accordingly, the Committee believes the houses should not be provided through the CSHA, unless there is a significant and lasting improvement in the level of maintenance to CSHA houses occupied by RAAF personnel.

231. Consistent with observations made by previous Committees this Committee also believes favourable consideration should be given to the inclusion of solar hot water heaters.

#### ENGINEERING WORKS AND SERVICES

232. Additional Aircraft Pavements: The pavement shoulders on the grass islands adjacent to the air movements apron are to be widened.

233. New Roads and Carparks: Access and exit points to the base off Medowie Road are the northern and southern entrances. DHC stated that an increase in traffic movements to and from the base will require improvements to both entrances. The proposal therefore is to widen pavements and to provide semi-channelised intersections. The Committee was advised that the proposed modifications to the entry and exit points will be in accordance with the requirements of the NSW Department of Main Roads.

234. On-base new road proposals include a distributor road serving 481 Maintenance Squadron technical support facilities and the re-alignment and diversion of Knox-Knight Road to provide a safer, general access route within the base.

235. Additional car parking for 1190 private vehicles will be provided within the domestic area inclusive of relocating existing carpark facilities in accordance with Defence policy to restrict the use of private vehicles within the defined security area. Re-sheeting and extension of an existing carpark in the domestic area is also proposed.

236. Trade Waste/Pollution Control System: Solid industrial waste will continue to be collected and drummed for disposal off base.

237. Liquid industrial wastes from aircraft movement areas, hangars and workshops will be collected by a system of trade waste sewers and reticulated to a central trade waste treatment plant for primary treatment to a standard acceptable to the base sewerage system.

238. The corrosion control facility will be provided with a separate treatment plant.

239. Remote areas, such as the engine run-up facility, will be provided with small secondary trade waste collection and treatment systems.

240. The Committee was advised that the systems described above will be designed to meet the standards set by the State Pollution Control Commission.

241. Sewerage System: A number of existing sewers which have become unserviceable due to their age and the relatively high water table will be replaced. The existing reticulation will be augmented by a system of gravity and pumped sewers. The main sewage pumping facility will be upgraded and minor sewage pumping also be provided.

242. A number of elements of the existing base sewerage treatment plant will become overloaded as a result of the increased base population and the proposed means of collecting and treating industrial waste. In order to provide a quality of effluent that will be acceptable to local authorities it is proposed to partially replace and upgrade the existing treatment plant.

243. Stormwater System: Stormwater from all paved surfaces and new buildings will be collected by a piped reticulation system and discharged via existing unlined drains into surrounding creeks. Use of existing open drains on the Base will continue. They will be re-aligned and widened as necessary. The Hunter District Water Board indicated they are not averse to the proposal provided proper steps designed to protect the Tomago Sandbeds are taken.

244. A representative of residents living around the base advised that problems had been experienced with runoff from the Base causing flooding of nearby farming areas and Williamstown village. The main cause for concern is the drain directing runoff water from the area of the base to Tilligerry Creek. It was submitted that the drain requires clearing and an embankment should be constructed on its southern side to prevent runoff water encroaching on farming areas and Williamstown.

245. The Committee believes DHC should investigate this particular problem and measures to minimise the overflow of the drain into Tilligerry Creek should be implemented.

246. The Committee notes that whilst the Department of Housing and Construction proposes to re-align and widen drains as necessary on the Base, no mention is made of the wider drainage system. The Commonwealth should contribute to the maintenance of any drains carrying runoff from Commonwealth property, especially in this case where the area is low lying and there is potential for runoff water directed to Tilligerry Creek causing local flooding.

247. It was pointed out to the Committee that no additional stormwater drainage will be directed to the existing stormwater retention lagoon.

248. Sand will be removed from existing stormwater drains to facilitate the operation of the system during dry weather.

249. Water Supply System: The Base water supply is fed by a Hunter District Water Board main and consists of a piped reticulation system connected to two ground level and one raised storage tanks. Minor upgrading of the storage and pressure boost pumping system will be undertaken to ensure adequate operating pressures and reliability.

250. The reticulation pipework will be extended to all new facilities to provide water for fire fighting and domestic purposes. Additional fire hydrants will be provided.

251. Water for foam fire sprinkler systems will be provided from water storage tanks and fire pumps to be located adjacent to 481 Maintenance Squadron hangar and in the vicinity of 77 and 3 Squadron facilities.

252. Electrical Power Supply System: The main feeder supply is considered by DHC to be inadequate to meet the expected increase in maximum demand and a new feeder supply for the Base will be installed. The existing 11kV distribution system within the Base will be extended and upgraded.

253. Power supplies will be provided from new and existing substations connected to ring mains.

254. Emergency power for existing and new facilities will be provided by extending the capacity of the existing central emergency power house.

255. Fire Detection and Monitoring in Hangars: Fire detection systems in hangars will comprise infra-red flame detectors, and smoke detectors activating foam suppression systems.

256. Electrical detection and closed circuit television systems will be monitored in a new centralised control centre to be established in the existing airfield control tower building.

257. Fire Protection: Wet pipe automatic sprinkler systems will be provided for each technical facility. Fire hose reels and hand extinguishers will be provided in all buildings. Automatic gas flooding fire suppression systems will be provided in specific electronic equipment areas.

258. Committee's Conclusion: The engineering works and services proposed are necessary. The Committee notes that the Commonwealth has taken notice of pollution problems and is providing extensive engineering services and facilities to reduce air or water pollution to acceptable levels.

RELOCATION OF PARACHUTE TRAINING SCHOOL

259. It was originally proposed that the school be relocated in new facilities at RAAF Williamtown. At the public hearing Defence witnesses advised that the possibility of locating the school at HMAS Albatross, near Nowra, NSW, was under consideration by the Minister for Defence.

260. In September 1983 the Committee was advised that the Minister for Defence had decided that the school should be relocated to Nowra. The relocation would be in line with the Government's stated intention to maintain the service population and level of activity in the area to offset the reduction associated with the phasing out of Navy fixed wing aircraft.

