



DARWIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION GROUP

Report on Meeting No 15– 19 November 2015

held at

Pandanus Room, Airport Management Centre, Darwin International Airport

1. Welcome and Apologies

Independent Chairman Daryl Manzie welcomed members to the 15th meeting of the Community Consultation group. Apologies were noted.

The Summary Record and Meeting Report of the meeting on 2 July 2015 had been previously settled by circulation.

2. National Overview Defence Fire Fighting Foam

Alison Clifton (Assistant Secretary Environment and Engineering, Department of Defence) joined by teleconference and provided a briefing on Defence use of aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) by fire fighting services at Defence bases.

Points outlined by Alison included:

- AFFF used internationally from the 1970's to the early 2000's because of its fire retardant properties. The AFFF commonly used, including Defence, was 3M Light Water, which contained PFOS and PFOA;
- in 2003 Defence investigated the environmental effects of the AFFF product being used. Following this investigation new policies were instituted and Defence transitioned from the Light Water product between 2004 and 2011;
- also between 2004 and 2011 facilities were put in place to capture any foam used (eg the foam capacity fire fighting equipment must still be tested and any foam is contained);
- the PFOS/PFOA in the previously used fire fighting foam is now a legacy issue. Until 2009 there was not an accepted way to test for PFOS/PFOA and Defence started monitoring for these in 2011. Results of Defence testing are often published on the Defence website and Defence will ascertain if RAAF Base Darwin testing results are publically available on the website;
- in 2012 the testing revealed that the contaminants had migrated to the site perimeters at Williamtown and Oakey;
- various studies have shown that there are no identifiable health effects;
- there will shortly be a meeting of Chief Health Officers on the PFOS/PFOA issue; and
- it is important to deal with the facts and not speculation.

The Independent Chairman emphasised the importance of getting information out to the public on the issue.

ACTION: Defence will ascertain if the RAAF Base PFOS/PFOA testing results are published on the Defence website and report back to the Consultation Group on both whether the results are published and the actual monitoring results.

3. Defence Support Report

Defence contractor Transfield provided a detailed brief on weed management on RAAF Base Darwin including:

- detailed mapping of all weed locations;
- from the mapping a management plan is being developed with eradication, management and containment zones; and
- targeted burns will form a part of the weed management plan.

Lesley Alford noted that Defence weed management and lack of controlled burning had enabled weeds, especially Gamba grass to become widespread. This had allowed the September fire to become very destructive to the Rapid Creek habitat. Lesley provided Defence a copy of a letter to the Minister for Defence on these issues from Rapid Creek Landcare. Defence committed to follow up on the response.

4. Airservices Matters

Rhiannon Eddy provided information on Airservices use of AFFF including:

- 3M Light Water AFFF ceased being used by Airservices in 2003;
- Darwin Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting Service uses the Ansulite fire fighting foam as required by Defence for military aircraft;
- exposure to Perfluorinated chemicals (PFC's) is widespread in the community (eg non-stick cook ware, waterproofing sprays, some textiles);
- there is no Australian standard for PFOS/PFOA testing;
- Airservices firefighters with long term service were tested and it was found that PFOS levels were equal to or slightly above the Australian population average and PFOA levels were the same as the average Australian;
- fire fighting foam in general is only used in emergencies since 2007 or in periodic training at the Airservices Melbourne facility where all foam is contained; and
- fact sheets on the issue are available.

Rhiannon Eddy reported on the following in relation to noise matters:

- Darwin is one of 5 new airports which will receive a Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System. Initially Webtrak will be installed and it is uncertain if the noise measuring capability will be available. WebTrak may be available in around 12 months; and
- Airservices and Defence are working on the Airport Noise and Operations Management System (ANOMS) which will apply at Darwin and details are yet to be settled.

