



CHIEF MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT

Mr Christopher Price

Dear Mr Price

Following your meeting with the Chief Minister of August 3 this year and as agreed, officers of the Department have held discussions with ACT Government agencies in relation to your proposal for a General Aviation Airfield at Williamsdale.

I would briefly like to relay some of the information and comment we have now received.

The ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) believe that there are a number of significant issues that would need to be addressed.

Firstly, the land resumption requirements are likely to straddle multiple blocks and associated leases. Based on information to date, ACTPLA believe that there may be a need to utilise two currently unleased blocks, totally resume one currently leased block and partially resume another two currently leased blocks.

ACTPLA also believe that current leaseholders are unlikely to be amenable to any resumption action. However, more fundamentally, ACTPLA also raised the issue about whether the land can actually be resumed under the "*Land Acquisition Act 1994*" The Act requires a public interest case to be established to support resumption and given the scale and intended use and utility of the development, the preliminary view is that a strong public interest case would be difficult to establish.

The scale of the resumption implies that there is a potential for significant costs associated with this resumption. This raises concerns regarding the suitability of the proposed financial model given that the resumption costs are likely to exceed the proposed cash input from the private sector.

The ACT Government Solicitor's Office (GSO) was consulted separately on the management and ownership framework described in your concept proposal. GSO were reluctant to provide any definitive advice noting the lack of clarity on several matters in your proposal, including:

- The ownership structure and governance model;
- The input structure (of funds); and
- Details of the proposed framework for on-site development.

The Department has not yet sought advice from ACT Treasury however we would predict that Treasury will focus on the veracity of estimates for resumption and other upfront costs and any exposure the Territory might have to recurrent or operating costs. Further, the Department does not believe that current costings are sufficiently developed and there is still a need for a detailed financial assessment of the proposal.

In summary, there appear to be genuine and not insignificant hurdles to the proposal as it currently stands and further advice from you is necessary to progress this matter.

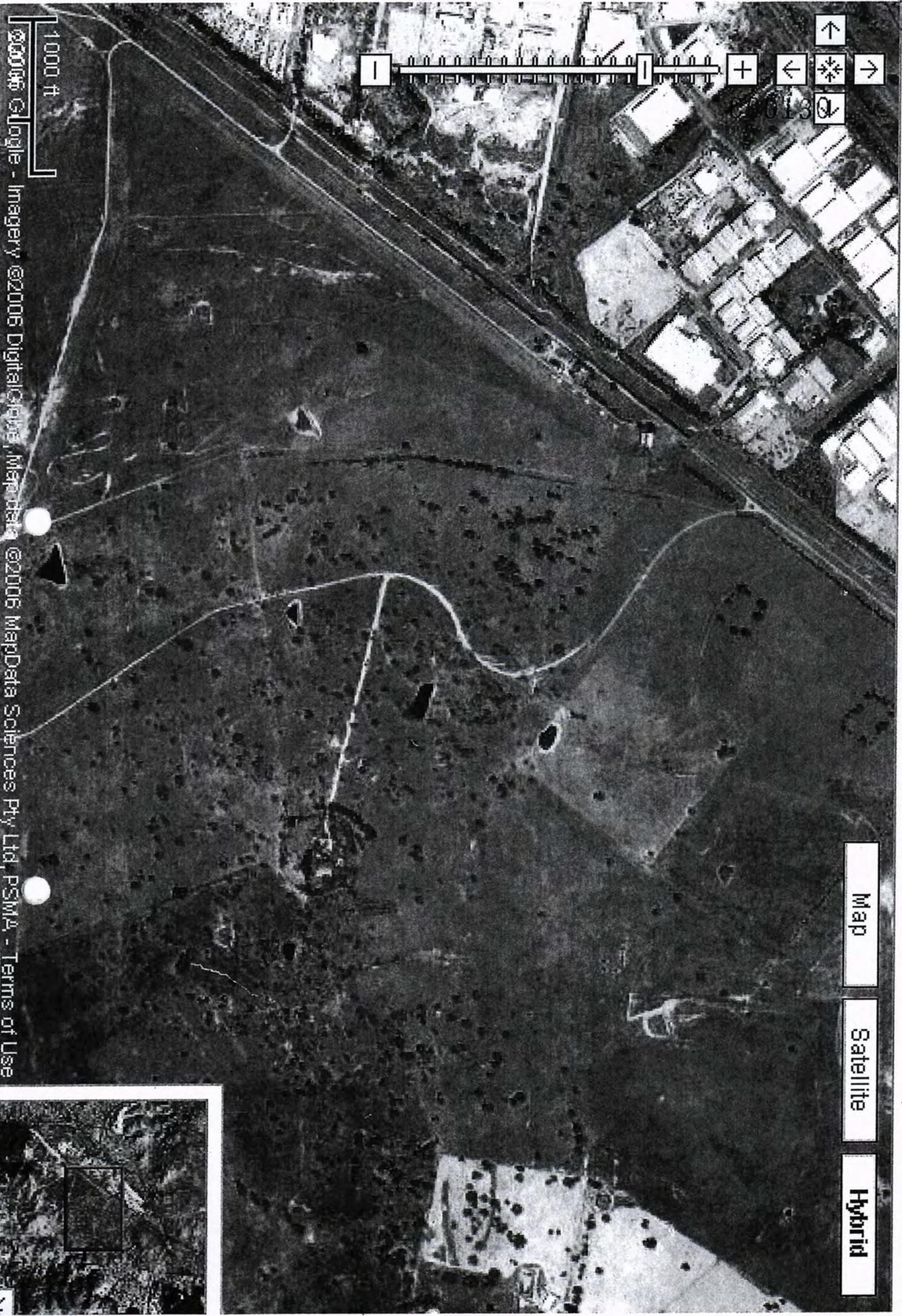
Unfortunately you have been out of Canberra frequently over the past month or so and I will now be on leave from 22 September to 20 October. I believe the best thing to do is meet with you on my return.

If you contact Anne McKeveitt (6207 2599) a meeting can be arranged to work through the issues. I have copied this letter to the Chief Minister's office for information.

Yours sincerely

Ian Cox
Director, Business and Economic Development

19 September 2005



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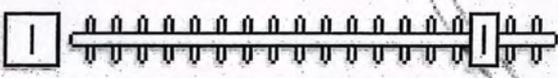
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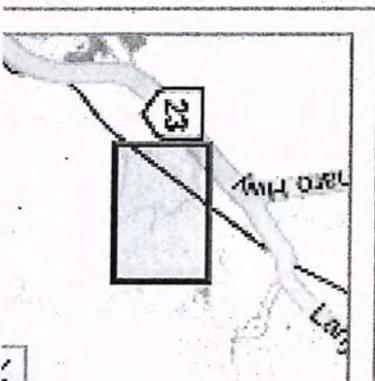
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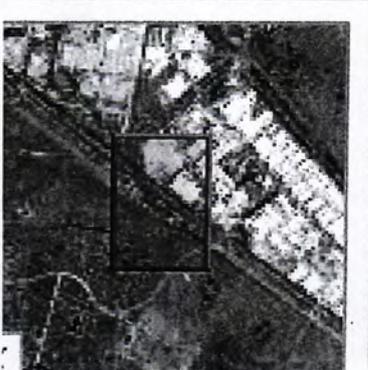
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The Hon Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CIVIC ACT 2000



Dear Mr Stanhope

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I am writing to you again about the proposal to develop a General Aviation airfield at Williamstown in the ACT. You may recall that when we met in 2006, I advised you that if finance is a stumbling block for the ACT Government developing the airfield, I could obtain the necessary funding from private investors provided that a suitable ownership model could be developed.

2

I understood from our meeting that you were keen to see the proposal proceed if a way to do so could be found, and I further understood that you directed Mr Ian Cox, Director, Business and Economic Development, to proceed to determine how this could be made to work. Specifically, as it is almost impossible for someone outside of Government to determine what would meet the needs of Government in terms of a public/private partnership, the Government Solicitor's Office (GSO) was to be directed to advise on what ownership models would meet Government's needs.

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I have enclosed the letter that I received from Mr Cox some weeks after our meeting. I was somewhat bemused to read that the GSO was reluctant to provide any definitive advice noting the lack of clarity on several matter, including most of the matters that I had understood were to be resolved by the GSO. I was particularly puzzled since I understood that you had directed Mr Cox to find out how it could be made to work and this response has taken it no further than before. It is, in my opinion and that of several others who have seen Mr Cox's letter, bureaucratic bullshit at it worst.

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The letter raises several other matters which should also be discussed. Firstly, there is the suggestion that Treasury would, *if consulted*, question the veracity of the estimates that I provided. As Treasury was not consulted I am puzzled at the use of the word "veracity" which, when you consider it, somewhat insulting to either myself or to those that provided me with costing advice. As the only other people Mr Cox consulted appear to have been ACTPLA and the GSO, and the GSO apparently does not want to provide any advice, I would suspect that that word was provided by ACTPLA.

You may be aware that your Department was on the verge of commissioning a financial feasibility study (and, I understood, had earmarked funds for this purpose) which would have resolved a number of matters such as costings, market and potential returns, when the ACT Treasury advised that there would be a budget shortfall. Consequently the study did not go ahead. Whilst I am sure that private sector supporters of the project could find the funds to undertake this study, this would be seen as a partisan study and Government would *still* have to undertake its own study. So it seems that this matter is raised more to stall the project than to point any possible way forward.

I mentioned that ACTPLA was also consulted. I would presume that this was the Rural Leasing Branch. Their comments are disingenuous, to say the least. It had already been clearly established that the requirement for the proposed airfield as it was put forward was for the "disused" recreation reserve, the Travelling Stock Reserve and the block immediately to the north of the TSR. This was identified in my original proposal, in discussions with Mr Andrew Wilson and in later discussions and site inspections with Mr Paul Isaks of ACTPLA. 0001257

However, Mr Cox's letter suggests that there may be need to resume land on a broader scale, based on "information to date". It would appear, therefore, that neither Mr Cox nor the Rural Leasing Branch actually consulted the files or the one person in ACTPLA who was already conversant with the proposal. Mr Cox also notes the current landowners "are unlikely to be amenable to any resumption action". I fail to see what point he thinks that he is making here. Resumption, on my understanding, takes place when Government decides to acquire land for purposes that it considers to be in the public interest. Few, if any, landowners are in favour of the public interest when it affects them adversely.

Which leads to the next point, that ACTPLA's "preliminary view" is that a strong public interest case would be difficult to establish.

Leaving aside issues such as Canberra being the only Australian capital city to not have a General Aviation airfield, the rapidly declining numbers of GA aircraft at Canberra International Airport since its privatisation, and the potential financial returns to the Territory if the airfield is established (part of which would have been established or refuted by the abandoned financial feasibility study), there is a stronger reason why the proposal is in the public interest. This is clearly outlined in my original proposal and is in fact one of the major reasons that I put the proposal forward in the first place.

My major reason for putting the proposal forward was, and remains, that it will significantly increase the capacity to contain fires such as the disastrous ones in January 2003. In fact, the major reason that has prompted me to re-enter the fray to get an airfield established at Williamsdale (I was in despair when I received Mr Cox's letter, after having had my hopes raised in our meeting that we might actually see some action) is that I can see the same conditions emerging in our region as existed before the 2003 fires.

My proposal was based on establishing an airfield in a strategic location which would permit NSW to operate its fixed-wing aircraft into those areas which are the seat of some of our most threatening bushfires, supplementing the ACT's rotary-wing activities. Currently the fixed wing aircraft have to operate out of Canberra International Airport and, whilst they have priority, in practice they cannot use CIA and achieve the necessary cycle times (12 minutes) required to be effective. Williamsdale provides this capability. Development of the airfield as GA airfield means that the GA community pays the cost of maintaining this facility, not the ACT community at large.

I would submit that this establishes a fairly strong public interest case. My proposal included a letter from the NSW RFS supporting this position. I note that Mr Cox, in reciting ACTPLA's views, has not spoken to the NSW RFS about this aspect or its views on the development of a Williamsdale facility.

Which brings me to my final point. I was curious as to why ACTPLA was so strongly opposed to the proposal. I can understand that it does not accord with the recently completed Territory Plan in terms of land use or potential industrial development, and that this might not be to the Authority's liking. However, the Territory Plan does not contain *any* provision for a GA airfield (unless you count Canberra International Airfield, which is unlikely to remain viable for GA activity), and I must admit that I always rather thought that the Territory Plan is meant to serve the community rather than the other way around. I thought that went out when the NCDC was disbanded.

I was aware that there are strong links between the ACT's rural community – ie leaseholders – and ACTPLA's rural leasing division. Given the numbers of ACT public servants in the Williamsdale/ Smiths Road area, both serving and former, I would be surprised if influence were not applied to stop the proposed airfield.

I would submit that this matter is of significant of public interest which, regardless of the outcome of Williamsdale General Aviation airfield proposal, needs to be investigated, either inside Government or, if necessary, from outside.

In the light of Mr Cox's letter it is obviously futile for me to try to push the proposal any further, unless you strengthen the directions that I understood you to give to Mr Cox, and ensure that the GSO and ACTPLA (and Treasury) take a positive attitude to the proposal.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Price

15-01-2007

GENERAL AVIATION AIRFIELD - WILLIAMSDALE



Working in partnership to protect and preserve life, property and the environment in the ACT

000114

To: Kevin Green, Senior Policy Officer
From: Michael Ross, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service
Topic: Comments on General Aviation Airfield, Williamsdale
Date: 17th April 2007

Mr Green,

I would like to refer to your letter you sent to myself on the 13th March 2007 outlining questions for a proposed general aviation airfield at Williamsdale.

I would like to provide the following responses.

1. The development of a general aviation airfield at Williamsdale may increase the capacity of Fire Agencies within South Eastern NSW to deploy fixed wing aircraft for fire detection or suppression. With the ACT Rural Fire Service moving into purpose built facilities at Canberra airport and establishing an Air Support Operations Centre it is my view that this facility would serve a greater purpose for the housing of aircraft as well as a strategic point for the deployment of aircraft to fires. This also provides a central location for briefing of aircrew, refuelling of machines and ensured safe and secured parking for aircraft.
2. The ACT Rural Fire Service may use a general aviation facility during large protracted fire incidents. This facility would be used as a retardant mixing base for the running of fixed wing bombing aircraft. This would require a hardstand-surfaced area and access to mains reticulated water supply. The ACT Rural Fire Service due to the size of the ACT primarily uses rotary aircraft (Helicopters) for the detection and suppression of fires. The ACT Rural Fire Service would need to investigate and develop a need for the use of fixed wing bombing aircraft as well as procure the capability to mix large volumes of retardant.
3. The ACT Rural Fire Service has the same views of a general aviation area if it were to be built at another site other than Williamsdale in that the purpose built facility at Fairbairn Canberra Airport is more than sufficient for the requirements of the ACT and surrounding NSW fire districts to support aviation fire operations.
4. The establishment of a general aviation area at Williamsdale would not provide any cost benefit to the ACT Rural Fire Service in that if the service were to use the Williamsdale site or any other site for that matter in that storage facilities for



retardant, mixing plants, pumping equipment and other stores would be required. The current facility at Fairbairn Canberra Airport already provides for this in a purpose built facility.

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I thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Regards

Scott Cashmere
Operations Officer
On Behalf of Michael Ross
Chief Officer
ACT Rural Fire Service.



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**ACT Rural Fire Service
Comments on the Proposed General Aviation
Airfield Williamsdale**

16th November 2004

To: Rob Clifton – Manager Joint Operations and Plans.
Cc: Brian Murphy – Operations Manager, ACTRFS..

Mr Clifton,

I am writing to inform you that I have read the Draft Proposal for the General Aviation Airfield at Williamsdale.

The ACT Rural Fire Service currently has been offered and will utilize during operations a 1600m grassed airstrip at the National Equestrian Centre on the coter road for the use as an airbase for fixed wing aircraft during operational incidents. This site is in a prime location as it is outside the Canberra Airport flight zone and is on the western edge of the residential area of the ACT allowing easy access to the North, West and South of the ACT in particular the Brindabella Ranges.

The location of this airfield within the Williamsdale area would be a possible sight for the ACT Rural Fire Service to potentially use for operational purposes for fires burning within the Southern and Eastern parts of the ACT in particular Namadgi National Park and the Googong Dam area.