261. The Committee was advised that the general scope of the proposal at Nowra would be the same as that proposed for RAAF Williamtown. Defence and DHC are conducting a detailed review of requirements associated with the new site location. Accommodation requirements at Williamtown have been changed and these changes are reflected in this report.

262. The Committee sees no reason to delay the redevelopment of RAAF Williamtown whilst awaiting details of the Nowra proposal.

263. Committee's Conclusion: The Committee will table a supplementary report on the proposed relocation of the Parachute Training School from RAAF Williamtown to HMAS Albatross, Nowra, after more details are made available by departments.

ON-BASE NOISE

264. According to the Draft Environmental Report noise exposure over much of the Base will increase with the introduction of the F/A-18. For example, 75 per cent of single accommodation will fall within the 30-35 ANEF zone as against 25 per cent at present; and 58 married quarters will fall within this critical zone as against none at present.

265. It may be expected that RAAF personnel and their dependants are more tolerant of aircraft noise than the civilian population. No evidence was presented to demonstrate that this is so. The Committee notes that the refurbishment of existing single accommodation will not include noise attenuation measures; nor will it be included in the new accommodation to be provided.

266. Defence has recognised that an on-base noise problem exists and noise attenuation measures will be provided in a number of new buildings, including the Base medical facility.

267. On the question of the large increase in the number of houses in the critical ANEF zone the Committee believes that personnel and their dependents should be given a choice of copying these houses. The same warnings about high aircraft noise as were given to the Council should be given to prospective occupants. This suggestion is made despite evidence given by a representative of wives at RAAF Williamstown who based her observations about the acceptability of noise on the present situation. The forecasts clearly show there will be an increase in noise.

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268. The Committee also sought details of hearing conservation measures in the RAAF, and was advised that there is an ongoing personnel health program which includes the monitoring of hearing loss of all personnel. The program is detailed in a Defence Instruction. Monitoring of hearing loss of personnel is undertaken at various regular intervals according to the level of sound pressure level at the work place. For example, personnel working in areas where sound pressure levels exceed 115dB(A) at any one time have their hearing checked every six months.

269. The Committee also believes that the monitoring of hearing loss of dependents of RAAF personnel and Department of Housing and Construction employees working on the Base should also be regularly carried out.

270. Hearing protection areas are zoned, identified by signs and hearing conservation equipment to be worn in the zone. The Committee is aware that matters of industrial safety and health are for good reasons receiving increasing attention and believes there is scope within the Defence Instruction for more rigorous enforcement of the wearing of hearing conservation equipment.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

271. Sub-section 4.2 of the Administrative Procedures made pursuant to the Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974, requires that:

"The proponent (in this case Defence) shall consult with the Department (of Home Affairs and Environment) with a view to agreeing upon the matters to be dealt with, and the extent to which those matters shall be dealt with, by an environmental impact statement."

272. The Committee is concerned that in the case of obtaining the necessary environmental clearances required by the Act the procedures required under sub-section 4.2 were not strictly complied with. The Draft Environmental Report was not prepared in accordance with the Administrative Procedures as they relate to the Department of Home Affairs and Environment.

273. Where proposals warrant public discussion on environmental issues, such discussions should be conducted within the framework of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared in accordance with the Administrative Procedures. Failure to do so could risk delaying the Committee's investigation. The Committee requires to be re-assured in this regard by the Minister for Defence.

#### IMPACT ON LOCAL COMMUNITY

274. The social impact of the redevelopment of RAAF Williamtown was extensively covered in the Draft Environmental Report and the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

275. The Committee sees further detailed planning and agreement on responsibilities between the State, Council and the Commonwealth to minimise any deleterious impacts on the social fabric of the areas as an integral part of the redevelopment. The Committee agrees with the recommendations made in the Department of Home Affairs and Environment Report on the Draft Environmental Report and the Final Environmental Impact Statement in this regard. The Report recommended that permanent arrangements be established for consultation involving the Commonwealth, State departments and instrumentalities, local government and other bodies as appropriate to facilitate planning and co-ordination for the proposal in the region, particularly as regards aircraft noise levels, housing and land demands, the adequacy of community facilities, employment and personnel levels, school requirements and pollution matters.

276. Since the public hearing it has been suggested to the Committee by the State Government that provision be made for financial assistance to local government and the State Government as part of the State's infrastructure financing policy. The State Government has referred this policy to the Committee for consideration. The subject of financial assistance for infrastructure development is a sensitive matter impinging directly on Commonwealth-State financial relations. Commonwealth policy in regard to matters, and requests, of this nature should be consistent.

277. The Committee would point out, however, that from an employment point of view, the redevelopment will undoubtedly be a stimulus to the local economy. By 1985 the construction workforce employed on the redevelopment is estimated to reach 500; there will be substantial increases in direct and indirect employment.

#### SOCIAL WORKER

278. A number of organisations supported the employment of a social worker to cater for the families of Defence personnel associated with the Base. Port Stephens Shire Council submitted that a high proportion of the workload of the Shire baby health clinic involves RAAF families and about 75 per cent of the psychologists case work time is spent with RAAF personnel and their families. Notwithstanding the Committee's comments on the need for further and continuous consultations between Defence and Port Stephens Council throughout the development and implementation of this proposal, the Committee believes that Defence should negotiate some form of cost sharing arrangements with the Council for the use made of Council health care facilities and staff by RAAF personnel and their dependents. Defence should also examine the establishment of a child care centre which, as put to the Committee at the public hearing by the representative of the RAAF wives, would be of great benefit.

CONSULTATIONS

279. The organisations - Federal, State and local government and private citizens groups consulted in the development of the project are included in evidence presented by the Department of Defence and need not be repeated here. It is sufficient to point out that even though the Committee is critical of non-compliance with certain statutory requirements under the Environmental Assessment (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974 they can only be regarded as preliminary consultations which need to be sustained during the detailed development of the project and beyond.

PROGRAM

280. The Government gave approval to concurrent detailed design and documentation of urgent works to a limit of \$45m. Detail design is proceeding and will permit early commencement for both the time critical works and remaining urgent works as soon as approvals and funds are available.