5. Community Consultation Group Chairs meeting in Canberra 8-9 September

Independent Chairman Daryl Manzie reported on the Community Consultation Group Chairs meeting in Canberra. Issues highlighted were:

- environment management issues at leased airports;
- capacity being available for an international route under the relevant Bilateral Air Service Agreement does not mean a route is commercially viable. The issue of cabotage rights for foreign carriers operating into Northern Australia was also discussed;
- planning and development of the second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek;
- progress on consideration of reforms to Master Plan and Major Development Plan processes;
- outcomes of the review of Community Consultation groups and Planning Coordination Forums;
- potential aviation security developments;
- disabled passenger facilitation including Disability Access Facilitation Plans;
- Airport Noise Ombudsman views; and

- the controversy surrounding installation of an Instrument Landing System at Gold Coast Airport.

6. Darwin Air Service Developments Retail and Ground Transport

Steve Prasser presented on developments and strategies in air services, terminal retail and ground transport:

- recent passenger numbers are soft in line with the Australian economy and other airports;
- airline service developments including the commencement of the 'Centre Run';
- medium term prospects for new services and routes;
- DIA focus on sustaining existing air services and working with airlines to develop new markets;
- Domestic carriers are looking to improve yield and profitability after a period of significant increases in capacity;
- Darwin's small population means that to attract and maintain new international services, more transit passengers are required;
- Two Brews, Green Bean and News Travels International retail outlets which had opened recently;
- the common user Darwin International Lounge proposal;
- terminal digital advertising initiative including the wave screen;
- proposed first floor terminal offices; and
- ground transport objectives for the next 12 months including upgrading the carpark equipment, relocating the car rental car park to the eastern end of the terminal and new staff car parking configuration and wayfinding improvements. Relocation of the car rental car park will significantly reduce internal airport traffic.

Dawn Lawrie observed that the wait at the passenger security point can be lengthy during peak periods.

7. RAAF Base Darwin/DIA 2042 Australian Noise Exposure Forecast – Public Consultation

Brenin Presswell outlined that Defence would undertake public consultation early in the new year on the 2042 Joint Civil-Military Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF) and associated noise metrics. It is anticipated that there will be an initial public meeting will be followed by a second 4-6 weeks later. The second public meeting will present any changes incorporated as a result of feedback received.

The ANEF is based on year round military flying excluding heavy exercise periods such as Pitch Black. It includes updated noise data for civil helicopters and military aircraft. The ANEF reflects 'fly neighbourly' flying practice and new Initial and Pitch procedures.

Dawn Lawrie mentioned that helicopter noise was becoming more noticeable. The Independent Chairman raised the impact of aircraft noise on commercial developments off both the east and west of the main runway and also the proposed residential development at Berrimah. Tim Hogan outlined that Defence, DIA and the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development had opposed the rezonings from the start on a number of grounds, including aircraft noise. Developments following the rezoning continued to be opposed to no avail. Justine Nordin reaffirmed the Defence position.

8. DIA Property Developments

Patrick Bellot presented on property developments at DIA including:

- Bond Helicopters complex in the Eastern General Aviation Area;

- a preferred party for the Jet Fuel Storage Facility has been selected and negotiations are continuing on the Build Own Operate and Transfer (BOOT) project;
- Kingpin Family Entertainment Centre is trading well and discussions on complementary activities next to it are proceeding;
- the concept for a Warehouse and Showroom precinct on the south of Osgood Drive was outlined; and
- Rydges Resort expansion had gone well.

Lesley Alford mentioned that the recent heavy rain had exposed a weakness in the sediment control management of the Rydges Resort expansion but it was quickly rectified.

