

Douglas, Ken

From: Wilson, Andy
Sent: Tuesday, 11 May 2010 5:32 PM
To: Wotton, Katrina
Subject: GA and flying training.
Attachments: Williamsdale GA Feasibility Study.docx; Canberra Flying School Closure.doc

Katrina

Attached is our *draft* estimates brief on the GA study for Williamsdale, and the QTB on the flying school.

In regard to the latter, it's probably simplest if I cut and paste it into an estimates brief, with any additional material/edits you might suggest

Cheerio

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Financial Feasibility Study on Development of General Aviation Airfield

Policy/Program Description and Rationale

\$50 000 has been allocated for examining the financial feasibility of a General Aviation (GA) airfield at Williamsdale in the ACT.

Subject

Why is the Government spending money on a feasibility study on a GA airfield at Williamsdale?

Response

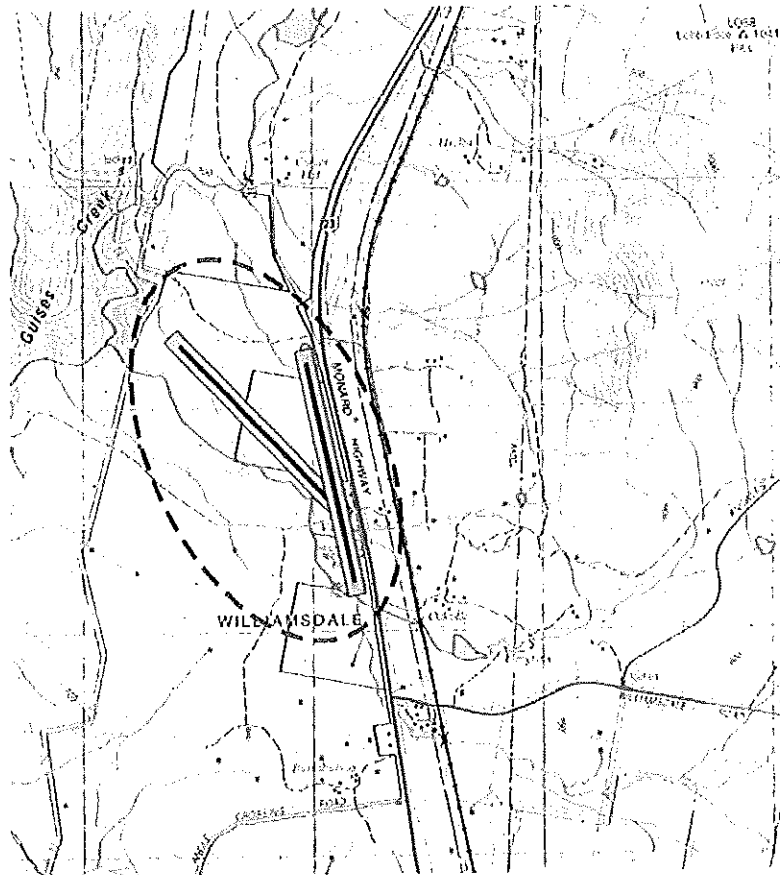
- The Government has committed funding to undertake an independent financial feasibility study of the proposed development. It will identify the costs of developing the proposed site as a functioning GA airfield, it will conduct a market survey to provide an accurate estimate of demand, and will examine operational costs and revenues.
- The output of the study will be a business case, which will allow Government to assess what role, if any, the Government should take in establishing a GA facility at Williamsdale. Any Government decision will also take into account the potential for increasing the effectiveness of ACT aerial fire-fighting capabilities.
- Although the study is focused on Williamsdale, the information gained by the study, in particular the market survey, will provide essential information for any proposed GA development in the immediate Canberra region. The Government may make the study results available for a suitable private sector proposal based elsewhere than Williamsdale.
- Any decision to progress the proposal will be subject to the planning system, and it is likely that it will require an Environmental Impact Study. Both those who support such a development and those who oppose that development will have full opportunity to have their views heard.
- In 2004 a proposal was put to Government that it should develop a General Aviation (GA) airfield at Williamsdale. The proposal included a prospective design, estimates of construction cost and indications of market demand for the facility.
- There were two major rationale put forward for the development:
 - The location would provide an ideal base to allow NSW fixed wing fire-fighting aircraft to supplement ACT aerial fire-fighting efforts in the Tinderry Ranges; and
 - GA activities, including flying training, are being displaced from Canberra Airport.
- A physical feasibility study was conducted in 2004 which determined that the proposed site was suitable for GA activities, including flying training. However, there was no clear way forward in terms of developing and managing such a facility.
- In early April 2010 a delegation from the newly-formed Canberra Region Aviators Association (CRAA) met with the Chief Minister to discuss taking the proposal forward. The CRAA is commissioning a 'desk-top' study of the market demand for a GA airfield in the ACT, and the organisation provides a formally constituted industry body with which Government can now work in furthering the proposal.

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3 PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SITE

The study site is located on the western side of the Monaro Highway at Williamsdale, approximately two kilometres north of the ACT/NSW border. The location of the runway nominated in the submission to the ACT Government is parallel to the highway with the southern end of the runway within the Williamsdale Recreation Reserve as indicated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Indicative Location of Study Site



Source: Williamsdale 1:25,000 Topographic Map

QUESTION TIME BRIEF
Sitting period beginning 4 May 2010

SUBJECT: CANBERRA FLYING SCHOOL CLOSURE

ISSUE: What is the ACT Government doing about the closure of the ACT's last flying school?

- The Government is aware of the issues faced by General Aviation (GA), and flying training in particular, in the ACT. As airports develop commercially and space becomes limited, the difficulties of operating out of major airports inevitably increases.
- As the Commonwealth retains control over air-related activities, the Territory does not have any power to intervene in commercial matters at Canberra Airport.
- The ACT Government has for some time been examining alternatives for GA, including flying training, in the ACT.
- The Government has committed funding of \$50 000 in the 2010-11 Budget to conduct a financial feasibility study. This study will identify the market for a GA airfield in or near to the ACT, and will provide essential information for any GA airfield proposal, whether at Williamsdale or over the border.

Background

- Due to the nature of the terrain in the ACT, there are limited locations for developing a GA airfield within the ACT. Most of the few suitable sites are much too close to residential areas, or to hills and mountains.
- One possible exception is at Williamsdale. This site, adjacent to the Monaro Highway, has been under investigation for some time. A study commissioned by Government in 2005 indicated that the proposed site is suitable for GA operations and flying training.

ActewAGL solar farm

- ActewAGL has purchased land at Williamsdale in order to develop a solar farm. Until ActewAGL determines the technology it will use, the design of the facility, the exact location of the facility and possible associated infrastructure such as a gas-fired power station, we cannot evaluate whether these uses are compatible.
- ActewAGL is expected to decide on its solar farm by the end of this year.

David Dawes, A/g Chief Executive, Department of Land and Property Services 620 73331

Date last saved: 3 May 2010