I would like to provide the follow comments from an ACT Rural Fire Service Planning and Operational perspective.

- A mains reticulated water supply (underground hydrants) with 65mm outlets for the shipping of standpipes be placed at strategic locations through the airfield for the purpose of water supply to mixing plants of fire retardant and the filling of fixed wing aircraft for the use of fire bombing during operational deployment.
- A tarmac hard surfaced area alongside the airstrip be made available for a permanent retardant mixing plant and supply stores (close to an underground hydrant), this should also able to take a heavy vehicle (dual axle, 20tonnes) for the purpose of supply of equipment to an airbase for operational purposes. The retardant mixing plant would require environmental safety protection measures around it in the case of spillage.



- The airstrip should not interfere with the flight paths for either commercial or private aircraft. Concerns that the main Commercial approach into the ACT from the south is directly above or close to this area, below this is the air corridor for helicopters departing the ACT and tracking south, this would cause delays in aircraft using the airfield for operations being able to take off from airstrip which during an operation is inconvenient as the aircraft need to be able to have the quickest turn around time while conducting retardant drops to have any effect on the slowing the rate of spread of the fire.

I would like to thank you for allowing the ACT rural Fire Service to provide comment on this topic and if you have any further queries please contact me directly on 0429100517.

Regards
Scott Cashmere
Planning Officer
ACT Rural Fire Service.

All communications to be addressed to:

NSW Rural Fire Service
Lake George Zone
10 Ellerton Drive
Queanbeyan NSW 2621

Telephone: (02) 62971840
e-mail: nick.turner@rfs.nsw.gov.au

NSW Rural Fire Service
Lake George Zone
PO Box 2234
Queanbeyan NSW 2621

Facsimile: (02) 62970068



Kevin Green
Senior Policy Officer
ACT Government
GPO Box 158
Canberra ACT 2601

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

ADM 71

23rd March 2007

Re: Airfield Facility at Williamsdale

Dear Mr Green

I can only reiterate my predecessor, Bruce Arthur's comments being that we would consider the establishment of a licensed airstrip in the Williamsdale area would provide a strategic and tactical resource available for aerial fire fighting operations.

The facility could be advantageous in the deployment of fixed wing aircraft, particularly into the Tinderry Ranges and the Northern area of the Monaro Team.

The Rural Fire Service is unable to commit to what extent the use of a facility at Williamsdale. It would be dictated by the circumstances to provide an efficient and effective base for aerial fire fighting operations on an as required basis.

The Rural Fire Service is not in a position to contribute towards the establishment/upkeep/maintenance of a General Aviation airfield if it were located either at Williamsdale or at an alternate site within the Canberra/Queanbeyan region.

I would like to thank you for allowing the Lake George Zone of the NSW Rural Fire Service to provide comment on this topic and if you have any further queries please contact me directly on

Superintendent
Nick Turner
Zone Manager
Lake George Zone

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CHIEF MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT
Business & Industry Development

Our ref:CMDG07/131

Superintendent Nick Turner
Zone Manager, Lake George Zone
NSW Rural Fire Service
PO Box 2234
QUEANBEYAN NSW 2620

Dear Superintendent Turner

The ACT Government is evaluating a proposal for construction of a General Aviation airfield near Williamsdale. The proponent, Mr Christopher Price, suggests that a major impetus for the airfield would be its use as an emergency services aerial fire-fighting operations base for fixed-wing aircraft. A letter of support to Mr Price's from your predecessor, Mr Bruce Arthur, was included with Mr Price's original proposal. A copy of Mr Price's original proposal, that includes a copy of Mr Arthur's letter, is attached.

In further evaluating the proposal for construction of a General Aviation airfield near Williamsdale I would appreciate your considered response to the following:

1. Does the NSW Rural Fire Service support Mr Price's statement that a General Aviation airfield near Williamsdale would make a major contribution towards improving fire-fighting capability for the region if it were available as an emergency services aerial operations base for fixed-wing aircraft?
2. Would the Service use a General Aviation airfield if it were established at Williamsdale and to what extent?
3. Would the Service use a General Aviation airfield if it were established at an alternative location within the Canberra/Queanbeyan region, and
4. Would the Service be willing to contribute towards the establishment/upkeep/maintenance of a General Aviation airfield if it were located either at Williamsdale or at an alternate site within the Canberra/Queanbeyan region?

Business and Industry Development is also discussing this issue with the ACT Rural Fire Service. If you require further information or discussions on this issue please contact me by phone on 02-6207 5843 or email at kevin.green@act.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Kevin Green
Senior Policy Officer
13 March 2007

CHIEF MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT
Business & Industry Development



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Our ref: CMDG07/131

Mr Michael Ross
Chief Officer
ACT Rural Fire Service
PO Box 104
Curtin, ACT, 2605

Dear Mr Ross

Business and Industry Development (BID) are evaluating a proposal for construction of a General Aviation airfield near Williamsdale. The ACT Government first investigated this proposal in 2004 and BID is now reviewing all information gathered.

The proponent, Mr Christopher Price, raises a number of issues to support his proposal including the suggestion that a major impetus for the airfield is the need for an emergency services aerial fire-fighting operations base for fixed-wing aircraft. The ACT Rural Fire Service provided comment on this issue in 2004. A copy of that letter is attached and I have also included a complete copy of Mr Price's original proposal.

In reviewing the original investigation into the proposal for construction of a General Aviation airfield near Williamsdale, and taking into account the previous response from RFS, I would appreciate your considered response to the following:

1. Does the ACT Rural Fire Service support Mr Price's statement that a General Aviation airfield near Williamsdale would make a major contribution towards improving fire-fighting capability for the region if it were available as an emergency services aerial operations base for fixed-wing aircraft?
2. Would the Service use a General Aviation airfield if it were established at Williamsdale and to what extent?
3. Would the Service use a General Aviation airfield if it were established at an alternative location within the Canberra/Queanbeyan region, and
4. Would the availability of a new airfield provide an improved and/or cost-effective means of delivering the ACT's emergency response capabilities?

Business and Industry Development is also discussing this issue with the NSW Rural Fire Service. If you require further information or discussions on this issue please contact me by phone on 02-6207 5843 or email at kevin.green@act.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Kevin Green
Senior Policy Officer
13 March 2007



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Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

TREASURER MINISTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

Dear

Thank you for your email of 15 January 2007 in relation to the proposal to establish an airfield at Williamsdale.

As you may know, the proposal for a General Aviation Airfield at Williamsdale has been examined at a preliminary level by my Department.

The view we have taken, and the view put to us by General Aviation interests, is that the private sector should take a leadership role to progress a workable commercial proposal. The fire-fighting capacity mentioned in your email is an important consideration, but this has not been the sole justification put forward by proponents for the development of a General Aviation facility at Williamsdale.

The Government has previously been presented with a conceptual proposal by Mr Chris Price, who has represented the interests of the General Aviation community on this issue. I met with Mr Price in August last year and agreed to examine a management model he presented in that meeting and also look at land use issues relevant to the site proposed. Out of that process emerged a view that cost and land resumption issues were likely to present significant hurdles and the management model proposed was not sufficiently well developed. The Government offered to continue to work with Mr Price on the issues at a finer level of detail.

Mr Price wrote to me again recently regarding his proposal and my Department is now working through those matters with responsible agencies.

While the Williamsdale concept has merit and appeal, there are significant factors and other stakeholder interests that also must be addressed. Cost, public interest, use of public funds, and current land use entitlements are real issues that require proper examination and consultation.

I will keep you informed of developments. Thank you for writing to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601
Phone (02) 6205 0104 Fax (02) 6205 0433 Email stanhope@act.gov.au



CHIEF MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT

Ref: CMD-M07/23

Date January 2007

To Chief Minister
Minister for Business and Economic Development

• Chief Executive

From Ian Cox, Business and Industry Development

Subject Response to Mr Christopher Price and re Williamsdale Airfield
proposal

Critical date and reason

Correspondence received from Mr Price regarding his proposal for development of an airfield at Williamsdale.

Background

You met with Mr Price on 3 August 2006 where it was agreed that officers from your Department would hold discussions with ACT Government agencies in relation to technical and operational elements of his proposal. I outlined the results of these preliminary discussions in a letter to Mr Price on 19 September 2006 (At Attachment A). A copy of the letter was sent to your office.

This advice in my letter of 19 September was intended to be preliminary in nature – there was a commitment given to a quick turnaround following the meeting with you – and the reply suggested a further meeting with Mr Price in late October to discuss the ACTPLA and GSO feedback. I also rang Mr Price on the day the letter was sent to him, to talk him through the emerging issues and the need for further dialogue to progress his model. That conversation was amicable.

Mr Price rang me in early November expressing anger at the letter, and making allegations about vested interests in the ACTPS blocking the proposal. He rejected a further invitation by me to meet and discuss his concerns.

From the Department's perspective, Mr Price does not seem to understand that an objective consideration process needs to occur and public servants are an impartial part of this process. Mr Price lamented to me after the meeting on 3 August 2006, that there was no strong ACTPS champion to push the proposal internally in the bureaucracy, following the retirement of Mr Andrew Wilson a former CMD officer. I indicated to Mr Price that I would look at the proposal objectively and progress it in the manner agreed at the meeting, but I was not the new internal champion of the proposal.

The Department has now commenced a process to look at the technical and factual issues raised by Mr Price in his January 2007 letter.

Issues

Mr Price's letter raises a number of complex issues. These need to be explored properly before a comprehensive reply can be sent. Accordingly, an interim response has been proposed.

Separate email correspondence on the airfield proposal has also been received from

Consultation

To explore the issues raised in Mr Price's letter consultation will need to be held with several Government agencies including ACTPLA, GSO, NSW RFS and JACS.

Recommendation

That you:

- Note this brief
- Note that a further advice will be provided to you once agencies have been consulted and a further letter will be drafted to Mr Price
- Sign the attached responses to Mr Price and to

Contact Officer: Ian Cox
Phone: 72004

Jon Stanhope MLA / /
AGREED/NOT AGREED/NOTED/PLEASE DISCUSS



CHIEF MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT

Our ref:

Mr Christopher Price

Dear Mr Price

Subsequent to your meeting with the Chief Minister of August 3 this year, the Department has had various discussions with other ACT Government agencies in relation to your proposal for a General Aviation Airfield at Williamsdale.

Discussions with the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) have confirmed that to fulfill the proposal:

- There may be a need to make use of two currently unleased blocks, resume all of one currently leased block and partially resume another two currently leased blocks;
- Current leaseholders are likely to not be amenable to any resumption and could create negative media around the issue; and that
- There may also be an issue about whether the land can actually be resumed under the "*Land Acquisition Act 1994*".

They also noted the potential significant cost for this resumption.

The ACT Government Solicitor's Office have asked for further clarity on several matters in your proposal, including:

- The ownership structure and governance model;
- The input structure (of funds);
- The suitability of the financial model given that the resumption costs for the currently leased land is likely to exceed the proposed cash input from the private sector; and
- Details of the proposed framework for on-site development;

The ACT Treasury will also seek from us clarity on the financial viability of the proposal. Any support by Treasury for the project will be based on financial factors including upfront cost and any potential for recurrent costs. To allay Treasury's concerns there will be a requirement for a thorough and detailed financial assessment of the proposal providing evidence of establishment costs within the proposed limit, and a demonstration of annual self-sufficiency.

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I will be out of the country until the last week of October – when I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the queries which have been raised by other ACT Government agencies and work out how we can address these concerns.

If you could contact Anne McKeveitt during my absence on 6207 2599, she can schedule a time for us to meet and work through these issues.

Yours sincerely

Ian Cox
Director, Business and Economic Development

13 September 2005



CHIEF MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT

Ref: *CMD XXXXXX*

Date 15 September 2006

To Chief Minister

- Chief Executive, CMD
- Director, Business and Economic Development

From Robert van Aalst, Business and Economic Policy

Subject Update on Chris Price proposal re potential Williamsdale Airfield

Purpose

To provide you with information on progress of discussions with Mr Chris Price regarding his General Aviation (GA) Airfield proposal for Williamsdale.

Background

- Mr Price is the proponent of a GA Airfield proposal for Williamsdale.
- Mr Price met with you on August 3, 2006. Mr Ian Cox was also present at this meeting.
- At this meeting, Mr Price tabled a three-page proposal document outlining a rough structure for a private/government partnership.
- The Department is consulting with other agencies regarding the Price proposal.

Issues

- The Business and Economic Development branch has had discussions with ACTPLA and the GSO regarding the proposal.
- ACTPLA has confirmed there are significant issues regarding the resumption of the land, not least of which is the potential cost and current leaseholder resistance.
- The GSO has sought clarification on all the issues that we asked it to provide advice on with regards this matter.
- We have written to Mr Price to seek clarification on the matters in his proposal that the GSO has queried and noted ACTPLA's issues. We have also suggested that a full financial assessment needs to be undertaken to allay any concerns ACT Treasury may have with the proposal.
- We have offered to meet with Mr Price to discuss the issues in an endeavour to seek a way forward.

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Media

There is currently no media attention given to this matter, however, there is a potential for further media coverage.

Recommendations

That you note this brief.

Robert van Aalst

Contact Officer: Robert van Aalst
Phone: x53185

Jon Stanhope MLA / /
AGREED/NOT AGREED/NOTED/PLEASE DISCUSS



Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

ATTORNEY GENERAL MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
MINISTER FOR ARTS, HERITAGE & INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

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Mr Paul Middleton
Executive Director
Recreational Aviation Australia Inc.
PO Box 1265
Fyshwick ACT 2609

Dear Mr Middleton,

Thank you for your letter of 28 March 2006 regarding the proposal to establish a General Aviation (GA) Airfield at Williamsdale.

I note your concerns in relation to access to suitable airfields by emergency services. I can advise you that earlier this year, the Emergency Services Authority (ESA) entered into a long term leasing arrangement at Fairbairn. This arrangement was entered into on the basis that it provided the best operational outcomes with regards to regional aerial fire fighting.

You have also enquired as to how the Williamsdale GA Airfield proposal is progressing. As you will understand, the development of a new facility in a greenfields site raises a significant number of issues that must be resolved before Government could consider committing to its development.

Since Mr Chris Price, the key project proponent, first presented the proposal to Government in early 2004, there have been a range of assessments conducted. My Department has worked with a number of consultants to assess the proposal, including the commissioning of a study to determine the suitability of the site.

While you mention in your letter that the development of the proposed Airfield at Williamsdale is of relatively low cost, from assessments undertaken to date, it is apparent that there are significant costs involved in the development of a possible airfield at Williamsdale, including establishment costs, acquisition of land and possible ongoing operational costs.

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601
Phone (02) 6205 0104 Fax (02) 6205 0433



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We note that aside from the ACT Emergency Services Authority (ESA) recently signing a ten-year lease at Fairbairn, there also appears some doubt as to the support for the Williamsdale option from the Canberra Airport Flying School. Both of these organisations were central to the proposal.

To develop the proposal further would require an additional detailed feasibility assessment. At this stage, the ACT Government is not in a position to commit funds for this purpose.

Thank you for writing to me on these matters.

Yours sincerely

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister



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Jon Stanhope MLA

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CHIEF MINISTER

ATTORNEY GENERAL MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
MINISTER FOR ARTS, HERITAGE & INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

Dear

Thank you for your email of 10 April 2006 about the refuelling difficulties at the Canberra International Airport (CIA).

While I note your concerns in relation to the inconvenience you have encountered over the past year, you may be aware that the Airport is within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth, through the Department of Transport and Regional Services. The ACT Government has no jurisdictional authority over its operation.

In the event that an approach to airport management fails to resolve this issue satisfactorily, I suggest that you may wish to raise this matter with the Federal Minister of Transport and Regional Services, The Honourable Warren Truss MP.

You have also enquired as to how the Williamsdale GA Airfield proposal is progressing. As you will understand, the development of a new facility in a greenfields site raises a significant number of issues that must be resolved before Government could consider committing to its development.

Since Mr Chris Price, the key project proponent, first presented the proposal to Government in early 2004, there have been a range of assessments conducted. My Department has worked with a number of consultants to assess the proposal, including the commissioning of a study to determine the suitability of the site.