9. RAAF Base Operational Issues and 2016 Exercises

SQLDR Stuart Lane outlined projected military aviation activity:

- 3 X P-3 Orions will continue to operate from Darwin as part of Operation Resolute. This will reduce to 1 Orion over Christmas;
- Singaporean F-16 and F-15 aircraft continue to exercise out of Tindal with KC-135 tanker and C-130 supply aircraft being seen in Darwin;
- 6-8 RAAF Super Hornets will be engaged in Exercise Faru Samu 20 November to 7 December;
- Defence Scientific and Technology Group will conduct weather monitoring in February and March 2016;
- US Marine Rotational Force Darwin will again locate in Darwin from April to October 2016. The aviation element will be 4 X CH-53 helicopters and 3 X UH-1Y Iroquois helicopters;
- Exercise Pitch Black 2016 will occur 20 July to 19 August and will be similar in size to Pitch Black 2014. The countries involved are still being confirmed;
- Exercise Koolendong (USMC and RAAF) will occur in August; and
- Exercise Kakadu (mainly a naval exercise) happens in September.

10. Master Plan Development Update

Chris Bigg reported that the DIA Master Plan would be put out for public consultation in the second half of 2016.

11. Ann- Maree Grant request Defence install Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System

The request of Ann-Maree Grant that Defence install the same Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System in Darwin as exists at RAAF Base Williamtown was noted and tabled.

12. Dept Infrastructure & Regional Development Update

John Maxwell outlined:

- progress made by the National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group including the development of new guidelines on Public Safety Zones and Protection of Aircraft Communication and Navigation Facilities;
- release of Australian Standard AS2021-2015 (building control and standards for aircraft noise affected areas) and the development of an aircraft noise information handbook; and
- recommendations of the review of Community Aviation Consultation Groups and Planning Coordination Forums are being considered.

There was discussion on the context and background of AS2021-2015.

Dawn Lawrie commented that the DIA Community Consultation Group had worked well.

13. DIA Environment Issues

Ian Kew noted that AFFF had already been addressed in the meeting. He then turned to Rapid Creek issues facing DIA:

- the 5 yearly Master Plan public consultation will occur in the second half of 2016;
- there are Rapid Creek issues which will probably become election issues;
- unfortunately the Rapid Creek Catchment Advisory Committee (RCCAC), which contained Rapid Creek land holders and stakeholders, was disbanded in late 2013. RCCAC provided a body to effectively manage the Catchment and its demise has left a vacuum which has been filled by Save Rapid Creek. DIA has been encouraging both the Northern Territory Government and Opposition to re-establish a Rapid Creek forum;
- DIA used to hand its water quality data to RCCAC and now provides the water quality data to the EPA. This issue has not been a priority of the EPA to date;
- in relation to potential Rapid Creek flooding DIA has been cooperating closely with the Northern Territory Government and a joint report was produced on flood mitigation measures located both outside DIA and within the DIA area. The Government has announced the construction of a large retention basin on the 'Triangle Block' bordered by MacMillans Rd, Henry Wrigley Drive and Rapid Creek. DIA has committed to 3 flood mitigation projects and formulation of storm water guidelines which will maintain storm water flows to pre-development levels for new developments; and
- it was noted that the large retention structure on the 'Triangle Block' would reduce Rapid Creek flows back to pre-1998 levels which was when DIA was privatised.

14. Community Consultation Group Member Issues

Members indicated that issues of interest to them had already been covered in the meeting.

15. General Business

Ian Kew reported on progress of the 4MW solar power station being constructed near the end of Runway 29. The project should be completed in early March 2016.

Grahame Webb reported on his reconciliation of tourist numbers and airline capacity during the dry season. He noted that around 12% of annual tourists arrive in each of May and June and around 22% arrive in July. Almost 50% of tourists arrive in those 3 months but airline capacity only increases marginally. There is no correlation between airline capacity and tourist numbers.

Ian Kew commented that previously there was flat growth in airline capacity and expensive hotel rooms. The recent capacity war between airlines has now finished but there is a significantly expanded room stock. Little will change until the Inpex project is completed in 2018.

It was noted that this was the last meeting for Chris Bigg and members thanked him for his contribution. Victoria Moore will be providing the secretariat for future meetings.

Note: 2016 meetings Thursday 31 March, Thursday 14 July and Thursday 10 November