COST

281. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was \$90.74m at April 1983 prices. The estimated cost of the time critical work, which the House agreed should be exempted from Committee scrutiny on the grounds of urgency, was \$15.0m at April 1983 prices. The total cost was therefore \$105.74m.

282. The Committee was advised at the public hearing that the Limit of Cost Estimate had increased from \$105.74m to \$106.98m at April 1983 prices. The increase resulted from additional information being obtained on technical requirements for maintenance of the aircraft. These have required modifications to detailed aspects of the designs of urgent facilities, particularly the Engine Maintenance Section and Avionics Workshop.

283. Component cost details of the revised limit of cost estimate are as follows:

	<u>Time Critical</u>	<u>Total</u>
	\$m	\$m
481 Maintenance Squadron	6.69	29.83
Fighter Unit Facilities		17.96
Administration and Base		
Facilities	2.79	8.71
On-base sleeping		
accommodation		5.67
Off-base married quarters		12.73
F/A-18 Flight Simulator		
Building	1.80	1.80
Engineering Works and		
Services	3.72	19.98
Land for off-base		
married quarters		5.04
Army Parachute Training		
School		<u>5.26</u>
	<u>15.00</u>	<u>106.98</u>

284. The proposed relocation of the Parachute Training School from RAAF Williamtown to Nowra has caused a number of further cost reductions in the estimated cost..

285. The Committee was advised after the public hearing that the cost of providing off-base married quarters has been reduced by \$1.670m, from \$12.73m to \$11.060m. Likewise, the cost of land acquisition for the married quarters has also been reduced, by \$0.670m, from \$5.04m to \$4.370m. Cost details for the married quarters are given below:

	<u>Construction</u>	<u>Land</u>
	\$m	\$m
73 houses	4.020	1.530
135 houses for 3 Squadron	<u>7.040</u>	<u>2.840</u>
TOTALS	<u><u>11.060</u></u>	<u><u>4.370</u></u>

286. The deletion of Parachute Training School component from this reference also reduces the limit of cost estimate for on-base single accommodation by \$1.025m from \$5.67m to \$4.645m.

287. In summary, the following estimated cost has been calculated:

	\$m
Revised estimated cost	106.98
Less difference in housing construction costs	1.670
Less difference in housing land costs	0.670
Less difference in single accommodation costs	1.025
Less Parachute Training School	<u>5.260</u>
TOTALS	<u><u>98.355</u></u>

288. Facilities required for 3 Squadron amount to \$14.38m and are included in the total cost.

289. The estimated cost does not include a provision for land acquisition costs associated with the land to be acquired for the Engine Run-up facility and Explosive Storage Area.

ed  
and

290. Committee's Recommendation: The Committee recommends construction of work at a revised estimated cost of \$98.355m at April 1983 prices as summarised at paragraph 287.

291. At the Committee's meeting on 6 October 1983, it was resolved on a motion by Mr Cowan that the following words be included in the Committee's report on this reference:

"MR COWAN'S VIEWS

292. I believe that the record shows that in the past there was inadequate co-ordination between the Commonwealth, the State Government and Port Stephens Shire Council on land use planning in the immediate vicinity of Salt Ash Air Weapons Range. This lack of co-ordination has caused the subdivision of land in what are now noise sensitive areas.

293. With the proposed redevelopment of the R... Base the impact of aircraft noise on the residents around Salt Ash Range will continue, probably at increased levels, and residents will continue to be understandably apprehensive about their safety from low flying aircraft.

294. I believe there is a case for the Department of Defence to review its land requirements for all weapons ranges, particularly the land required immediately below flight paths approaching the target areas. Local residents should be assured that risks associated with high performance aircraft approaching target areas at high speed have been absolutely minimised. Any land required to minimise the risk of aircraft crashes causing danger to life or damage to property should be acquired.

295. Mention was made at the public hearing about the possibility of the RAAF using the Singleton Range for bombing and strafing. I believe this option should be pursued by Defence with a view to the Singleton Range absorbing a significant proportion of the training carried out at Salt Ash Range.

296. I should like to commend the RAAF for the responsible attitude they have taken towards minimising noise around Salt Ash Range. Measures taken can only be regarded as an interim solution to a problem which does exist and about which firm and lasting action must now be taken in order to protect the interests of the RAAF and at the same time ensure that local residents are offered the protection they deserve.

297. Finally, whilst I believe the actions I have outlined will not present any difficulties in implementing, should they not be implemented, then I believe the Salt Ash Range should be totally relocated."

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

298. The recommendations and conclusions of the Committee are set out below. Alongside each is shown the paragraph in the report to which it refers.

Paragraph

1. LOCATION OF THE TACTICAL FIGHTER FORCE  
AT RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN OFFERS COST  
ADVANTAGES OVER POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE  
LOCATIONS.

2. RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN IS THE MOST ECONOMICAL LOCATION FOR TACTICAL FIGHTER FORCE AIRCRAFT. AIR-TO-GROUND WEAPONS TRAINING SHOULD CONTINUE AT SALT ASH RANGE. THE COMMITTEE IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE NOISE IMPACT FROM AIRCRAFT USING SALT ASH RANGE AND STRONGLY URGES CONSULTATIONS IMMEDIATELY TAKE PLACE BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMONWEALTH TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS NO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN NOISE SENSITIVE AREAS.

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3. EXISTING FACILITIES FOR OPERATIONAL SQUADRONS, MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT FUNCTIONS, AT RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN WILL BE INADEQUATE TO CATER FOR THE CONTINUED OPERATIONS OF MIRAGE AND THE INTRODUCTION OF F/A-18 AIRCRAFT. DEFICIENCIES IN EXISTING ACCOMMODATION SHOULD BE RECTIFIED AND WHERE NECESSARY NEW ACCOMMODATION SHOULD BE PROVIDED.

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4. FIGHTER UNIT FACILITIES PROPOSED FOR CONSTRUCTION APPEAR TO BE ADEQUATE AND SHOULD BE A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT ON EXISTING FACILITIES. CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES FOR NO. 3 SQUADRON AT WILLIAMTOWN SHOULD NOT COMMENCE UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE A DECISION ON THE RELOCATION OF THE SQUADRON FROM BUTTERWORTH.