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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Phone (02) 6205 0104 Fax (02) 6205 0433

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From the assessments undertaken to date, it is apparent that there are significant costs involved in the development of a possible airfield at Williamsdale, including establishment costs, acquisition of land and possible ongoing operational costs.

We also note that the ACT Emergency Services Authority (ESA) has recently signed a ten-year lease at Fairbairn and that there appears some doubt as to the support for the Williamsdale option from the Canberra Airport Flying School. Both of these organisations were previously central to the proposal.

However, to develop the proposal further would require additional detailed feasibility assessment. At this stage, the ACT Government is not in a position to commit funds for this purpose.

Thank you for writing to me on these matters.

Yours sincerely

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister



Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

ATTORNEY GENERAL MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
MINISTER FOR ARTS, HERITAGE & INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

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Mr Christopher Price

Dear Mr Price,

I am writing to advise you on how your proposal for a proposed general aviation airfield at Williamsdale is progressing.

You will be aware that the development of such a facility in a greenfields site raises a significant number of issues that must be resolved before Government could consider committing to its development.

Since you first presented the proposal to Government in early 2004, there have been a range of assessments conducted. My Department has worked with a number of consultants to assess the proposal, including the commissioning of a study to determine the suitability of the site.

From assessments undertaken to date, it is apparent that there are significant costs involved in the development of a possible airfield at Williamsdale, including establishment costs, acquisition of land and possible ongoing operational costs.

In relation to the Emergency Services aspect, I can advise you that earlier this year, the Emergency Services Authority (ESA) entered into a long term leasing arrangement at Fairbairn. This arrangement was entered into on the basis that it provided the best operational outcomes with regards to regional aerial fire fighting.

Aside from this there also appears some doubt as to the support for the proposal from the Canberra Airport Flying School. The support of both of these organisations was central to the business case and the ongoing financial viability of the project.

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Phone (02) 6205 0104 Fax (02) 6205 0433



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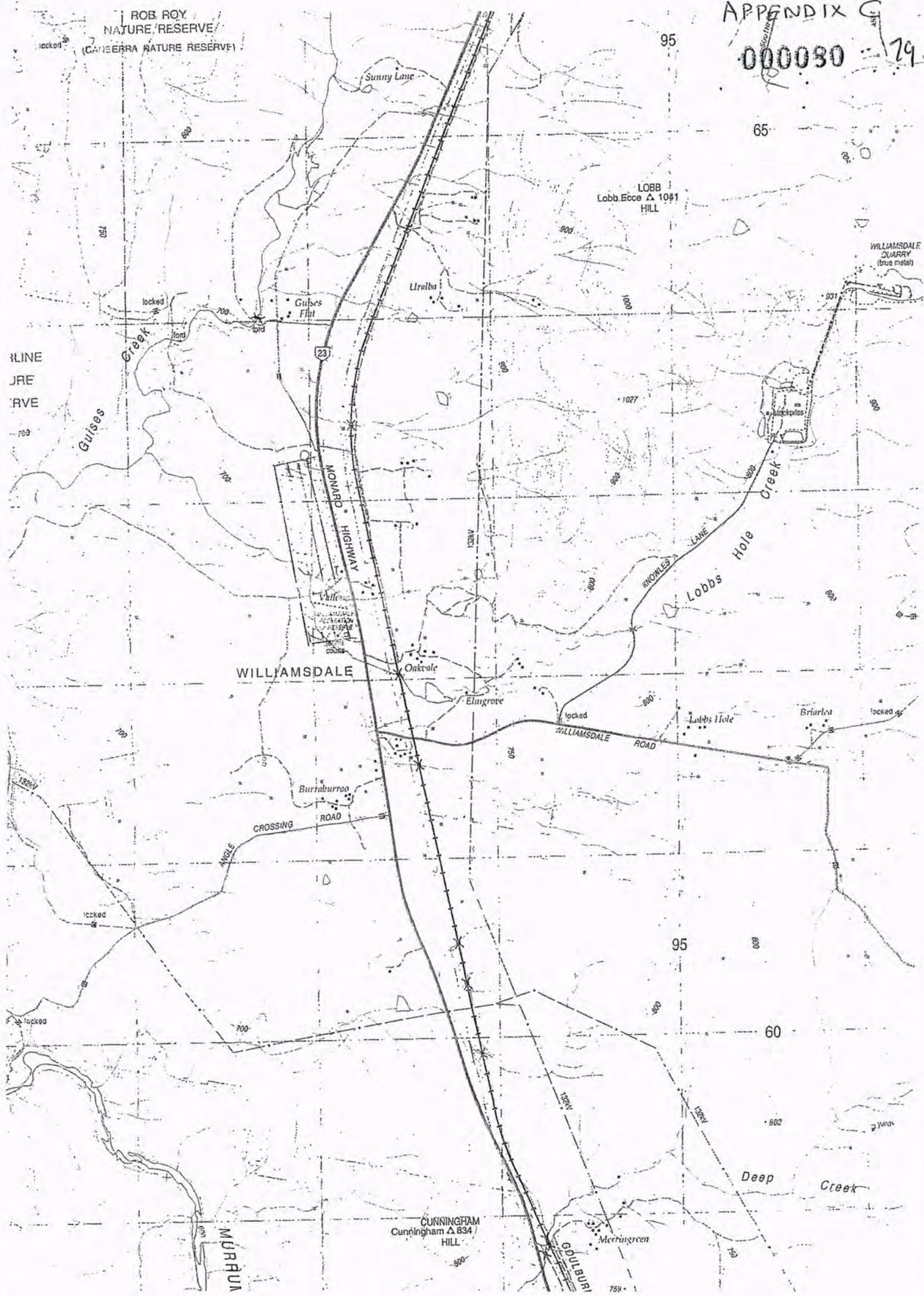
In addition, to develop the proposal further would require a substantial and detailed financial assessment and a full analysis of the business case. At this stage, the ACT Government is not in a position to commit funds for this purpose.

I thank you for your interest in this matter. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please feel free to contact my office.

Yours sincerely

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister

000030 29



LINE
RE
RE

WILLIAMSDALE

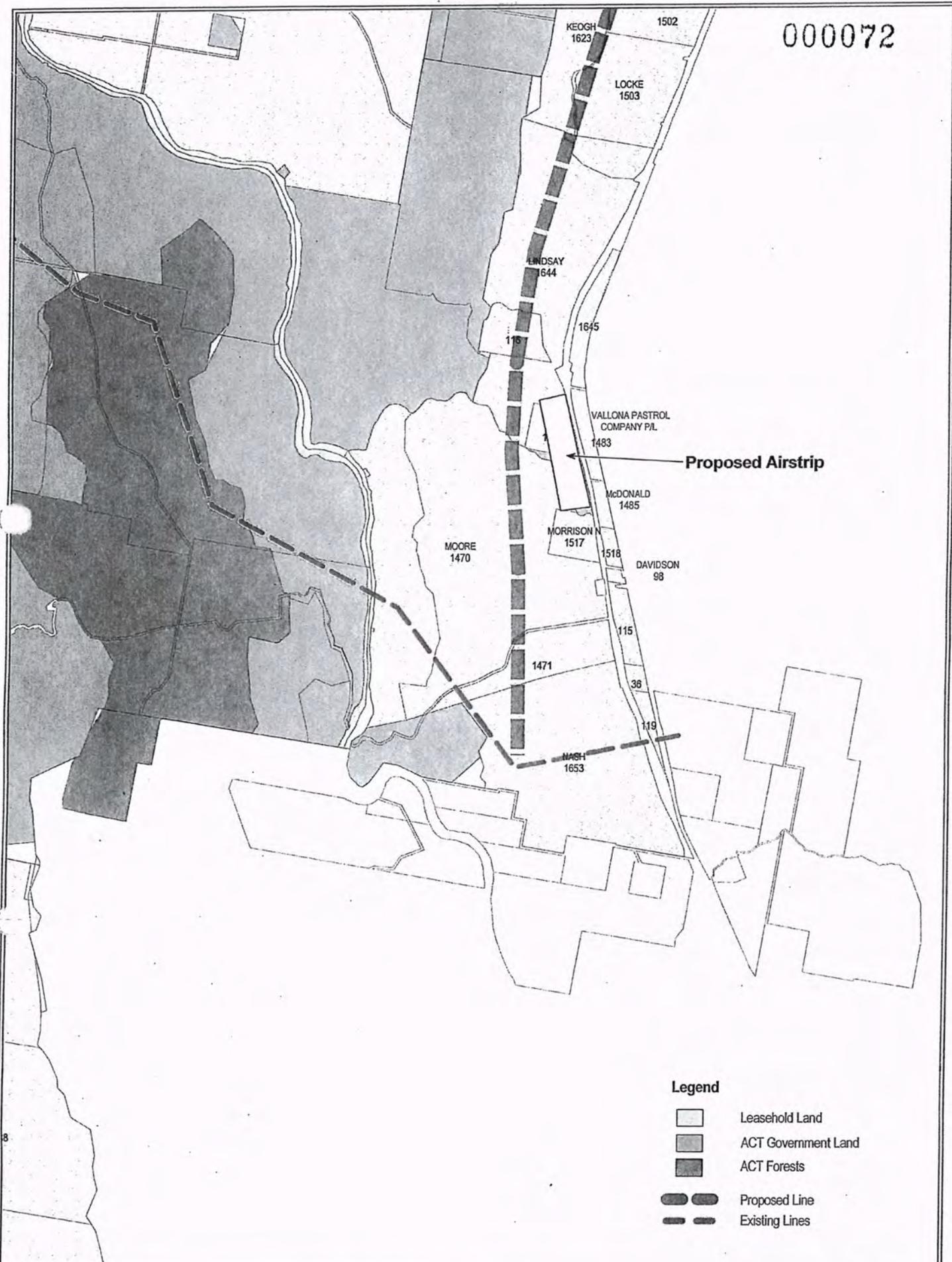
CUNNINGHAM
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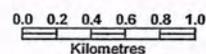


Legend

-  Leasehold Land
-  ACT Government Land
-  ACT Forests
-  Proposed Line
-  Existing Lines



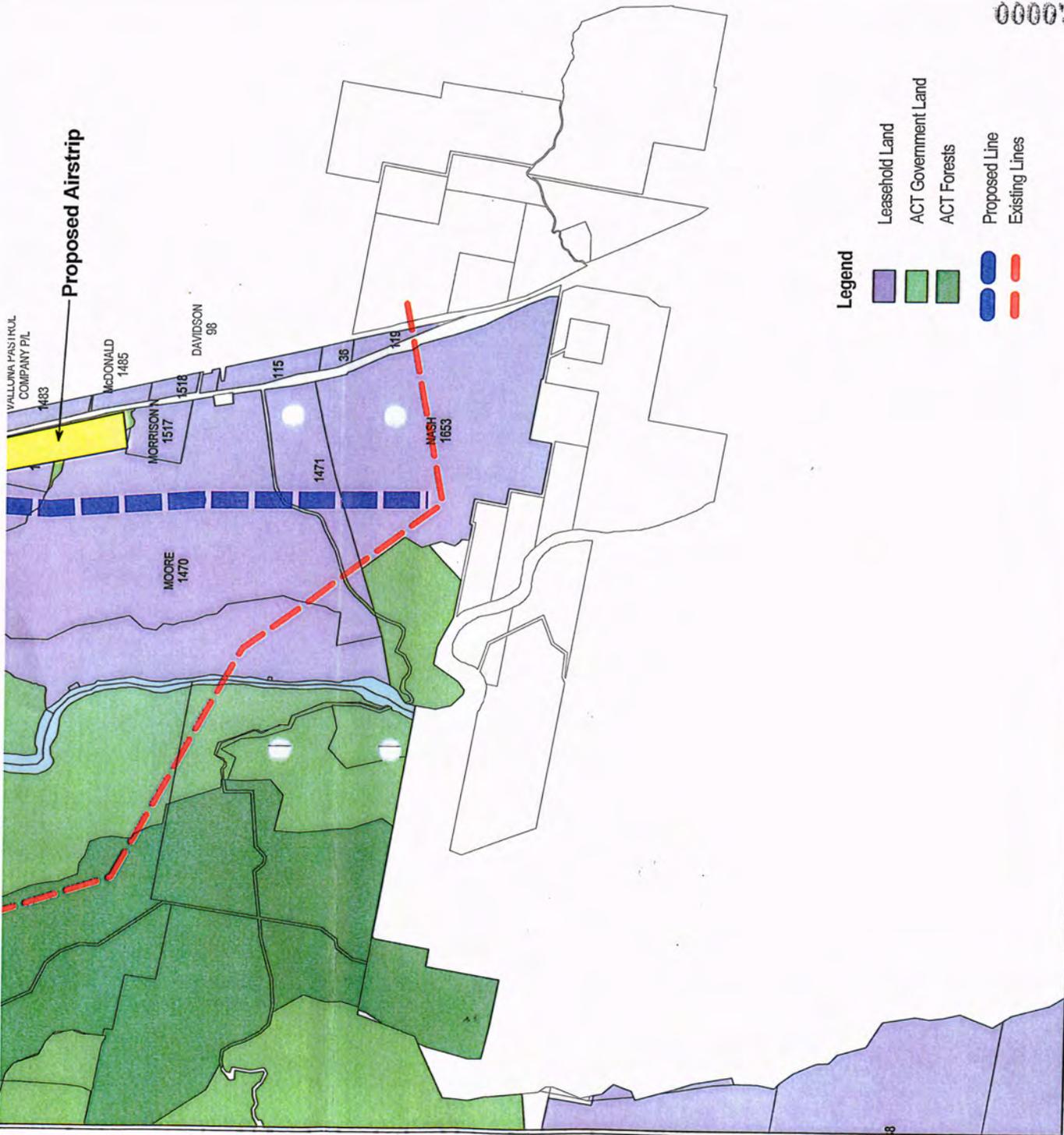
Proposed Airstrip



Scale: 1:30 000 Date: March 2007

ACT Planning & Land Authority

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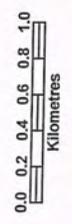


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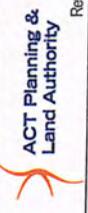
- Leasehold Land
- ACT Government Land
- ACT Forests
- Proposed Line
- Existing Lines

Proposed Airstrip

<http://www.actplala.act.gov.au/actplac> DPMH - 16 Challis Street, Dickson ACT 2601



Scale: 1:30 000 Date: March 2007



Ref: 070320

VALLUNA PASTORAL COMPANY PTL 1483

Proposed Airstrip

MCDONALD 1485

MORRISON 1517

DAVIDSON 98

MOORE 1470

1471

115

36

118

MASH 1653

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Green, Kevin

From: Van Aalst, Robert
Sent: Tuesday, 16 January 2007 9:03 PM
To: Green, Kevin
Subject: FW: Ministerial - In Confidence

Kevin,

This one may sound complex - and it probably is given you have no background. I suggest you ask for the extension as a first step, then perhaps read the background material under BEP/Planning/Williamsdale....

I think the first letter and short brief are a good idea - it seems there will be quite a deal of work around this one and a fair bit of liaising with ACTPLA, ESB and NSW RFS.

When I get back in we can hit the brief proper.

Thanks

Robert

Chris Price has written to the Chief Minister expressing disappointment about my correspondence from September. The brief is on its way to you.

Given India, given people are away, including me, and given the complexity of things, I suggest you get an extension to the back end of February to give us time to do a proper reply. It would also be worth doing a quick reply back to Price under a simple brief to the CM saying something like:

- attached is an interim reply to correspondence received from ... The letter raises a number of complex issues including allegations about the professional conduct of ACTPS officers. These matters need to be explored properly.

"Dear Mr Price

Thank you for your letter I have asked my Department to brief me on the issues you raise and I will reply to you in more detail on my return from India in late February.

CM"

The letter also raises some issues about ACTPLA's behaviour and professionalism and Mike Harris probably needs to write to Neil Savery.

You will also have to dig out the advices received from ACTPLA and GSO and attach them to the brief that goes to the CM.

The comments about the fire fighting capacities should now probably be explored in formal correspondence to our ESB and the NSW RFS.

All of this will take time to complete properly.

Sorry, it has become a project! I will send you some emails.

But when it comes to drafting, here are a few suggestions to work in:

para's 2 and 3

17/01/2007

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- [CM] 'keen to see the proposal proceed' / incorrect interpretation - CM had some empathy for the proposal but did not make any direction to me to make it 'work'. What was agreed was CMD would seek advice from ACTPLA on the lease and resumption issues and GSO would be asked to examine on the financial / operational model put forward by Price. This was done.

- It is not for the Government to do the background and legal work of the private group, pushing this proposal and its self interest. We did not offer solutions - we offered to test some of the issues and assumptions of the proposal.

para 4

- veracity testing is what Treasury do to all numbers and proposals - ie, examine it closely / in discussions, ACTPLA did say that the numbers presented by Mr Price seemed unrealistic

para 5

- i think we have said repeatedly that we would assist the private sector to scope the study (ToR, etc), but it should fund the study itself. Position hasn't changed and offer hasn't changed.

para 6

- will review this statement. The information contained is new and ACTPLA will be asked to review.

para 7

- it is not a matter for the landowners to decide. The public interests grounds of the proposal are weak.

para 10

- i think we need to get some up to date advice from ESB and possibly NSW RFS

para 13/14

- allegation that ACTPLA officers are behaving unprofessionally / refer to ACTPLA

para 16

- convenient interpretation of the meeting and the Chief Minister's instructions

The brief also needs to say that on 18 September I telephoned Mr Price and talked him through the letter he was about to receive. I also explained that I would be on leave until the end of October and it would be a good idea if we arranged a meeting then to talk through the issues raised in the letter. He seemed amenable to this approach.

Mr Price rang me in early November 2006 expressing his disappointment with the letter and saying he believed that self interested officers in ACTPLA were providing misleading advice and preventing proper consideration of the proposal. He said he intended to investigate land holdings by ACTPLA officers in the Williamsdale area and would go to the media. He had no intention of talking to the Government any further. I offered to meet with him to talk matters through but he was not interested.

Ian Cox
Director
Business and Economic Policy
Chief Minister's Department

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CHIEF MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT
Business & Industry Development

Ref: (Ministerial Number, TRIM number and/or CMD file number – text is 10pt font and right aligned)

Date 9 February 2007 Pages 7
To Mr Gerry Allen, Manager, Leasing
Fax 02-6207 1862 Phone 02-6207 4965
From Kevin Green, Business and Industry Development
Fax 02-6207 0033 Phone 02-6207 5843
Subject Williamsdale Airfield Proposal



Urgent?

Number C64/07 CMD-807123
Date Due 30/01/2007
000064 64

Chief Minister Correspondence

From: Price Christopher

Subject: Proposal to develop a General Aviation airfield at Williamstown in the ACT

Referred to Economic Development, Arts and Comms

Action Required

For Appropriate Action, Economic Development, Arts and Comms. Due:
30/01/2007 4:46 PM

Notes

Five horizontal lines for notes.

Completion details

Action Offi _____

Telephone no _____

File place _____

Date Comple _____

End of Report

DB Name CM Support



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Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

TREASURER MINISTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

Dear

Thank you for your email of 15 January 2007 in relation to the proposal to establish an airfield at Williamsdale.

As you may know, the proposal for a General Aviation Airfield at Williamsdale has been examined at a preliminary level by my Department.

The view we have taken, and the view put to us by General Aviation interests, is that the private sector should take a leadership role to progress a workable commercial proposal. The fire-fighting capacity mentioned in your email is an important consideration, but this has not been the sole justification put forward by proponents for the development of a General Aviation facility at Williamsdale.

The Government has previously been presented with a conceptual proposal by Mr Chris Price, who we understand is representing the interests of the General Aviation community on this matter. I met with Mr Price in August last year and agreed to have my officials examine a management model he presented in that meeting and also look at land use issues relevant to the site proposed. Out of that process emerged a view that cost and land resumption issues were likely to present significant hurdles and the management model proposed was not sufficiently well developed. The Government offered to continue to work with Mr Price on the issues at a finer level of detail.

Mr Price wrote to me again recently regarding his proposal and my Department is now working through those matters with responsible agencies.

While the Williamsdale concept has merit and appeal, there are significant factors and other stakeholder interests that also must be addressed. Cost benefit, public interest, use of public funds, and current land use entitlements are real issues that require full examination and consultation.

I will endeavour to keep you informed of developments. Thank you for writing to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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Phone (02) 6205 0104 Fax (02) 6205 0433 Email stanhope@act.gov.au

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Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

TREASURER MINISTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

Mr Christopher Price

Dear Mr Price

Thank you for your letter of 15 January 2007 in relation to the proposal to establish an airfield at Williamsdale.

I have asked my Department to brief me on the issues you raise and I will reply to you in more detail on my return from India in late February 2007.

Thank you for writing to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601
Phone (02) 6205 0104 Fax (02) 6205 0433 Email stanhope@act.gov.au

COPY

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CHIEF MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT

Date due with Minister's Office
30/1/07

Date due with CE Office at least 2 working days before Minister's Office
29/1/07

Tracking Numbers
CMD-
B07/23

Any other critical date and reason

Subject: Proposed to develop a general aviation airfield at Williamstown in the ACT.

Reply to correspondence from: Mr Christopher Price
(if relevant)

Contact Officer: Kevin Green

Telephone:

Cleared by Manager: Robab van Aalsb.
(type/print name and sign)

Date:

Ext 2/2/07

Cleared by Director: Ian Cox
(type/print name and sign)

Due

Date: 29/1/07

Cleared by Deputy Chief Executive:
(type/print name and sign)

Date:

Cleared by Chief Executive:

Date:



CHIEF MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT

Ref: CMD-M07/23

Date January 2007

To Chief Minister
Minister for Business and Economic Development

• Chief Executive

From Ian Cox, Business and Industry Development

Subject Response to Mr Christopher Price and
proposal Williamsdale Airfield

Critical date and reason

Correspondence received from Mr Price regarding his proposal for development of an airfield at Williamsdale.

Background

You met with Mr Price on 3 August 2006 where it was agreed that officers from your Department would hold discussions with ACT Government agencies in relation to technical and operational elements of his proposal. I outlined the results of these preliminary discussions in a letter to Mr Price on 19 September 2006 (At Attachment A). A copy of the letter was sent to your office.

This advice in my letter of 19 September was intended to be preliminary in nature – there was a commitment given to a quick turnaround following the meeting with you – and the reply suggested a further meeting with Mr Price in late October to discuss the ACTPLA and GSO feedback. I also rang Mr Price on the day the letter was sent to him, to talk him through the emerging issues and the need for further dialogue to progress his model. That conversation was amicable.

Mr Price rang me in early November expressing anger at the letter, and making allegations about vested interests in the ACTPS blocking the proposal. He rejected a further invitation by me to meet and discuss his concerns.

I believe that Mr Price does not fully understand that an objective consideration process needs to occur and public servants are an impartial part of this process. Mr Price lamented to me after the meeting on 3 August 2006, that there was no strong ACTPS champion to push the proposal internally in the bureaucracy, following the retirement of Mr Andrew Wilson a former CMD officer. I indicated to Mr Price that I would look at the proposal objectively and progress it in the manner agreed at the meeting.

The Department has now commenced a process to look at the technical and factual issues raised by Mr Price in his January 2007 letter.

Issues

Mr Price's letter raises a number of complex issues. These need to be explored properly before a comprehensive reply can be sent. Accordingly, an interim response has been proposed.

Separate email correspondence on the airfield proposal has also been received from

Consultation

To explore the issues raised in Mr Price's letter consultation will need to be held with several Government agencies including ACTPLA, GSO, NSW RFS and JACS.

Recommendation

That you:

- Note this brief
- Note that a further advice will be provided to you once agencies have been consulted and a further letter will be drafted to Mr Price
- Sign the attached responses to Mr Price and to

Contact Officer: Ian Cox
Phone: 72004

Jon Stanhope MLA / /
AGREED/NOT AGREED/NOTED/PLEASE DISCUSS

Williamsdale Airport Development and Financial Analysis Study

Terms of Reference

Purpose of Study

This study is a further step in the evaluation of a proposal put to the ACT Government for the development of a General Aviation airfield at Williamsdale. The purpose of this phase of the study is to develop operationally acceptable planning options and determine their financial implications for the ACT Government.

The basic proposal is for a 1000m grass strip with minimum facilities, parking space for aircraft and sites for lease of hangars. The airfield must accommodate as a core function emergency fire-fighting services facilities. These facilities will be scoped separately and the parameters made available for the study. Ab-initio flying training is also envisaged as a primary function. Direct and indirect General Aviation activities that will enhance the commercial viability of the airfield should be considered in the study.

There are several possible options for development beyond the basic proposal which would vary the cost of development, potential patronage and revenue. Options identified thus far include:

- A longer runway
- A cross-runway
- Bitumen or other surface thresholds
- A full bitumen or other runway surface
- Lights for night operations.

The consultant will, in consultation with the ACT study manager, select up to four representative options for investigation.

An area of land has been identified as suitable for the basic proposal. Additional land requirements need to be identified for the above and other possible options, as well as for any General Aviation-related activities which could enhance the commercial viability of the development.

Areas of expertise required

It is anticipated that three predominant areas of expertise will be called upon in delivering the study:

- Expertise in the aviation industry, particularly in airfield design. To provide reliable costing bases it will be necessary to identify and define a number of realistic

development options for a GA airfield and generate preliminary designs for each at the Williamsdale location;

- Ability to conduct market surveys. It will be necessary to determine the level of demand and potential revenue associated with each of the identified airfield development options; and
- Ability to develop a business case. The costing information for each option and the associated revenue will form the basis for a series of analyses to determine which options are commercially viable, either on an operating cost basis (which would take construction of the facility as a 'sunk cost'), or on a full cost-recovery basis.

Each option would require sufficient preliminary design work to be undertaken to enable a reliable estimate of costs. Assessments of potential demand and willingness to pay also will be required to assess revenue streams. It is anticipated that these assessments would be made through market surveys, however alternative means may be proposed for consideration.

Outcome of study

The study will develop a number of design options for a Williamsdale airfield, and produce preliminary estimates of revenue and expenses for each option. For each option the likely requirements of, or returns to, Government should also be identified.

The potential development patterns over time are also of interest, and the study will also identify growth options and associated land requirements.

Timing of study

Government is keen to progress consideration of this proposal. An *indicative* timetable for this study process is therefore as follows:

- Advertise for expressions of interest 12 February 2005 – allow 7 days for response
- Shortlist preferred consultants by 25 February
- Call for proposals 28 February – allow 2 weeks for responses
- Select consultant by 18 March
- Complete consultancy documentation by 25 March
- Study commences on 28 March, progress report 15 April, completion by 29 April
- Study finalised by 13 May

Other factors

A significant issue in preparing costings for development options is land cost. It is anticipated that the successful tenderer may be required to obtain commercial valuations for the cost of land to be resumed for the development(s).

The ability to operate effectively as a base for aerial fixed-wing fire fighting operations is crucial to the development. Discussions will be held with ACT Emergency Services and NSW Rural Fire Service to establish the parameters for development of the site to meet the needs of aerial fire-fighting operations. These discussions are expected to commence in early February for completion that month, and will primarily be conducted by the ACT's in-house aviation consultant and provided as part of the study documentation to the successful tenderer.

The development is taking place adjacent to the Monaro Highway, one of the National Capital Authority's Approaches of National Significance. This is likely to place constraints on the development of aviation facilities at the site which will need to be reflected in design work. Whilst the ACT will conduct initial discussions with the NCA to identify any design constraints, the successful tenderer should take into account the possible need to consult with the NCA on design concepts.

A steering group will be established comprising representatives of relevant ACT Government agencies. This steering group will develop the detailed requirements for the financial analysis to be produced by the study.

This committee will be chaired by Policy Group. The study will be managed by Andrew Wilson, Manager, Cabinet and Policy Group, Chief Minister's Department.

Financial Study of Proposed Airfield

The Chief Minister's Department of the Australian Capital Territory is calling for expressions of interest from consultants to undertake a study of the financial implications for the Territory of a proposed General Aviation (GA) airfield at Williamsdale in the ACT. The purpose of this study is to identify and assess various development options in terms of their cost and demand and revenue.

The study requires three areas of expertise:

- Expertise in the aviation industry, particularly in GA airfield design.
- Ability to determine the level of demand and potential revenue associated with each of the identified airfield development options; and
- Ability to develop a business case.

Expressions of interest will be assessed on demonstrated expertise in these three areas, and detailed proposals will be sought from the best qualified. Expressions of interest should include information on relevant work undertaken by consultants, and should also include contact details for referees for relevant studies previously undertaken.

Closing date for expressions of interest is close of business Friday 18 February 2005. Further information is available from Andrew Wilson on (02) 6205 0592.

Parameters for proposals to undertake a Financial Study of Williamsdale

This document needs to be read in conjunction with the Terms of Reference for the financial study of the proposed Williamsdale General Aviation airfield.

Objective of study

The purpose of the study is to establish:

- The estimated cost of constructing an airfield at Williamsdale;
- The estimated patronage for the proposed airfield development, including revenues which would be generated by uses; and
- The on-going costs of operation of the facility once constructed.

Base-Line development for the study

The base-line for airfield development is to be a 1000m grass airstrip utilising Blocks 1647, 1648 and 1482 Tuggeranong in the Australian Capital Territory. This is to be used both for the cost estimates and for the revenue and operating cost estimates.

Advice on other development options

The ACT Government also wishes to obtain information on costs and revenues associated with incremental airfield developments beyond the 'base-line' development option. It is expected that the consultant will identify development options which are most likely to generate patronage and revenue. Options might include extending the runway, hard-surfacing the runway, providing a cross runway, facilitating night operations, or some combination of these options.

Output of study

Ideally, the ACT Government wishes to generate demand/revenue curves (that is, potential patronage at each price-point, for a range of charging options) for each of these options, as well as the information on their capital and operating costs. It is recognised that within the limits of the study budget of \$20 000 it may not be feasible to explore all possible options. Proposals should therefore be put forward on the basis of what can be delivered within the identified budget.

The study **must** deliver the required information on the base-line case. Consultants should also identify which, if any, additional development options they propose to examine within the scope of the study, and it is expected that these additional developments will be selected based on expert industry knowledge of which options are likely to represent the best investment (additional return for additional investment).

Market study

The ability to deliver an effective market study is crucial to this analysis. Consultants should identify the methodology proposed for the market study in sufficient detail for the Steering Group to satisfy itself that the approach is rigorous.

Spread-sheet analysis

The market analysis for each option examined must be accompanied by an electronic spread-sheet which will provide the market information in a form which will enable the Government to examine all options within the range of charges and associated demand identified in the study.

Development of proposals

As the range of development options is significant, consultants may wish to discuss proposed approaches to the study with the Study Manager. These discussions will be held confidential. The Study Manager is Andrew Wilson, who can be contacted on (02) 6205 0592 or 0402 393 347.

Information in proposals

Proposals should include detail of who will perform what role in completing the study, and provide curriculum vitae for the persons undertaking work on the study.

Timing for proposals

Proposals should be provided by close of business on Friday 11 March 2005. They may be forwarded electronically to:

andrew.wilson@act.gov.au

A hard copy should provided to:

Andrew Wilson
Cabinet and Policy Group
ACT Chief Minister's Department
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

(rough) Notes on Discussions regarding proposed Williamsdale GA Airport
Proposal

6/3/06

Ian Cox, Rod Burgess, Robert van Aalst

- Rod handed over several copies of the original proposal received from a Christopher Price January 2004 and an 'operational feasibility assessment report' commissioned by CMD and completed by 'Airport Technical Services Pty Ltd' – dated August/September 2004.

Rod gave an overview of the history of the issue.

- General aviation owners have been looking for alternatives to Canberra International Airport (CIA) since prices have risen dramatically and the Airport owners seem to have a strong commercial focus.
- Some small plane operators have moved to Yass and other regional small airfields (and perhaps some to Cooma?)
- CIA likes the Flying Schools (because they generate income???)
- There were original thoughts that Emergency Services would also benefit from a 'less busy' airstrip closer to potential fire situations – However – Emergency services have recently (?) come to an agreement with CIA for a permanent location at CIA

introduced Chris Price to the CM (some time in 2003?)