155

Paragraph

5. THE PROPOSED MAINTENANCE SQUADRON TECHNICAL SUPPORT FACILITIES WHILST EXTENSIVE, ARE JUSTIFIED. 195
6. THE SCOPE AND LOCATION OF PROPOSED ADMINISTRATIVE, DOMESTIC AND ORDNANCE FACILITIES ARE JUSTIFIED AND FUNCTIONALLY ADEQUATE. 216
7. THE COMMITTEE NOTES THAT CONSIDERABLE USE WILL BE MADE OF UPGRADED ACCOMMODATION BLOCKS FOR SINGLE PERSONNEL. CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ACCOMMODATION FOR OTHER RANKS SHOULD COMMENCE AFTER A DECISION ON THE RELOCATION OF 3 SQUADRON HAS BEEN MADE. 226
8. THE ENGINEERING WORKS AND SERVICES PROPOSED ARE NECESSARY. THE COMMITTEE NOTES THAT THE COMMONWEALTH HAS TAKEN NOTICE OF POLLUTION PROBLEMS AND IS PROVIDING EXTENSIVE ENGINEERING SERVICES AND FACILITIES TO REDUCE AIR OR WATER POLLUTION TO ACCEPTABLE LEVELS. 258
9. THE COMMITTEE WILL TABLE A SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF THE PARACHUTE TRAINING SCHOOL FROM RAAF WILLIAMTOWN TO HMAS ALBATROSS, NOWRA, AFTER MORE DETAILS ARE MADE AVAILABLE BY DEPARTMENTS. 263

10. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS CONSTRUCTION OF WORK AT A REVISED ESTIMATED COST OF \$98.355M AT APRIL 1983 PRICES AS SUMMARISED AT PARAGRAPH 287 OF THE REPORT.

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(D.J. FOREMAN)  
Chairman

Parliamentary Standing Committee  
on Public Works,  
Parliament House,  
CANBERRA A.C.T. 2600

5 October 1983



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LIST OF EXHIBITSExhibit No.Department of Defence

Draft Environmental Report - The Proposed  
Introduction of New Tactical Fighter F/A-18,  
RAAF Base Williamtown, Volumes 1 and 2 1

Final Environmental Impact Statement -  
The Proposed Introduction of New Tactical  
Fighter F/A-18 RAAF Base Williamtown,  
May 1983 2

National Acoustics Laboratories

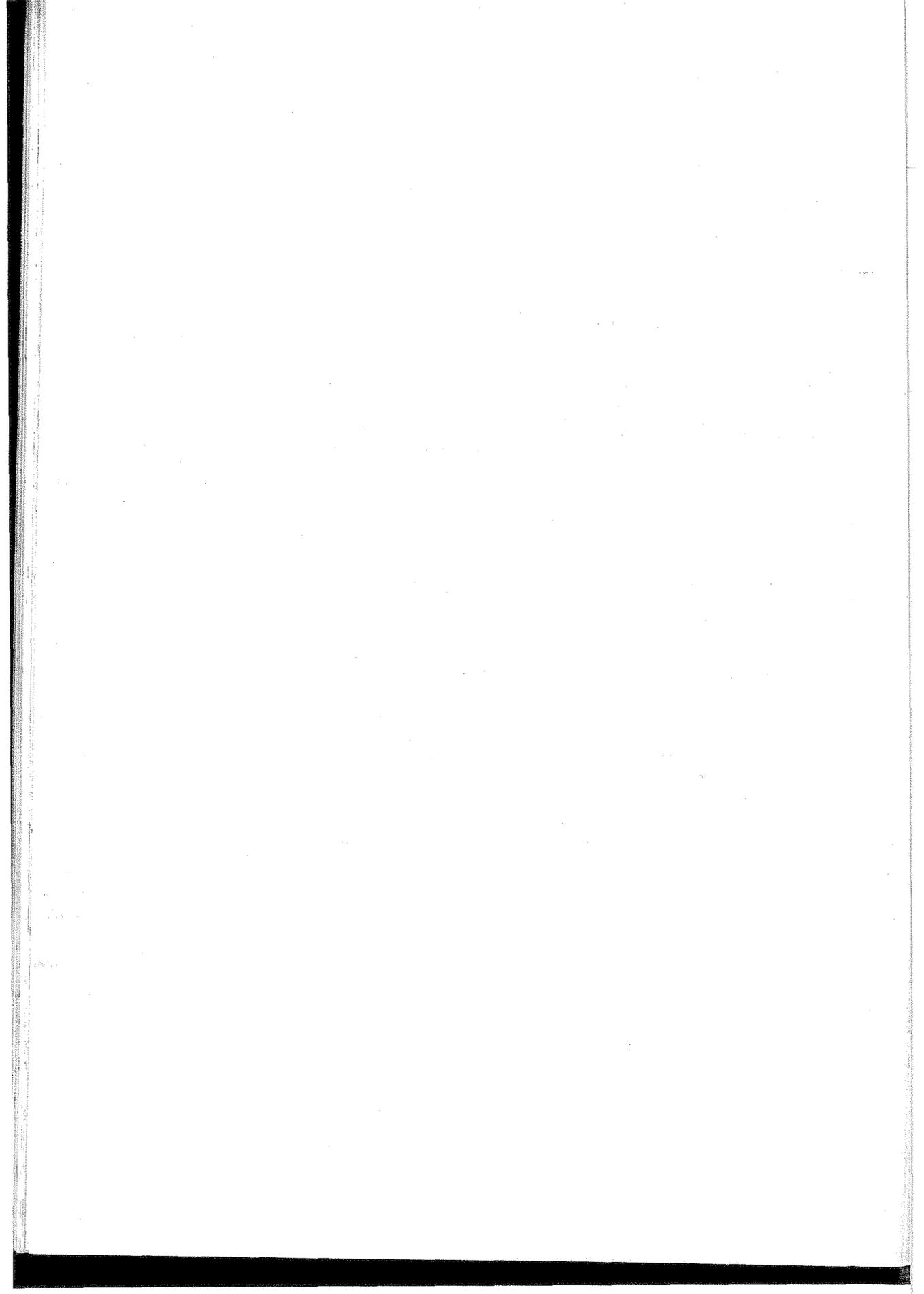
Report Number 88 "Aircraft Noise in Australia:  
A Survey of Community Reaction", AGPS,  
February 1982 3

Department of Aviation

"The Australian Noise Exposure System and  
Associated Land Use Compatibility Advice  
for Areas in the Vicinity of Airports",  
November 1982 4

Department of Home Affairs and Environment

"Assessment of the Final Environmental Impact  
Statement on the Proposed introduction of the  
New Tactical Fighter F/A-18 to RAAF Base  
Williamtown, NSW", June 1983 5

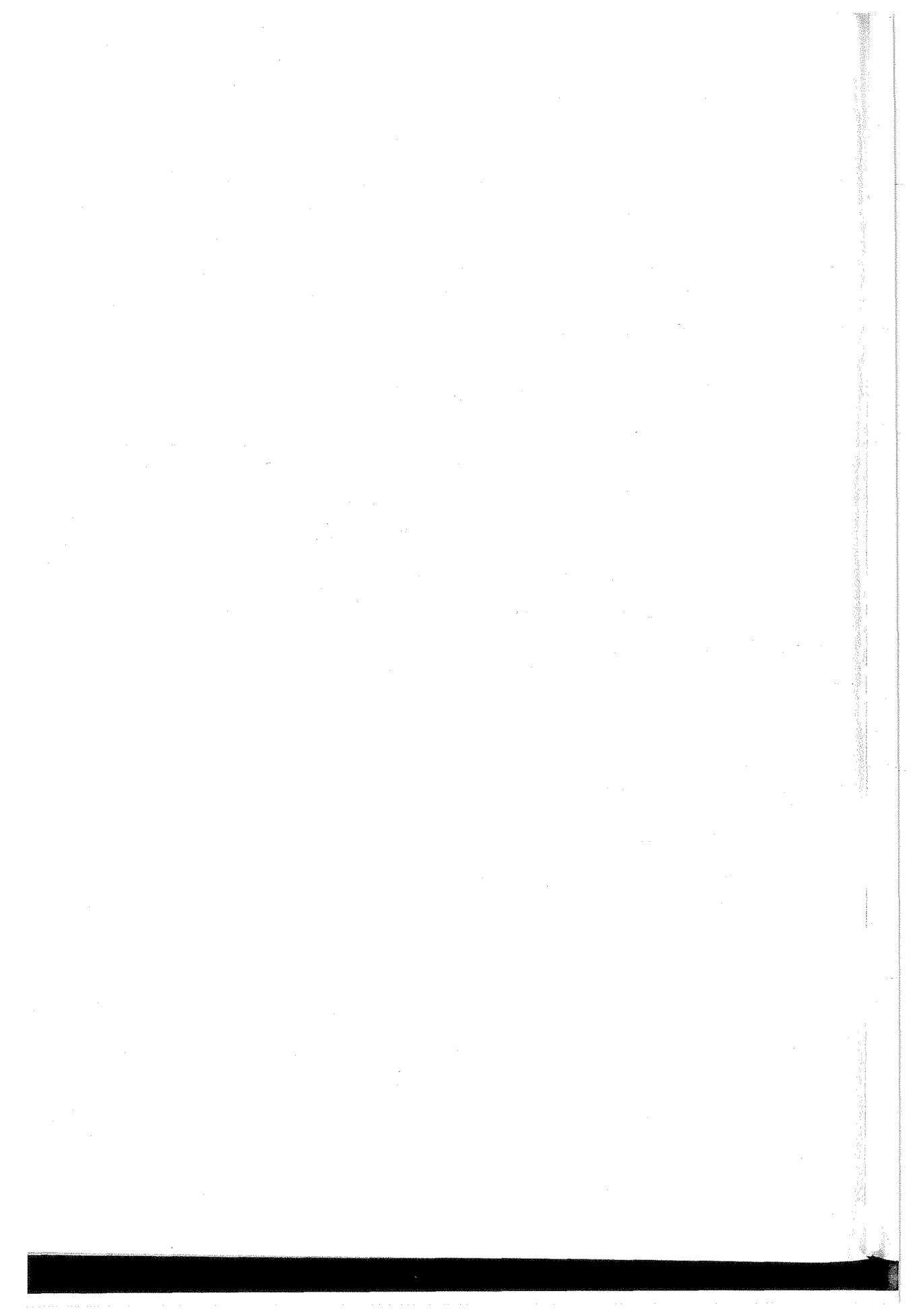


CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTSPROCLAMATION OF SALT ASH AIR WEAPONS RANGE,  
APPROVAL OF SUB-DIVISIONS IN THE VICINITY,  
RECOGNITION OF THE NOISE PROBLEM

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
19 March 1953	Salt Ash Air Weapons Range proclaimed pursuant to Air Force Regulation 439
1965	Mirage aircraft introduced - range used continuously by Mirage aircraft since then
12 Sept 1973	Application for the development of Hideaway Estate lodged with Port Stephens Shire Council
24 Sept 1973	Application for the development of Parkland Estate lodged with Port Stephens Shire Council
24 Dec 1973	Parkland development as proposed refused by Port Stephens Shire Council - reasons for refusal - unsatisfactory layout

- 11 March 1974 Parkland development as re-submitted approved by Council
- 15 April 1974 Hideaway Estate approved by Council
- Jan 1975 Weapon delivery patterns in use at that time altered by RAAF in an attempt to lessen the impact of noise on those residences already in existence in the approaches to the Range
- mid-Oct 1975 Headquarters RAAF Williamtown becomes aware of a new sub-division in Salt Ash area - nearest point 1.2 kilometres from the Range boundary. RAAF approaches Shire Council. Department of Defence recommends Shire Council consider inclusion of following words in covenants: "This area is subject to severe noise from military jet aircraft at very low altitude engaged in air to ground bombing and gun firing. This action takes place at frequent intervals, generally on weekdays during daylight hours".
- late Oct 1975 Shire Council meeting refuses to include aircraft noise covenant on the sub-division on the grounds that it is not Shire Council responsibility, that the Council does not have the power to put a caveat on the land affected by noise previously approved for development in accordance with Council regulations and by-laws.
- April 1976 Defence expresses concern about development around Salt Ash to Port Stephens Shire Council and NSW Planning and Environment Commission.