- The Chris Price proposal had the value of the work estimated at \$600k, which didn't include land acquisition (which would be a significant amount as there was one privately leased block involved).
- The 'Assessment of Operational Feasibility' report, commissioned by CMD, went to cabinet and they asked for a further, more comprehensive study to be undertaken – which would probably cost in the vicinity of \$50k - \$80k. Such a study would include:
 - o A full site analysis
 - o A review of the original proposal
 - o Environmental assessment
 - o A firming up of costs – including land acquisition
 - o A firming up of usage potential
 - o A full assessment done of other potential sites (is Williamsdale the best option for a GA airfield?)
- Rod suggested the issue was luke warm politically and that there was no strong view either way as to proceeding with the option or canning it.
- The issue is not seen as a high priority
- Rod suggested that we should 'sit and wait' until it receives more attention – then the plan would be to instigate the full and more comprehensive study.

QUESTION

What is the **benefit** to the Government in proceeding:

1. With a costly consultancy
2. With the proposal should the consultancy look favourably on the option

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Extract from letter by CM 050505

Should the Government determine that it could be of benefit, it will then be necessary to undertake a full Preliminary Assessment, including environmental impact, heritage and community impact studies. This will provide the opportunity for comprehensive community consultation, to include both those people who support such a development as well as those who consider themselves disadvantaged by it.

000049

MINUTE

Date	10 May 2006
To	Chief Minister
From	Department of Economic Development
Subject	Williamsdale General Aviation Airport

Background/Issues

- In June 2003 you met with members of the GA community led by [redacted] to discuss the possibility of a GA airfield for the ACT. In January 2004, Mr Chris Price submitted a proposal to your office in relation to establishment of an airfield at Williamsdale.
- The Williamsdale proposal assumes the support of the Canberra Airport Flying School and the ACT Emergency Services Authority's (ESA) fire fighting aircraft. Since then, [redacted] wrote to you withdrawing his support for the proposal. Additionally, the ACT ESA has recently entered into a ten-year lease at Fairbairn.
- Canberra International Airport (CIA) denies it is trying to minimise GA aircraft usage at the Airport or that it has increased costs significantly to this sector of the industry. The CIA has welcomed the proposal for a second airport to cater for general aviation.
- Despite support for the Williamsdale proposal from 80 small aircraft owners, the GA community is a small, select segment of the ACT population.
- The proposal indicated a cost of \$660,000 for the establishment of the airfield – this is likely to be understated. An additional, but as yet unknown amount, would be required to cover the cost of acquiring the land (a portion of which is currently privately leased) and to meet ongoing operational costs, where these are not met by user fees.
- An 'Assessment of Operational Feasibility' commissioned by the Chief Minister's Department (CMD) in September 2004 noted the Williamsdale site suitable for a 1,000m grassed runway for use by single engine (and limited twin engine) general aviation.
- The next step, of an 'Independent Analysis of the Business Case' to further examine the financial aspects of the submitted proposal was never undertaken as the funding allocation was withdrawn in a round of budgetary savings in 2005. It is considered that around \$80,000 would now be required to undertake this consultancy.
- You have recently written to the project's main proponent, Mr Chris Price, advising him the Government was not in a position to commit funds to an analysis of the business case.

Recommendation

- The Department does not believe it is in the Government's interests to progress the project at this stage due to:
 - The ACT ESA securing a long-term arrangement at the CIA,
 - A likely lack of support from the Flying School,
 - An unverified amount of \$660,000 for establishment costs,
 - Land acquisition costs which are likely to be substantial,
 - The potential for ongoing operational costs where user fees are inadequate,
 - Current ACT Government budget issues and the apparent lack of a business case.

Contact Officer:

Robert van Aalst
X53185

3 AUGUST 2006

Meeting between Chris Price (Williamsdale Airfield proponent) and Jon Stanhope (possibly) and Greg Friedewald.

Meeting Notes for Ian Cox

There have been a number of briefs completed and correspondence drafted on this issue over the past few months. The policy position we put forward was that, contrary to the earlier direction taken by the CMD, the proposal for a General Aviation Airfield should come OFF the agenda of the Government due to:

- Current budgetary position (of the ACT Government)
- A lack of identifiable and broadly-based 'community benefit' and
- An unproven business case (which raises the possibility that a GA airfield could be costly, not only to establish, but also as an ongoing cost concern to Government)

The Chief Minister's most recent letter to Mr Price included the following:

"..... the Government is not in a position to fund this work at this time. However, if the private sector is prepared to fund this work, the Government would assist with the scoping of the study to ensure the appropriate issues are addressed....."

SCOPING OF STUDY

Attached are the initial 'terms of reference' as drawn up by CMD in early 2005 for a consultancy (which never proceeded). The purpose of this consultancy was to test the financial viability of the proposal. It is clear that a **comprehensive Business Plan** and **Cost Benefit Analysis** needs to be undertaken on this proposal before anyone would invest financially in it. Other issues that would need to be considered include:

- An **environmental assessment** (possibly an EIS – Am unclear on the requirements)
- An assessment of the **noise impact** and general **community impact** of an Airfield at Williamsdale
- **Planning issues** would need to be addressed with ACTPLA and the NCA (as the Monaro Highway is a 'Major Approach' to the National Capital)
- **'Potential costing/availability'** of the land – some of which is currently ACT Government owned, and the balance privately leased
- **CASA issues** would need to be further addressed – noting that an examination of 'controlled airspace issues' was briefly covered in the initial consultancy.

Attached are:

- The meeting brief prepared for the CM for this meeting
- Copies of the most recent correspondence between the CM and Mr Price
- A copy of the TOR for the unfulfilled Business Case study
- A copy of the initial 'assessment of operational feasibility' study

New ACT airport plan (Date: 17/01/2005)

The ACT Government will prepare a business case for a proposed second airport, at Williamsdale for light aircraft and pilot training, a spokesman for ACT chief minister Jon Stanhope said.

He said the proposal had been before treasury and cabinet and warranted more analysis.

The airport's proponent, Chris Price, who has been pushing the case for more than a year, said the 1000m grass strip would be used by firefighting aircraft and for pilot training.

Price said Bankstown, Goulburn and Cooma airports were cheaper to fly out of since Canberra's airport was privatised and the territory had lost many aircraft owners and industries associated with flying and maintenance.

Noise would affect three homes at Williamsdale, but commercial activity would be generated by fuel sales and accommodation. The training patterns would run to the west of Williamsdale, over a national park.

<http://www.aopa.com.au/infocentre/news.cfm#92>

6.4. Proposed General Aviation Airport at Williamsdale

Alex Ananian-Cooper, Capital Airport Group, advised RAPAC of a proposal for a general aviation airport at

Williamsdale. Details of the proposal are not yet available from the proponents.

Members suggested the proponents present their proposal for Williamsdale at the next RAPAC meeting in September.

Action Item: Alex Ananian-Cooper to organise for the proponents to give RAPAC a brief on their proposal for Williamsdale at the next meeting in September.

Agenda Item: Ongoing

<http://www.airservicesaustralia.com/customer/rapac/rapacact050428.pdf>

News

September 27, 2005

 [E-mail This Page](#)

Second ACT airport under 'serious consideration'

The ACT government is considering a proposal for a second low-cost airport in the ACT to cater for general aviation, according to a report in today's *Canberra Times*.

It said the ACT government had "signalled it is very interested" in the proposal put forward by a private citizen, Chris Price, in a submission to the government in January.

The proposed site for the airport is at Williamsdale on land that is mostly held by the ACT Government and partly held under a private pastoral lease.

It is said to be one of a long line of sites considered over time by the ACT government as a means of easing pressure on general aviation caused by the growth of Canberra International Airport.

8 March 2004

<http://www.travelbiz.com.au/articles/e6/0c01e4e6.asp>

MR STEFANIAK: I have a supplementary question. Minister, will the government definitely build a dragway at Majura or are you looking at other options, such as Williamsdale? I note your answer, but I saw in the press something about 307 hectares, or something like that, of land at Williamsdale for some other motor sport facility that no-one seemed to know about. My question, basically, is: will you definitely build it at Majura or is the government looking at other options, such as Williamsdale?

MR QUINLAN: I cannot bring you up to date exactly on Williamsdale, but an area of Williamsdale is also being kicked around as a general aviation airport as well because of the pressure that is being applied to general aviation at Canberra airport. A lot of the general aviation has been just elbowed out and people who ran businesses out of the Canberra airport previously are now standing at Cooma and other places, even as far as Cowra, in terms of flying schools and those sorts of things that have been squeezed out.

I think that it is fair to say that the Williamsdale site is inhibited largely by the development at Royalla. It is a development outside our control-it is a New South Wales development-of 100 houses or so, but I am not sure exactly of the number. It is quite independent of the ACT. It is not dependent on our infrastructure, but established, and that tract of land is now placed within earshot of suburban development

<http://www.hansard.act.gov.au/hansard/2005/week02/493.htm>

Govt to examine new ACT airport

By John Thistleton

Wednesday, 12 January 2005

Canberra is another step towards a second airport, catering for light aircraft and pilot training.

The ACT Government will prepare a business case for the proposed airport, at Williamsdale.

A spokesman for ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said the proposal, which had been before Treasury and Cabinet, had merit and warranted more analysis. Federal authorities did not have a problem with it and he did not think Canberra Airport would have a problem, because it would remove light aircraft activity.

It was too early to say who would build the airport or who would run it. The business plan would probably be finished within six months.

Aircraft owners who left the territory when the Canberra Airport was privatised could return if a general aviation strip opened.

The airport's proponent, Chris Price, who has been pushing the case for more than a year, said the 1000m grass strip would be used by firefighting aircraft and for pilot training, generating a new industry for Canberra.

Mr Price, a pilot and retired policeman, said 128 aircraft would come tomorrow if the airport was built. He knew of three ultra-light and two general aviation schools and two maintenance organisations interested in Williamsdale.

A Civil Aviation Safety Authority spokesman said the authority would have no involvement because the airport would be outside controlled air space and it would not need a CASA certificate.

Mr Price said Bankstown, Goulburn and Cooma airports were cheaper to fly out of since Canberra's airport was privatised and the territory had lost many aircraft owners and industries associated with flying and maintenance.

Noise would affect three homes at Williamsdale, but commercial activity would be generated by fuel sales and accommodation:

The training patterns would run to the west of Williamsdale, over a national park and the second strip would remove many flights from the central Canberra area.

Barry Smith, whose family has farmed the block identified for the air strip for 140 years, opposed the idea because it would disrupt his super-fine merino grazing business. He said hills and north-west winds from the Murrumbidgee River corridor would jeopardise safety and an airport would harm the environment.

Royalla-Williamsdale Landcare chairman Bob Moore said landholders objected to the plan. The strip would be about 300m from a recreation park and on a travelling stock reserve.

Canberra Aero Club aircraft manager Ben Matthers said the club, which had 120 members was keen to see anything supporting general aviation in the area.

"We would like to stay at Canberra airport and believe there are moves there to create something for general aviation there."

Canberra Airport declined to comment.

http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/detail.asp?story_id=362819&y=2005&m=1&class=News&subclass=Local&category=General+News&class_id=7

1. INTRODUCTION

Chris Price, a local aviation enthusiast, has developed a proposal for the establishment of a grass airfield in the vicinity of Williamsdale in the ACT, just to the north of the service station on the Monaro Highway. The discussions with the ACT Government have been going well and the signs are looking very positive.

Chris has expressions of interest from local emergency service providers as well as GA and AUF flying schools. He has ongoing meetings with the ACT Government and would like as many expressions of support from potential users of such a facility as possible.

2. LATEST INFORMATION

5 May 2005

from Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister for the ACT

Dear

Thank you for your e-mail of 6 April 2005 about the proposed General Aviation (GA) airfield at Williamsdale.

As you will understand, developing a new facility in a greenfields site raises a significant number of issues which have to be resolved before Government can commit to its development. The ACT Government commissioned a physical feasibility study to assess whether the nominated site could accommodate the proposed activities safely. That study was completed late last year and found that the site is physically suited to a range of aviation activities including ab-initio training.

The proposal put to Government by Mr Price suggested that on-going operations, at least, could be supported by revenue from GA activities at the airfield. In order to establish whether the Government wishes to proceed further, we need to have a good understanding of the financial aspect of the proposal - the costs of construction, operating costs and revenue. We are currently looking at options for establishing the financial elements of the proposal.

When we have that information we will evaluate whether it is in the interests of the broader community to develop such a facility. Should the Government determine that it could be of benefit, it will then be necessary to undertake a full Preliminary Assessment, including environmental impact, heritage and community impact studies. This will provide the opportunity for comprehensive community consultation, to include both those people who support such a development as well as those who consider themselves disadvantaged by it.

As you will understand this is not a quick process and, considering the potential impact on the community, we are examining the proposal carefully and thoroughly.

Yours sincerely

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister

10 September 2004
from Andrew Barr, Labor candidate for Molonglo

The Chief Minister [of the ACT] received a proposal in January of this year that the ACT Government should develop an airfield at Williamsdale. The proposal is for an 1100 metre grass strip, with additional space available for hangar and management facilities. The proposal is supported by a letter from the Yarrowlumla/Queanbeyan District of the NSW Rural Fire Service indicating that development of an airfield at that site would be particularly advantageous in deploying NSW fixed wing "Fire Bomber" aircraft into the southeastern quadrant of the District, the Tinderry Ranges and "the northern area of the Monaro District" (ie the ACT).

The proposal also indicates that a facility at Williamsdale would remove a significant number of GA flights from the central Canberra area, effectively extending the life of Canberra airport before air traffic congestion leads to the need to develop a third runway.

The ACT Government has been approached on a number of occasions over the past five years by members of the GA community, asking that Government provide a separate GA facility within the ACT. The advice, and I understand that this was consistent with advice on previous occasions, was that the proponents needed to put forward a specific proposal which the Government could consider. This is the first such detailed proposal received by Government.

Following earlier approaches by the GA community Maunsell McIntyre, in 2000, was commissioned to conduct a review of studies undertaken over the previous thirty years of possible sites for airports. The Maunsell McIntyre report reviewed studies that had essentially been undertaken to establish possible alternative sites for Canberra's major airport. That review did not look at sites which were not previously identified and, as the Williamsdale site had not been previously identified, that report did not consider it.

The Maunsell McIntyre report identified four possible sites for a GA airfield within the ACT, but each presented significant environmental, safety or cost issues. In view of the findings, no further action has arisen out of the review, and the ACT Government has not sought a site for either GA activities or as an alternative to Canberra's existing airport.

Air Services Australia has indicated that there are no airspace impediments or restrictions that may affect the Williamsdale site, and informal advice from CAS A indicates that there are no significant identifiable safety issues.

As there may be significant public interest benefits in development of such a facility, the Chief Minister has directed his Department to examine the proposal in order to establish whether the site is viable, and if so, what issues arise out of its development as a GA facility.

As the first stage of that, an independent consultant will examine the site to provide a formal assessment of its suitability for a GA airfield. If this preliminary assessment indicates that the site is suitable, the Government will then consider what further actions to take.

Andrew Barr

Labor Candidate for Molonglo
www.andrewbarr.com.au

13 February 2004
from Chris Price, aircraft owner and pilot

A little over three weeks ago I presented a proposal for an emergency services and general aviation (including ultralight) airstrip at Williamsdale in the ACT. There has been much speculation within all areas of the aviation community about the contents of the proposal.

The information that can be released at present is as follows:

- The proposal is for a 1000m grass airstrip at Williamsdale in the ACT.
- The aim is to provide a base of operations for emergency service aircraft and affordable accommodation and operations for general aviation and ultralight aircraft.
- The proposed airstrip is outside of controlled airspace, under the 4500ft Class C step, and within a few miles of the 6500ft Class C step.

If the proposal is successful, the airstrip will be licensed and there will be provision for hangarage, both private and commercial, as well as normal tie-down facilities.

The processes required to obtain approval for a proposal are extremely detailed and time-consuming and I am not prepared to speculate about the time scale involved.

Until such time as the ACT Government releases a decision in relation to the proposal, all other information must remain confidential.

Speculation and rumours about the proposal are at the very least pointless and have the potential to jeopardise any chance the proposal has of success.

As soon as I can give you more detailed information, I will certainly do so.