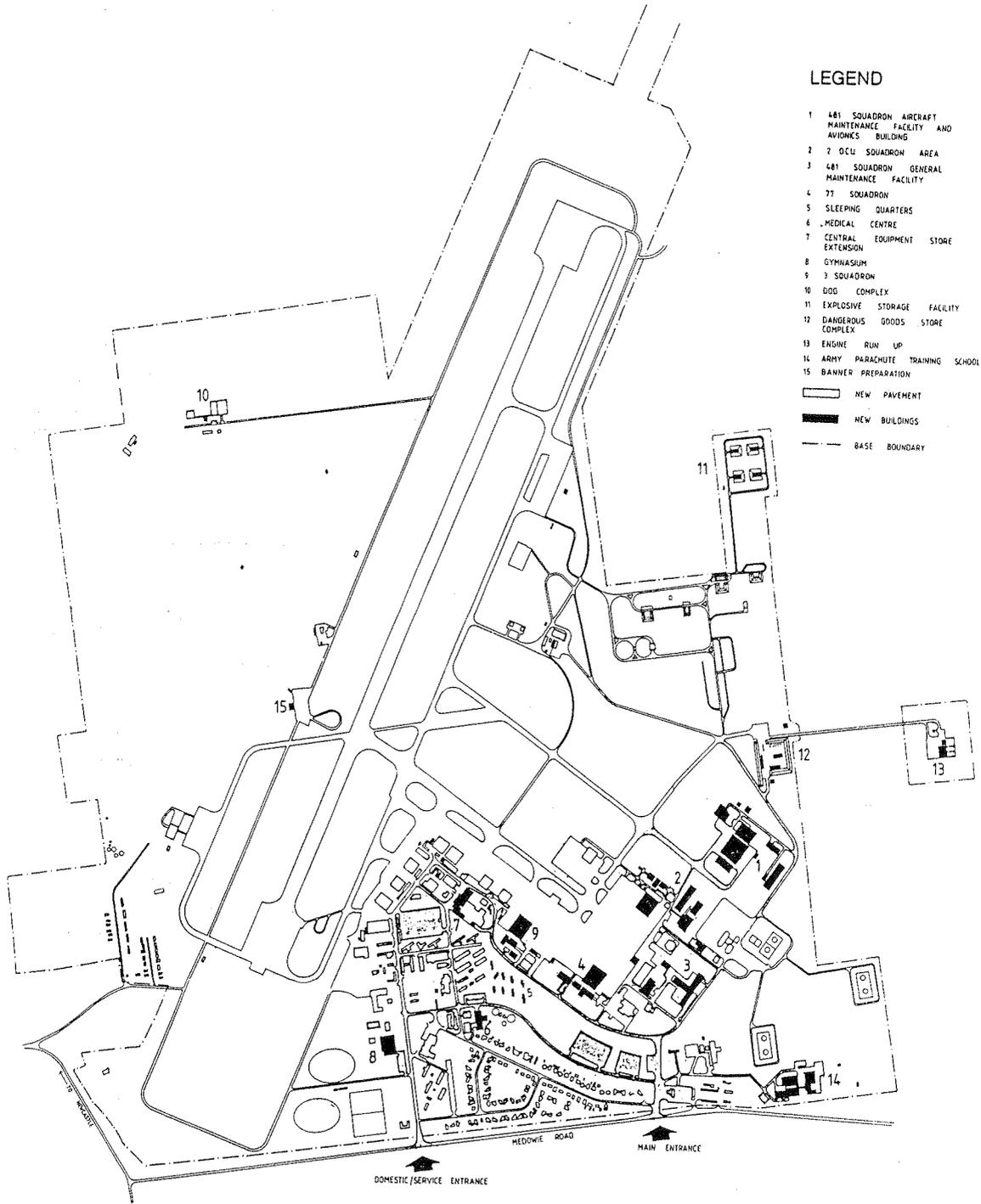
- May 1976 Port Stephens Shire Council advises Defence that no further large scale sub-divisions were envisaged within Salt Ash area.
- 17 Sept 1976 Noise Exposure Forecast (NEF) maps passed to Shire Council and NSW Planning and Environment Commission.
- Oct 1976 Council agrees that NEF information be made available to future developers. Buyers of land not notified of aircraft noise until issued with building approval certificates.
- 11 Nov 1976 Defence press release to highlight issues at Salt Ash features on front page of Newcastle Herald.
- 15 Nov 1976 Editorial in Newcastle Herald questions Shire Council's attitude in not adopting the inclusion of covenants.



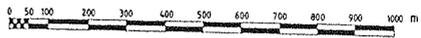
PLAN 1

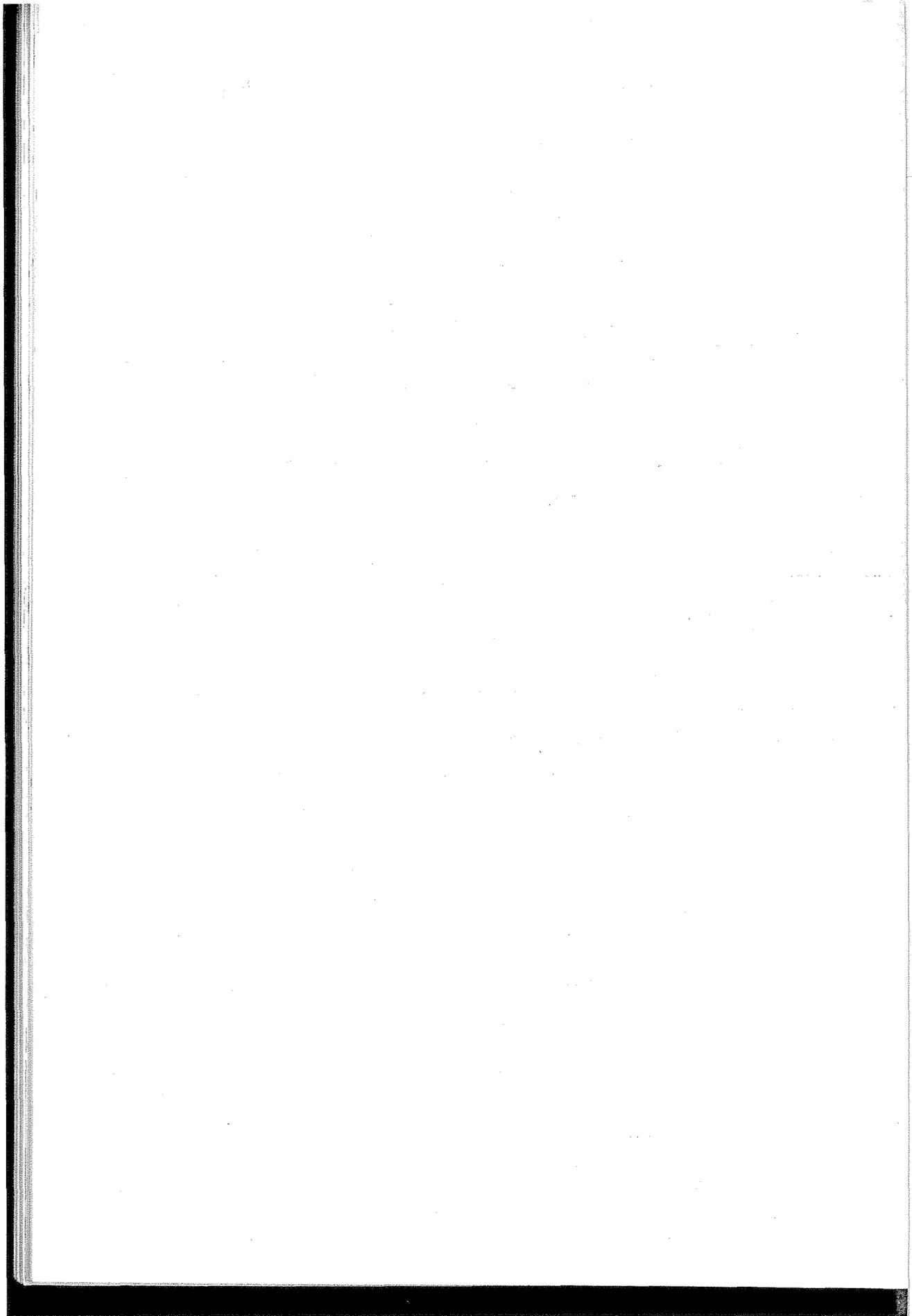
LEGEND

- 1 481 SQUADRON AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE FACILITY AND AVIONES BUILDING
  - 2 2 OCU SQUADRON AREA
  - 3 481 SQUADRON GENERAL MAINTENANCE FACILITY
  - 4 77 SQUADRON
  - 5 SLEEPING QUARTERS
  - 6 MEDICAL CENTRE
  - 7 CENTRAL EQUIPMENT STORE
  - 8 GYMNASIUM
  - 9 3 SQUADRON
  - 10 DGS COMPLEX
  - 11 EXPLOSIVE STORAGE FACILITY
  - 12 DANGEROUS GOODS STORE
  - 13 ENGINE RUN UP
  - 14 ARMY PARACHUTE TRAINING SCHOOL
  - 15 BANNER PREPARATION
-  NEW PAVEMENT
  -  NEW BUILDINGS
  -  BASE BOUNDARY



PROPOSED SITE PLAN OF  
RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN





# PLAN 2

## LEGEND

### 1 481 SQUADRON AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE FACILITY AND AVIONICS BUILDING

- N5 COORDINATION CONTROL FACILITY
- N6A 481 SQN. HANGAR / WORKSHOPS
- N6B G.S.E.
- N6C FOAM PUMP HOUSE
- N6D FLAMMABLE LIQUID STORE
- N7 481 SQUADRON H.Q.
- N20 AVIONICS AND B.L.C.

### 2 2 OCU AREA

- N9A 2 OCU HANGAR
- N9B 2 OCU TECHNICAL SERVICES BUILDINGS
- N9C G.S.E.
- N9D FLAMMABLE LIQUID STORE
- N10 FIELD TRAINING FLIGHT BUILDING
- N11 SIMULATOR BUILDING
- N12 SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT (IASSE)

### 3 481 SQUADRON GENERAL MAINTENANCE FACILITY

- N15 BATTERY MAINTENANCE FACILITY
- N16 ENGINE MAINTENANCE FACILITY
- N15A FLAMMABLE LIQUID STORE
- N17 GENERAL ENGINEERING FACILITY
- N18 GROUND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE FACILITY
- N18A EQUIPMENT WASH

### 4 77 SQUADRON

- N34A 77 SQUADRON HANGAR
- N34B 77 SQUADRON TECHNICAL SERVICES BUILDING
- N34C 77 SQUADRON H.Q.
- N34D G.S.E.
- N34E FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS STORE
- N34F FOAM PUMP HOUSE

### 5 SLEEPING QUARTERS

- N8A DR'S ACCOMMODATION
- N8B JO'S ACCOMMODATION

### 6 MEDICAL CENTRE

- N30 MEDICAL CENTRE

### 7 CENTRAL EQUIPMENT STORE EXTENSIONS

- N15 CENTRAL STORE EXTENSIONS
- N24 ESS COMPOUND

### 8 GYMNASIUM / SQUASH COURTS

- N26 GYMNASIUM / SQUASH COURTS

### 9 3 SQUADRON

- N33A HANGAR
- N33B TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS
- N33C HEADQUARTERS
- N33D FLAMMABLE STORE
- N33E G.S.E.