Chris Price



3 LETTER to Aircraft Owners and Operators in the ACT Region

9 February 2004

In January of this year a proposal for a general aviation and emergency services airstrip was presented to the ACT Government.

The reason for this proposal is to provide a base of operations for emergency service aircraft and facilities for general aviation operations which is affordable and outside controlled airspace.

The proposed airstrip would be situated within the ACT at Williamsdale, 18nm from Canberra Airport (YSCB), under the 4500ft Class C step, and 2nm from the edge of the 6500ft Class C step.

The proposed airstrip would be an 1100m-long registered grass strip with a 350 degree orientation, the southern end of which would commence approximately 900m north of the Williamsdale service station.

The airstrip would have security fencing and provision for aircraft parking and hangarage, both private and commercial.

The costs of parking would be based on aircraft type, not on gross maximum take-off weight, and are projected as follows:

- Ultralight aircraft - \$400 per annum
- Single-engine aircraft - \$700 per annum

- Twin-engine aircraft - \$1200 per annum.

Landing fees would be included in these prices.

All hangarage would be constructed to specific covenants in order to avoid the problems of having a disorderly collection of structures which would detract from the area's visual impact and appeal.

The cost of hangarage has yet to be finalised but would not be expensive, and there would be provision for both private and commercial ownership of hangars.

If you would consider relocating your aircraft or commercial operations to the proposed airstrip, please respond in writing to the undersigned at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully

Chris Price

<http://users.bigpond.net.au/pilotpreferred/williamsdale/index.htm>

Govt considers plan for second airport

By Verona Burgess, Public Service Reporter
Monday, 8 March 2004

The ACT Government is giving serious consideration to a preliminary proposal for a low-cost second airport in the ACT to cater for general aviation.

The proposal includes a suggestion that emergency services aerial operations could also be based on the site.

The proposed 1200m site is at Williamsdale, not far from the location of the failed quarry venture and outside controlled airspace.

This would help reduce costs in the general aviation sector, mostly recreational and charter operations.

The proposed site is on the ACT side of the border, adjacent to the Monaro Highway, on land which is mostly held by the ACT Government and partly held under a private pastoral lease.

It is one of a long line of sites considered over time by the ACT Government as a means of easing the financial and spatial pressure on general aviation caused by the growth of Canberra International Airport.

The presence of general aviation in the ACT has been reduced significantly in recent years.

The proposal is already suffering some behind-the-scenes turbulence between supporters of the idea.

But the ACT Government has signalled it is very interested in the proposal, put by a private citizen, Chris Price, in a submission in January.

A spokesman for the Chief Minister's Department said that any development of the new airfield for general aviation would be at the Government's expense and not that of a private developer. "This proposal is some distance off becoming a reality and government agencies are giving thought to possible governance arrangements as part of the process of considering the proposal's viability.

"Whatever arrangements seem feasible, our principle aim is to preserve the Government's interest, as it is being asked to fund the land and infrastructure provision."

He also said the ACT Government had protocols in place for dealing with members of the public.

An officer in the department had been providing advice and assistance to proponents of a new airfield for a number of months and had done so in an appropriate and ethical manner.

http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/detail.asp?story_id=290859&y=2004&m=3&class=News&subclass=Local&category=General+News&class_id=7

Price Williamsdale letter response

NOTES 13/2/07

Para 1

Re iterate that we believe a privately funded model is the best option

Para 2

Govt could be keen to progress if:

- mostly privately funded and run with no significant establishment or recurring costs to the Govt
- NEED is demonstrated
 - o Demand by private operators
 - o Demand by flying school (goes to viability)
 - o Demand by RFS (ACT or NSW)

The letter (and meeting) did indicate that the Govt and bureaucracy would be supported, but the process needs to be driven by the prv sector and NOT in an adversarial way (why did Price not take up the offer to meet with Ian Cox as per his letter?)

Para 3

GSO was to provide comments on the model provided by Price previously, not to define any new model or possible structure (there are too many variables at this stage for them to define)

Goes back to the process needing to be primarily driven by the private sector and supported by Govt if there are demonstrated benefits – any benefits have not been clearly articulated with rationale and supported arguments.

Para 4

Veracity (not reliable) is a word coined by CMD, not ACTPLA. Based on the fact that the costings were done several years ago and that it is usual for proponent estimates to be on the low side.

Para 5

Yes the Dept. was on the verge of commissioning a financial feasibility study, however the position now is that this study should be private sector funded and drive – the Gov't can provide assistance with the setting of the terms of reference for any such study, in order that it satisfy Govt needs.

Para 6

It was the 'Leasing' branch of ACTPLA that was consulted. They are of the opinion, and CMD BID agree, that parts of a cpl of other blocks will also need to be resumed in order to allow for satisfactory infrastructure and access to any airfield.

Para 7

Demonstration of public interest is the key issue here – in relation to resumption of land – this is a legislative requirement.

Para 8/9

Building a GA airfield, cause 'Canberra doesn't have one' is not a public interest argument. Building a GA airfield for the benefit of 'few' in the community, can not be argued to be in the greater public interest.

Para 10

We need to liaise with RFS/ESA and NSW RFS – preliminary advice from ACT was that due to the primary use of helicopters, there was no need for an airfield for fire fighting activities. They could land on 'any piece of dirt anywhere'.

Para 11

The ACT is not in a position to build infrastructure for NSW. However, there is an argument that if it helps to save territory property/lives etc..... There would be several other more appropriate locations down the Monaro highway which would suit the needs of the NSW RFS.

Para 12.

The letter from NSW RFS said 'that they would use such a facility if built, however would not commit to funding, up front or on an ongoing basis. If they have a need for such an airfield – why haven't they built one themselves already? There are also numerous other airstrips around, including polo flat – near Cooma, Bunyan, between Bredbo and Cooma and the one at HUME/Tralee.

We have not spoken to NSW RFS – and we now should.

Para 13

ACTPLA were not so STRONGLY opposed to the proposal – they were cautious, as were we regarding resumption issues.

A study was done earlier which actually looked for options for a GA airfield in the ACT – NO location was found suitable (incl Williamsdale)

Para 14

ACTPLA need to be given the opportunity to rebut this.

Para 15

- Outside of government is fine, the preferred option. Govt can help facilitate IF
- public benefit can be demonstrated
 - costs (est and ongoing) can be identified and covered so as not to cause ongoing cost burden to Govt
 - financial viability can be demonstrated

Para 16

We can take a more positive approach to the proposal if the above can be demonstrated AND the private sector drives the process. At this stage we have nothing CONCRETE to take to GSO and Treasury and based on what we have to date, they can only show restrained support.

ALSO - we need also to keep in mind the nature and length of the proposed runway and its limitations. For example, we need to find out what fixed wing aircraft NSW RFS actually use and whether they can land on a 1,000m grass runway. What are the main uses for fixed wing aircraft in firefighting and is there local access to water if needed?

Runway

Build grass but what cost bitumen? If bitumen runs long out of action is a size increase needed?

Take-off/landing directions - is there any risk of contamination of water catchment in case where aircraft crash?

For EBA uses

Flying time from Cooma / Yass / Coulburn - is it acceptable for fire attacks?
Water supply costs?

Meeting with ACTPLA Leasing Section on Williamsdale airfield Proposal - notes

There is a proposal to develop a secure power supply installation on lands south of the proposed airfield site that will see an above ground power supply system (2x132 kva transmission-structures) transect the proposed site.

This proposal is with the Chief Minister and is set to go ahead no matter what. It is not for publication. David Butt (Director, Cabinet and Intergovernmental Relation) is aware of the details.

Leasing advises that land acquisition issues for lands proposed for the airfield are far too complicated and would likely be too costly to permit the airfield going ahead on the proposed site. Land acquisition is only allowed, under the Act, for the public good. This would be difficult to prove in this case. Given this acquisition of lands could also see lessees able to argue that their properties, once part of their land has been taken for the airfield, have become uneconomical to operate. If this were to occur the Territory would be forced, under the Lands Act, to purchase the entire block back at a high cost.

BACKGROUND

In June 2003 the Chief Minister met with a delegation from the General Aviation (GA) community led by _____ requesting that Government establish a GA airfield in the ACT. This was the third such delegation over the past five years seeking relief from the significantly escalating cost to GA aircraft of using Canberra airport. The delegation was invited to prepare a proposal for Government's consideration. In January 2004 Mr Chris Price, a GA pilot and member of the Kaine delegation, put forward a proposal that the ACT Government should develop a GA airfield at Williamsdale in the ACT (Attachment A).

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Mr Price proposed that the ACT Government use a recreation reserve and travelling stock reserve which were about to be disposed of to an adjoining rural leaseholder, together with some additional land currently held under leasehold, to develop an 1,100 – 1,200 metre grass strip. Mr Price asserted that the site would be ideal for deployment of the fixed-wing aerial fire-fighting aircraft used by the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Mr Price's submission included a letter from Superintendent _____ of the Yarrowlumla/Queanbeyan NSW Rural Fire Service indicating that an airfield of the type proposed, outside of controlled airspace, would facilitate targeting fires in the Queanbeyan and Monaro fire districts and the Tinderry Range using NSW fixed wing "Fire Bomber" aircraft. Subsequent discussion by CMD officers with Superintendent Arthur confirms that the site would be of significant assistance and that Canberra airport itself is less suitable as aerial fire-fighting aircraft have difficulty in functioning efficiently in conjunction with scheduled passenger aircraft in controlled airspace.

Fire-fighting aircraft would be deployed to the airfield on an as-needed basis. At other times the airfield would be used as a GA airfield, and the on-going operations of the airfield would be met by fees charged to use the airfield for landing and parking. Mr Price provided a business case which indicated that the airfield (after capital costs) would become self supporting after three years and that it would, thereafter, operate with a surplus. An analysis of the business case is provided below.

BENEFITS

Mr Price's submission indicated that there would be three major benefits flowing from the development:

- The facility would provide a fire-fighting base which would significantly enhance the capability to target fires at their source, that this would deliver on the MOU signed in October 2003 between the ACT and NSW fire-fighting services which formalises the co-operative arrangements for fire and emergency management and supporting services, and which would effectively be funded by GA activities;
- It would reduce the number GA landings and take-offs at Canberra airport by up to 40 000 per year in the year 2050, significantly deferring the need to develop a third runway at Canberra airport; and
- It would significantly reduce the number of training flights/circuits over Canberra suburbs, thereby ameliorating aircraft noise issues in the ACT.

The issue of flying training was discussed with Brindabella Airlines, the major provider of flying training in the Canberra region. The owners were enthusiastic about the

availability of an alternative site for flying training as Canberra Airport is becoming increasingly busy and difficult for smaller aircraft. Brindabella would look to conduct most of its flying training from such an alternative site, and expressed the view that there will be considerable interest from owners who have removed their aircraft from Canberra over the past five years, and that the development would be likely to attract follow-on activities to the site as well.

The preliminary survey undertaken by Mr Price, and supported by a number of letters to myself, indicates that the development would bring in (or back) to Canberra a significant number of aircraft which are currently housed interstate, as well as possibly triggering commercial developments such as an ultralight training facility, a helicopter chartering operation and others, contributing to increased economic activity in the ACT.

COSTS

Mr Price provided an estimate of \$660 500 (including 5% contingency but excluding land) as the cost of construction of the GA facility on the proposed site at Williamsdale (including management and amenity facilities but not including specialised fire-fighting facilities or cross runway). The construction costs were based on quotations received from industry sources. It did not include the costs required to complete the studies necessary to reach a decision on the proposal (estimated at \$80 000 – see below), the cost of land acquisition or the detailed design work necessary (provisionally put at \$20 000). Land acquisition costs have not been determined at this stage, but advice from ACT Planning and Land Authority is that two of the blocks involved have 99 year leases without land withdrawal provisions, so the costs may be substantial (potentially \$0.5m or more).

Mr Price also provided a business case for the facility's operations: This assumed:

- Operating costs of \$84 000 rising to \$118 000 per annum over five years; and
- Revenues rising from \$55 000 to \$180 000 per annum over five years.

This predicts a 'break-even' point for operating costs in the third year of operation. A sensitivity analysis (30% reduction in revenues) pushed out break-even to year four.

Whilst revenues come from a variety of sources, the business case was built on the airstrip providing permanent parking, by year five, to 25 ultralight aircraft, 60 single engine aircraft and 19 twin-engine aircraft at competitive annual parking fees. Mr Price has subsequently undertaken an informal survey of aircraft owners who might use Williamsdale, and forwarded letters from owners in excess of 120 aircraft expressing commitment to using the facility as a base, if it is developed. These are mostly single engine aircraft, some of which are ultralights.

OPERATIONAL FEASIBILITY ISSUES

As a preliminary step, a study was commissioned from Airport Technical Services Pty Ltd of Adelaide, to determine whether the proposed site is in fact physically suited to the proposed operations.

The study by Airport Technical Services (Attachment B) indicates that the proposed Williamsdale facility would be suitable for fire fighting operations, for general GA activities and for 'ab initio' pilot training (the critical first stage of learning to fly). It expressed reservations about the ability of the runway's design length to accommodate twin-engine operations (twins generally require longer runways than singles). However,

Canberra airport's cross-runway also fails to meet the optimum specifications provided by the manufacturers of several twin-engined aircraft that use that runway regularly.

Discounting commercial operations from the business case (in order to exclude almost all twin-engined aircraft) results in a twenty-five percent drop in revenues. This falls within the range of the thirty percent sensitivity analysis. On the other side, Mr Price's informal market survey indicates that single/ultralight usage may well be in the order of thirty percent higher than estimated in the business case.

In order to take this proposal further, there needs to be an independent business case study to examine the assumptions and calculations that have gone into the business case provided by Mr Price. If this were positive, a full Preliminary Assessment including an Environmental Impact Statement would then need to be done to progress the proposal.

From the initial study it is clear that in order to prepare a full business case (including amortising the cost of construction through estimated income streams) it will be necessary to establish some preliminary design parameters for the facility both as a basis for undertaking a market survey and to determine the full costs of development. Informal inquiries indicate that the preliminary design work and market survey should be undertaken as part of the same exercise, and would cost around \$20 – 30,000.

ISSUES

Public or private development

A threshold issue at this point is whether further work is to be directed at establishing it as a Government-owner facility, or one which is to be made available for private sector development.

The assumption behind Mr Price's proposal is that the facility would be established as a deployment base for fixed-wing aerial fire-fighting activities, with its maintenance (and possibly some of its capital cost) being met by GA activities.

Whilst this does not preclude establishing Williamsdale as a private sector operation, it should be noted that GA activities generate lower returns for investors than alternative commercial activities on such sites. It is for this reason that Canberra Airport, as well as other recently-privatised airports which still have GA activities, are pricing these activities at a level which is driving out recreational GA aircraft as well as some commercial operators. It is understood, for example, that the Airport Flying School (which is not owned by the airport operators) is closing down.

Significant caveats would need to be placed on any private sector operator in order to ensure that its ability to cater for aerial fire-fighting services when required would not be eroded by commercial developments. If it is also intended to ensure that GA training activities are retained at the site, further caveats will be required.

While part of the land is already within Government control, the remainder of the required land is currently leased. There would be significant issues arising from any move by Government to resume this land and then dispose of it to other private sector interests. An alternative is that Government develops and retains ownership of the facility but tenders for an operator to manage it.

Alternative sites to Williamsdale

The Department of Urban Services' Infrastructure and Asset Management Unit commissioned Maunsell McIntyre in 2000 to identify a site suitable for GA activities within the ACT border. That study identified four sites, but did not identify the Williamsdale site, although Williamsdale does meet the criteria identified for that study. The Maunsell McIntyre study was confined to a review of sites previously identified as alternatives to Canberra airport or as a more substantial GA airport, rather than for a smaller GA airfield. This indicates that it is possible that there may be sites other than Williamsdale which have not been identified and which would be suitable, although informal discussions with local pilots suggests that this is unlikely.

A search for further sites is likely to be costly. The Maunsell McIntyre report, which was essentially a review, cost around \$20 000 in 2000. A study to identify new sites and evaluate their suitability is likely to be much costlier as it would need to duplicate the work undertaken for the Williamsdale site for each additional site identified.