### 12 DANGEROUS GOODS STORE COMPLEX

- N4A AMENITIES AND NON-FLAMMABLES BUILDING
- N4B FLAMMABLE GOODS AND RETURNABLE CONTAINERS STORE
- N4C GAS CYLINDER STORE
- N4D ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH STORE

### 14 ARMY PARACHUTE TRAINING SCHOOL

- N29 ARMY PARACHUTE TRAINING SCHOOL

### 16 REFURBISHED BUILDINGS

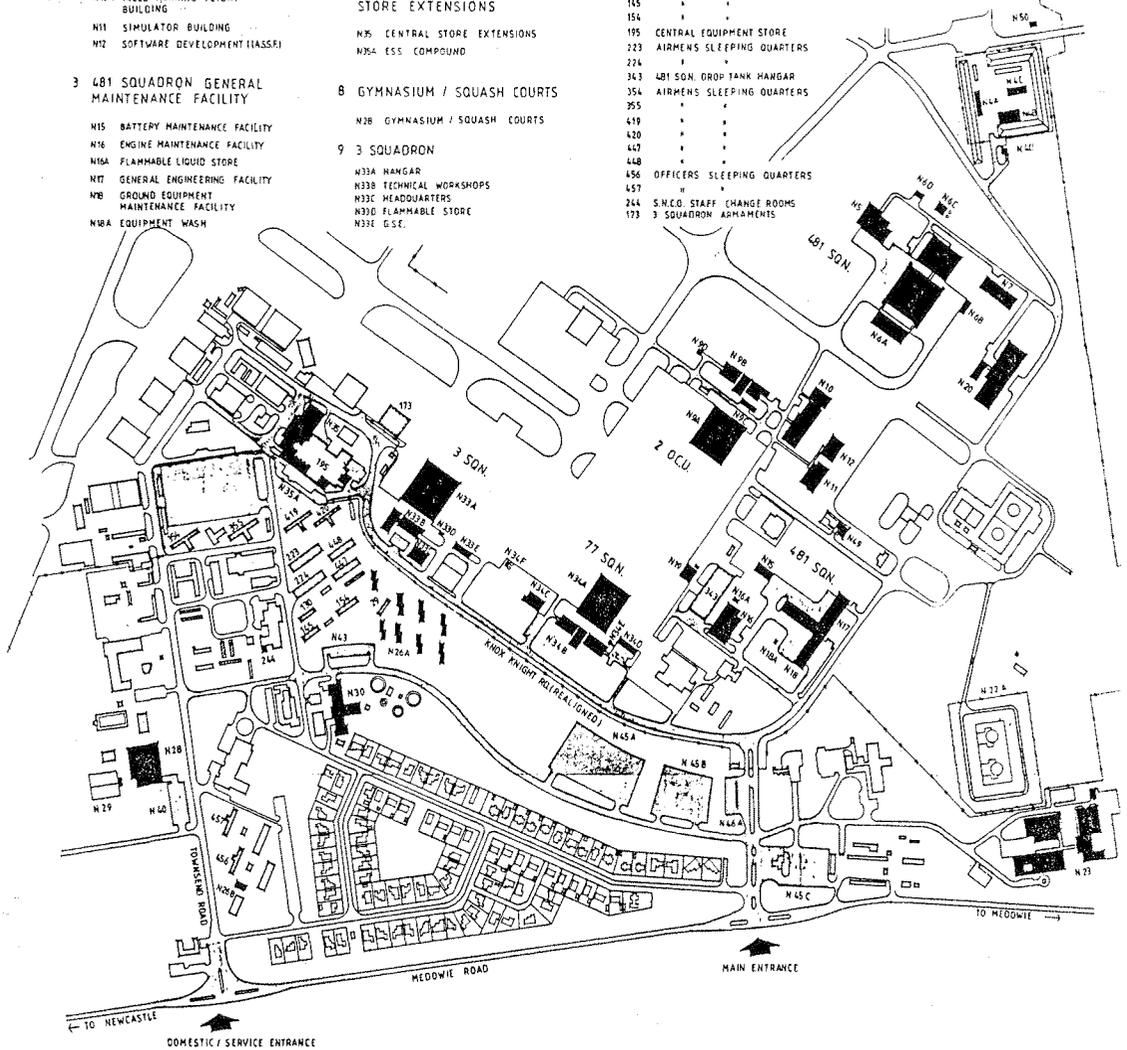
- 29 SERGEANT SLEEPING QUARTERS
- 130 " " "
- 145 " " "
- 154 " " "
- 195 CENTRAL EQUIPMENT STORE
- 223 AIRMENS SLEEPING QUARTERS
- 224 " " "
- 343 481 SQN. DROP TANK HANGAR
- 354 AIRMENS SLEEPING QUARTERS
- 419 " " "
- 420 " " "
- 427 " " "
- 448 " " "
- 456 OFFICERS SLEEPING QUARTERS
- 457 " " "
- 244 S.W.C. STAFF CHANGE ROOMS
- 173 3 SQUADRON ADHMENTS

### 17 CARPARK FACILITY

- N40 GYMNASIUM
- N43 AIRMENS ACCOMMODATION
- N44 MEDICAL CENTRE
- N45A LIVING OUT PERSONNEL
- N45B " " "
- N45C " " "
- N46 VISITORS

### 18 MISCELLANEOUS

- N29 TENNIS COURTS
- N24A ADDITIONAL FUEL STORAGE
- N26A ADDITIONAL FUEL STORAGE
- N49 TRADE WASTE TREATMENT PLANT
- N50 GUN STOP BUTT
- N19 AIRCRAFT WASH



## LEGEND

- |  |                     |  |                    |
|--|---------------------|--|--------------------|
|  | EXISTING BUILDINGS  |  | PROPOSED FENCES    |
|  | NEW                 |  | A - FENCE          |
|  | REFURBISHED         |  | B - SECURITY FENCE |
|  | NEW PAVEMENT        |  | (A)                |
|  | RELOCATED BUILDINGS |  | (B)                |

## PROPOSED SITE PLAN OF RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN BUILDINGS AREA