RISKS

There are some risks associated with Government's development of the facility:

- Predicted level of private GA interest in the facility does not materialise, and the Government has to fund the ongoing operation of the facility
 - The next step would be to commission a review of the business case which would include a market survey, resulting in greater certainty over the net cost/profit, and any shortfall appears likely to be relatively small.
- Costs of development are higher than predicted
 - Design and costing studies would be undertaken before a final decision is required.
- Local rural leaseholders object to the increase in aircraft noise and activity at Williamsdale
 - The number of landowners potentially affected is relatively small, whilst the public benefits (including noise reduction in central Canberra) could be significant.
 - There are commercial opportunities associated with development of the facility which could offset the objections of local leaseholders.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED FOR PROCEEDING

Three options for proceeding in the short term have been identified. These were:

A. Delaying Government consideration of the Williamsdale proposal pending consultations with the National Capital Authority, Canberra International Airport and other concerned stakeholders;

B. Undertaking a financial feasibility study to better identify the costs, benefits and other issues associated with the Williamsdale proposal; and

C. Completing a wider planning study to identify other potential general aviation airstrip sites and compare them against the Williamsdale proposal.

At present Option A may give an impression of a higher level of commitment than prudent at this stage. Option C would be a good course of action if the Government agreed to support a general aviation airfield in the ACT and the Williamsdale site was considered unsuitable for some reason. However, the Maunsell McIntyre study examined a range of sites proposed and rejected all of them, so it is possible that no better site will be found.

Option B has been adopted as there are still questions about the proposal's feasibility, and this would provide more detailed understanding of financial issues. A call for expressions of interest was published on 12 February. Selected consultants will be asked to tender for a study which will identify a limited number of design options for the Williamsdale site, will cost these, will identify the likely demand for the options, and will prepared business cases for each.

The financial feasibility study is expected to be completed by June 2005. Government should then have sufficient information to determine whether it wishes to proceed any further. If a decision to proceed is taken a full Preliminary Assessment will be initiated, including studies of environmental impact, community impact and heritage amongst other issues.

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ACT GOVERNMENT

**WILLIAMSDALE
GENERAL AVIATION AIRFIELD PROPOSAL**

ASSESSMENT OF OPERATIONAL FEASIBILITY

September 2004



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ACT GOVERNMENT

ASSESSMENT OF OPERATIONAL FEASIBILITY OF WILLIAMSDALE AS A SITE FOR A GENERAL AVIATION AIRFIELD

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1 OVERVIEW

A site at Williamsdale on the southern border of the ACT has been proposed to the ACT Government as a suitable location for the development of a general aviation airfield. The proposal nominated a longer term demand for a facility to handle up to 40,000 aircraft movements, including ab-initio flying training per year.

The ACT Government has identified that an airfield in the southern part of the Australian Capital Territory has the potential to provide a base for aerial fire fighting activities during the active part of the bush fire season and has engaged Airport Technical Services Pty Ltd (ATS) to undertake an operational feasibility assessment of the site as the first stage of an evaluation of the proposal. ATS is based in South Australia and have engaged the services of a Canberra based company, AOS Airport Consulting Pty Ltd, to undertake the data collection phase of the study.

This study has been undertaken only in relation to the operational feasibility of the site for the proposed usage. The study has not addressed any of the environmental, social or financial issues associated with the establishment of an airfield at Williamsdale.

This report presents details of the physical characteristics of the site, the assessment criteria adopted for the analysis and the performance of the site against the assessment criteria.

The study includes consultation with stakeholders resident in the Williamsdale area who had provided a written submission to the ACT Government in relation to the proposal. Discussions have also been held with the Lake George Zone of the NSW Rural Fire Service to determine the key operational characteristics of an aerial fire fighting base.

The Williamsdale airfield proposal includes an initial development of a 1000 metre runway located approximately parallel to the Monaro Highway with the potential identified for a secondary runway in the north-west direction. Whilst the development proposal for the site included two runways, the analysis of prevailing wind directions and site topography has indicated that the site potential may be realised with a single runway orientated in the north-west direction to suit the prevailing wind conditions.

**ACT GOVERNMENT
WILLIAMSDALE AERODROME SITE STUDY**

The analysis undertaken by ATS, in consultation with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority has identified that the site is suitable for the development of a 1000 metre runway for use by single engine and light twin-engine aircraft. The analysis also indicates that the site has limited development potential beyond the single engine airfield stage.

The study has identified that the site is well suited for development as a base for aerial fire fighting fixed wing aircraft and helicopters that could be activated when needed during the bushfire season.

The study has also concluded that alternate site options should be investigated if the development of an airfield for larger aircraft is desired.

2 OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The ACT Government have advised that they have received a proposal for an airfield at Williamsdale, based on the provision of a 1000 metre runway with a grassed surface suitable for use by single engine and light twin engine aeroplanes. The proposal also includes helicopters and ultra-light aircraft as potential users of the airfield and nominates a longer term potential demand level of 40,000 annual aircraft movements. The ACT Government has also identified that a general aviation airfield in the southern part of the ACT would be capable of providing a base for aerial fire fighting during the active part of the bushfire season.

The submission for the airfield development submitted to the ACT Government has not been reviewed in detail within this study but has been provided to ATS as a reference document to assess the site characteristics needed to meet the potential longer term development capability. These include the capacity to provide for a crosswind runway, night operations, areas for hangarage and maintenance facilities, an annual activity level of 40,000 annual movements and a potential to provide a longer term alternative to Canberra International Airport for general aviation aircraft.

An indication of the scope of development associated with these requirements has been obtained by aerial inspection of the general aviation airfields in the region between Sydney and Canberra. These include Goulburn, Mittagong, Wedderburn, Hoxton Park and Camden. Whilst none of the aerodromes provided a direct equivalent to the Williamsdale proposal, they all represented similarities to many of the identified characteristics and the changing level of facility that would be expected to occur over time. Further details and aerial photos of the aerodromes inspected are presented in Attachment A to this report.

The inspection identified a number of common elements for all airfields including the use of hangars as the principal parking and storage option for aircraft, the provision of parallel taxiways at the busier aerodromes and the relative remoteness to significant terrain in the immediate vicinity to the aerodromes.

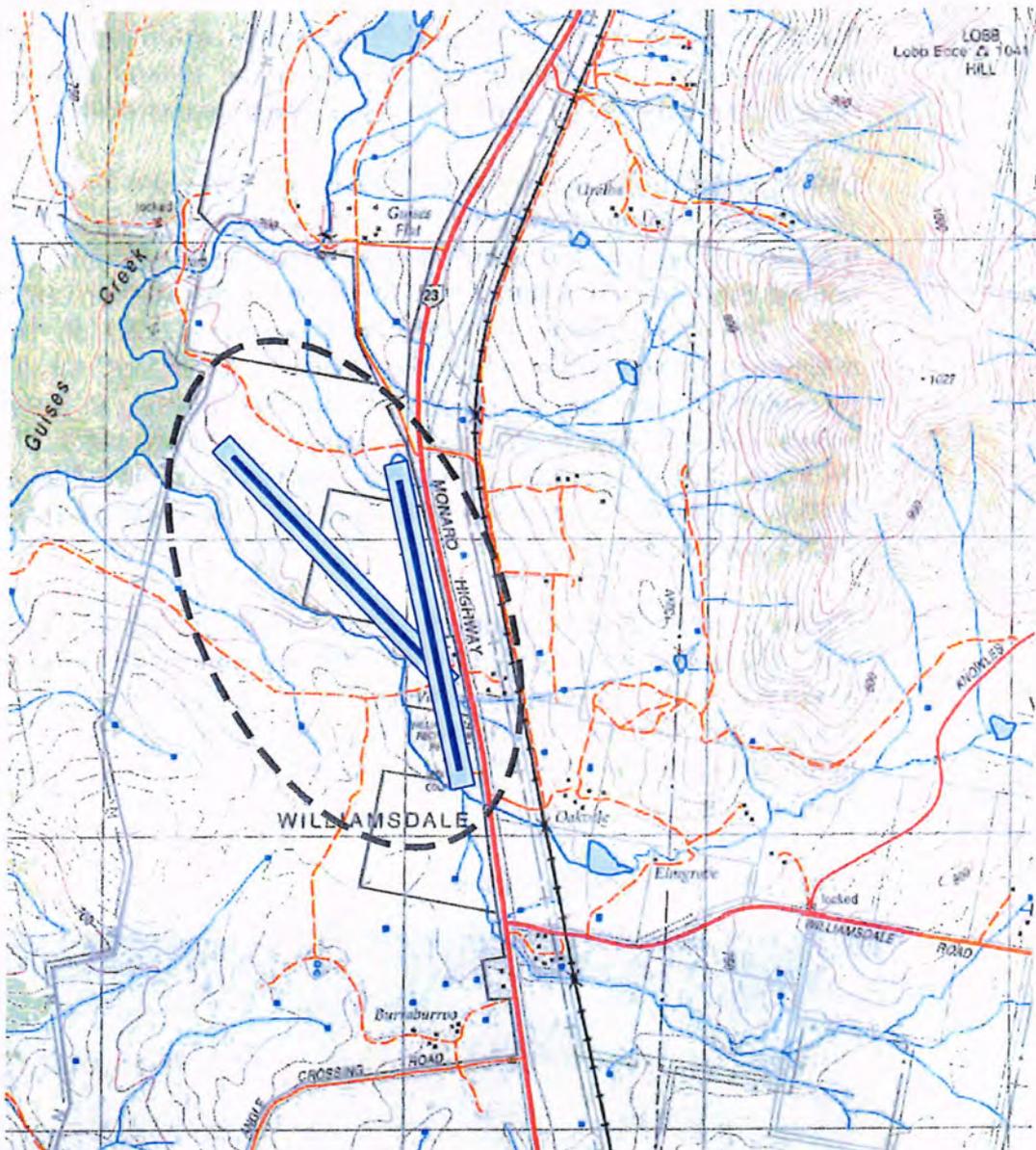
The projected activity level of 40,000 annual movements is considered significant in terms of general aviation aerodromes with only Camden and Hoxton Park aerodromes currently operating at activity levels greater than 40,000 movements per year.

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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

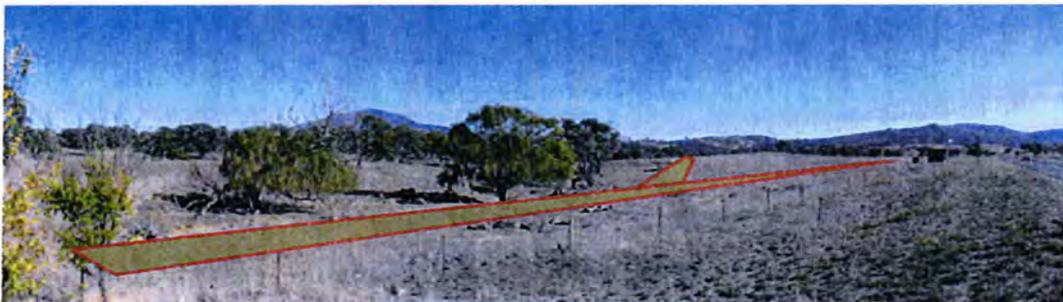
The land on the western side of the study site rises to the north and creates a ridge with a NW-SE axis, falling to a creek on the west and the Monaro Highway on the east. The topography along the north-south runway alignment is relatively flat with an elevation around 715 metres AHD. The topography appears to also suit an alternate runway alignment with a north-western alignment parallel to the creek.

The land in the vicinity of the site consists of a number of rural leasehold areas, a travelling stock reserve and the Williamsdale Recreation Reserve. The Williamsdale Recreation Reserve is a triangular block surrounded by two creeks and the Monaro Highway. The nominated southern end of the runway is within the reserve with the creek to the south of the reserve being the southern boundary of the study site. A 1,000 metre runway would extend between the reserve and the existing dam on the Guises Flat leasehold area.

Development of the site would need to include provision for the existing stormwater drainage flows that cross the Monaro Highway and through the site. There are four existing culverts under the Monaro Highway between the recreation reserve and the dam at the northern end of the site. The four culverts in combination provide a total of nine 750 millimetre diameter pipes across the highway. In addition, the creek at the southern boundary of the site crosses the highway in a series of boxed culverts that is 15 metres wide. The equivalent of these drainage structures would need to be provided to divert the storm flow around or under the north-south runway and the associated 60 metre wide runway strip.

Figure 2 presents a photograph of the site at ground level from the road adjacent to the southern threshold of the runway and indicates the alternate runway alignment identified. The topography of the area around the site can be determined with reference to the contour information presented in Figure 1 and the aerial photos presented in Figures 3 and 4.

Figure 2: View of Site from Southern End



The topography of the area to the east of the site (Figure 3) extends to a height of more than 300 metres (1000 feet) above the runway elevation within 1500 metres of the runway. The terrain to the north of the site (Figure 4) is dominated by a saddle that rises from the Murrumbidgee River and runs to the north with peaks more than 150 metres (500 feet) above the runway elevation within 2500 metres of the runway ends and aligned with the runway centreline.

Figure 3: Aerial view of site and terrain from the south-west

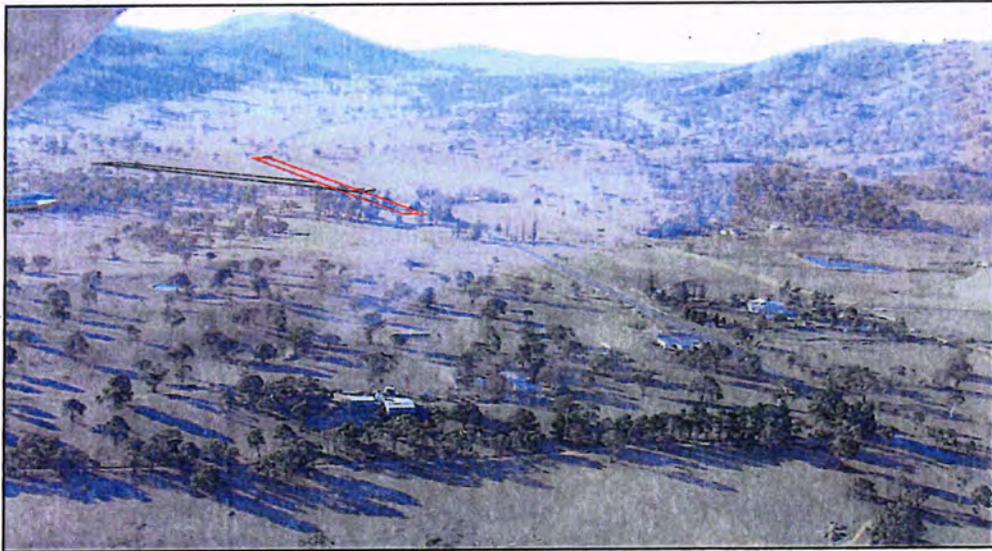


Figure 4: Aerial view of site and terrain from the south



4 NOMINATION OF ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The criteria used to assess the operational feasibility of the site have been selected with the principal focus of ensuring the safety of aviation operations from the airfield site. Additional factors relating to the potential of the site to meet projected future demands have also been considered.

The environmental, social and financial issues associated with the establishment of a general aviation airfield have not been included in the selection of assessment criteria used in this study.

The factors used in this study to assess the operational feasibility of the site are:

- Speed and direction of the prevailing winds;
- Terrain in the vicinity of the site;
- Operational criteria for ab-initio flying training activities;
- Flightpath options for arrival, departure and circuit operations;
- Site area and development potential.

5 PREVAILING WIND CONDITIONS

The prevailing wind conditions at the site have been assessed using TAPM, a computer program developed by the CSIRO to model the atmospheric dispersal of plumes. The meteorological module of the program is able to simulate the weather characteristics of a nominated site using Bureau of Meteorology records of the synoptic data for the period since 1997.

The resultant output from the program provides a record of hourly average wind speed and direction data relative to the nominated site. The site is defined with reference to the nearest half minute of latitude and longitude and the TAPM program contains terrain and vegetation databases that describe the nominated location.

The TAPM output is available for a large number of heights above a reference datum. The nominal heights selected for this study from the options available within TAPM are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Heights Used in Wind Data Analysis

LOCATION RELATIVE TO RUNWAY	HEIGHT (FEET)	HEIGHT (METRES)
Landing Threshold	30	9
Approach or initial cleanup	150	46
Turning onto final or crosswind (500 feet)	450	138
Circuit height (1000 feet) equivalent	900	277
Circling height (1500 feet)	1512	461
En-route height (3000 feet AGL)	3025	922

The TAPM output data for the daytime period on 7am to 7pm has been analysed with reference to a range of wind speeds at the various heights. The wind speed values used are 10, 15 and 20 knots which relate to the crosswind limitations for light aircraft.

Figures 5 to 10 present the wind distribution in terms of wind speed and direction at the nominated heights. All of the results indicate a dominance of winds from the north-west which reflects the presence of the Murrumbidgee River corridor on the west of the site. The dominant wind directions indicated in the TAPM analysis are supported through comments made during discussions with local stakeholders.

Figure 5: Wind distribution at 9 metres (30 feet)

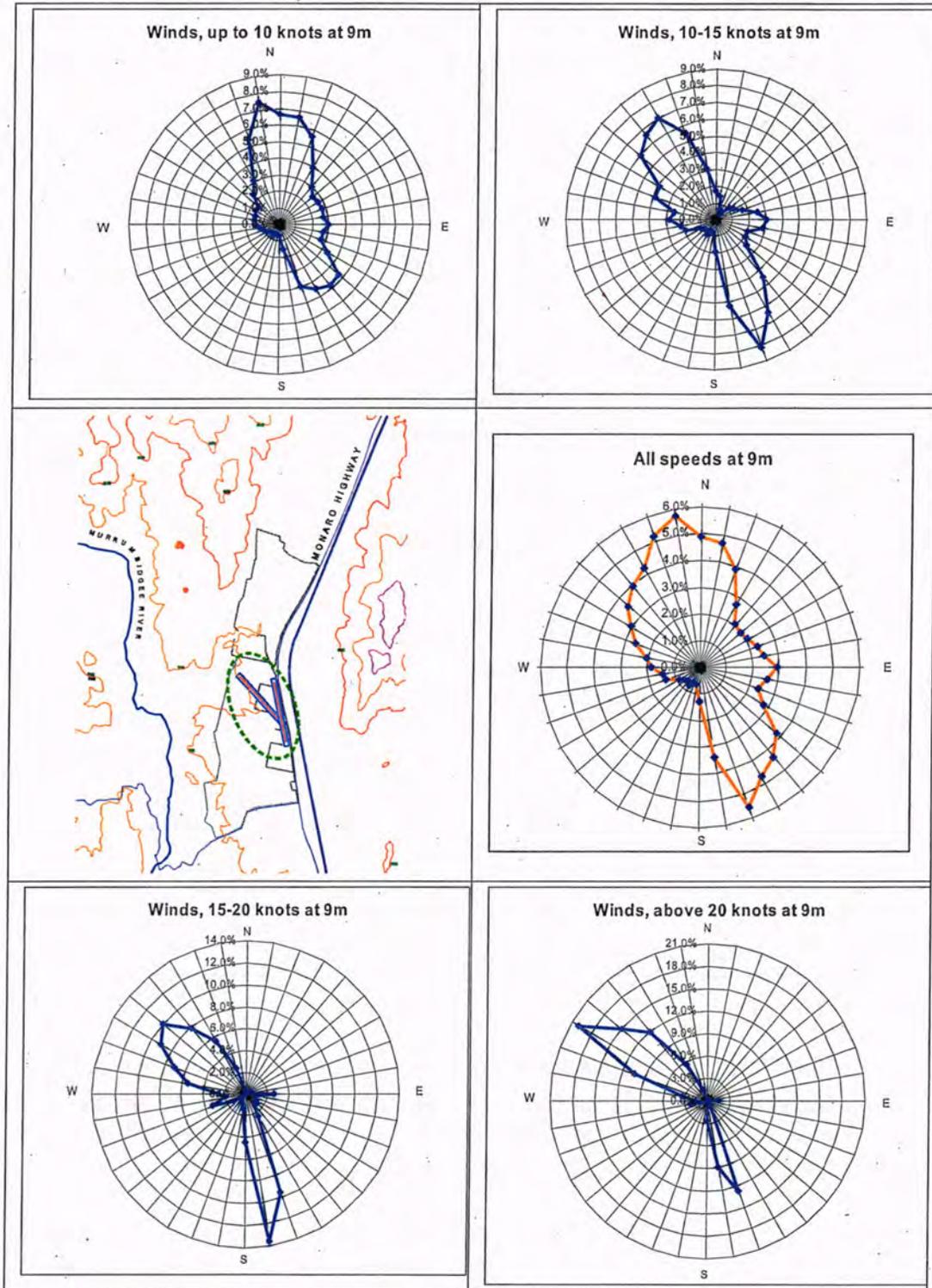


Figure 6: Wind distribution at 46 metres (150 feet)

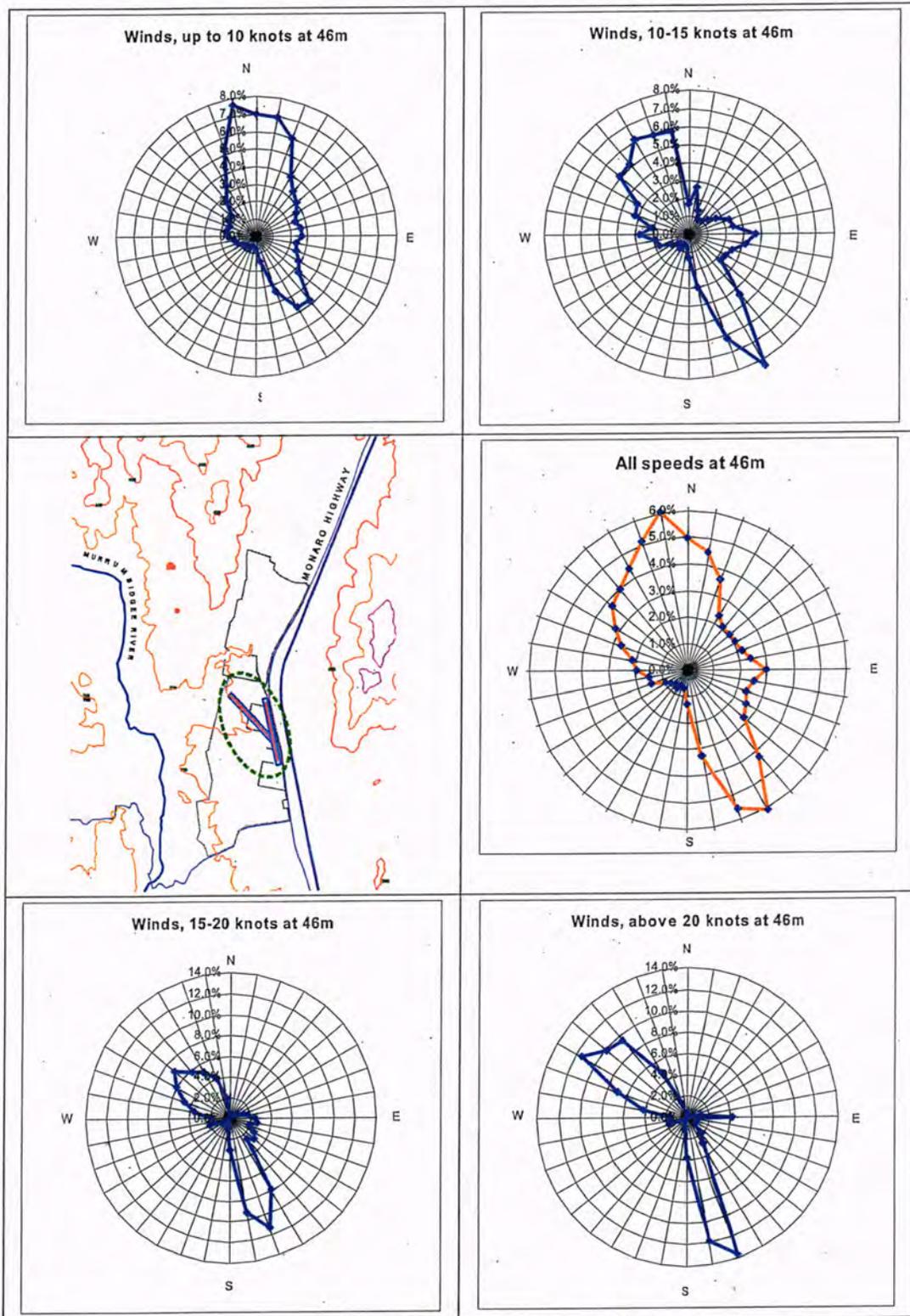


Figure 7: Wind distribution at 138 metres (nominal 500 feet)

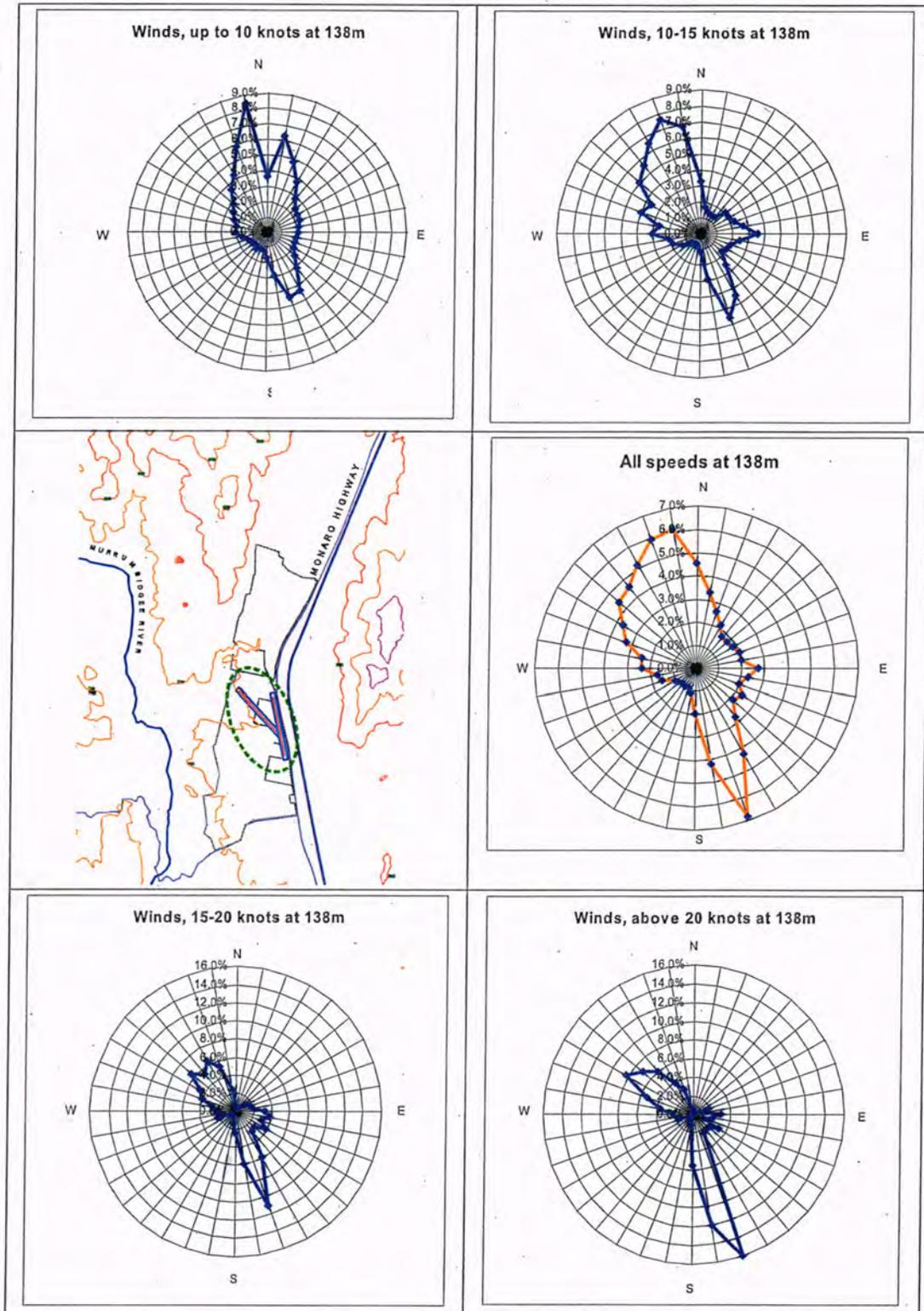


Figure 8: Wind distribution at 277 metres (nominal 1000 feet circuit height)

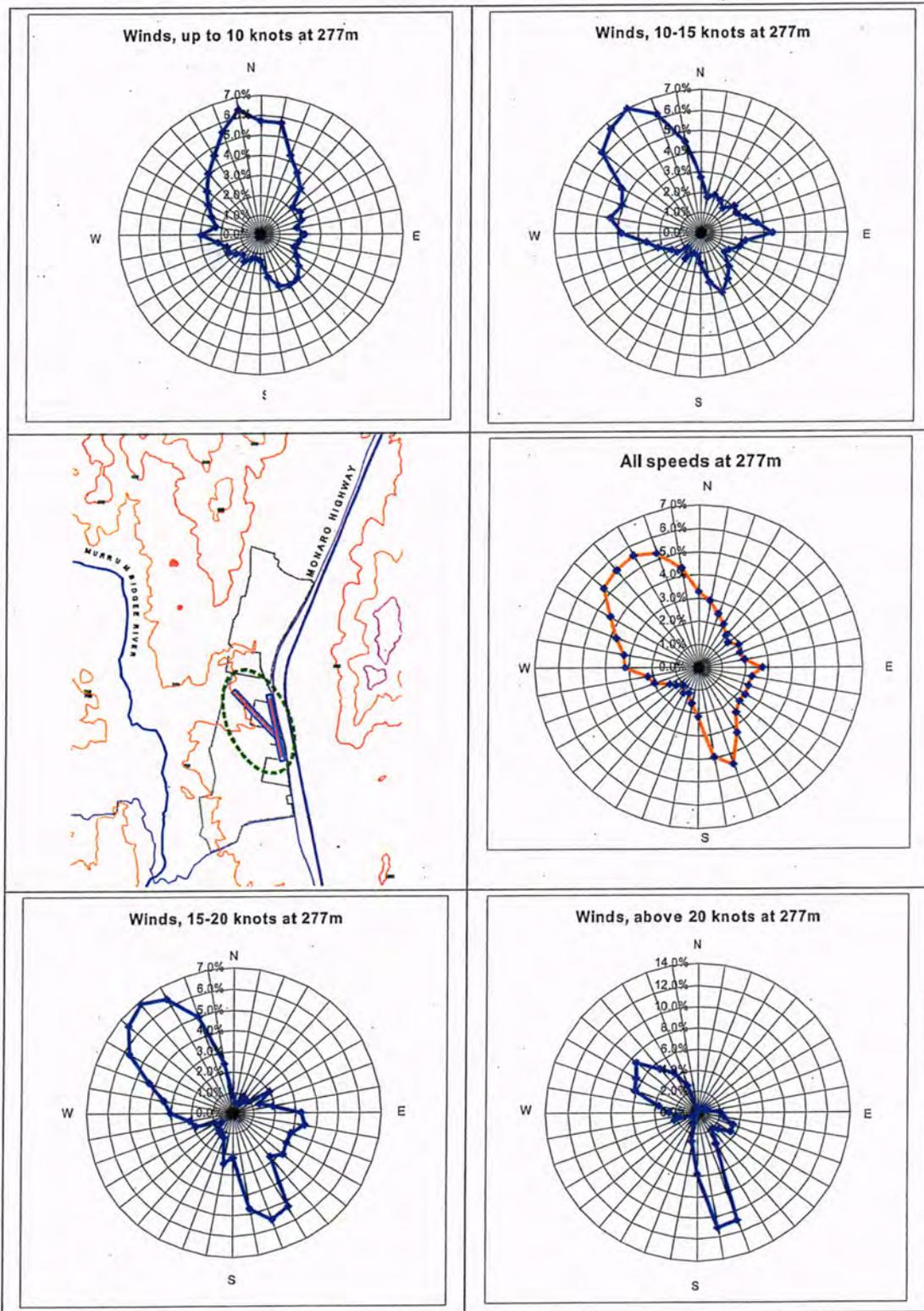


Figure 9: Wind distribution at 461 metres (nominal 1500 feet circling height)

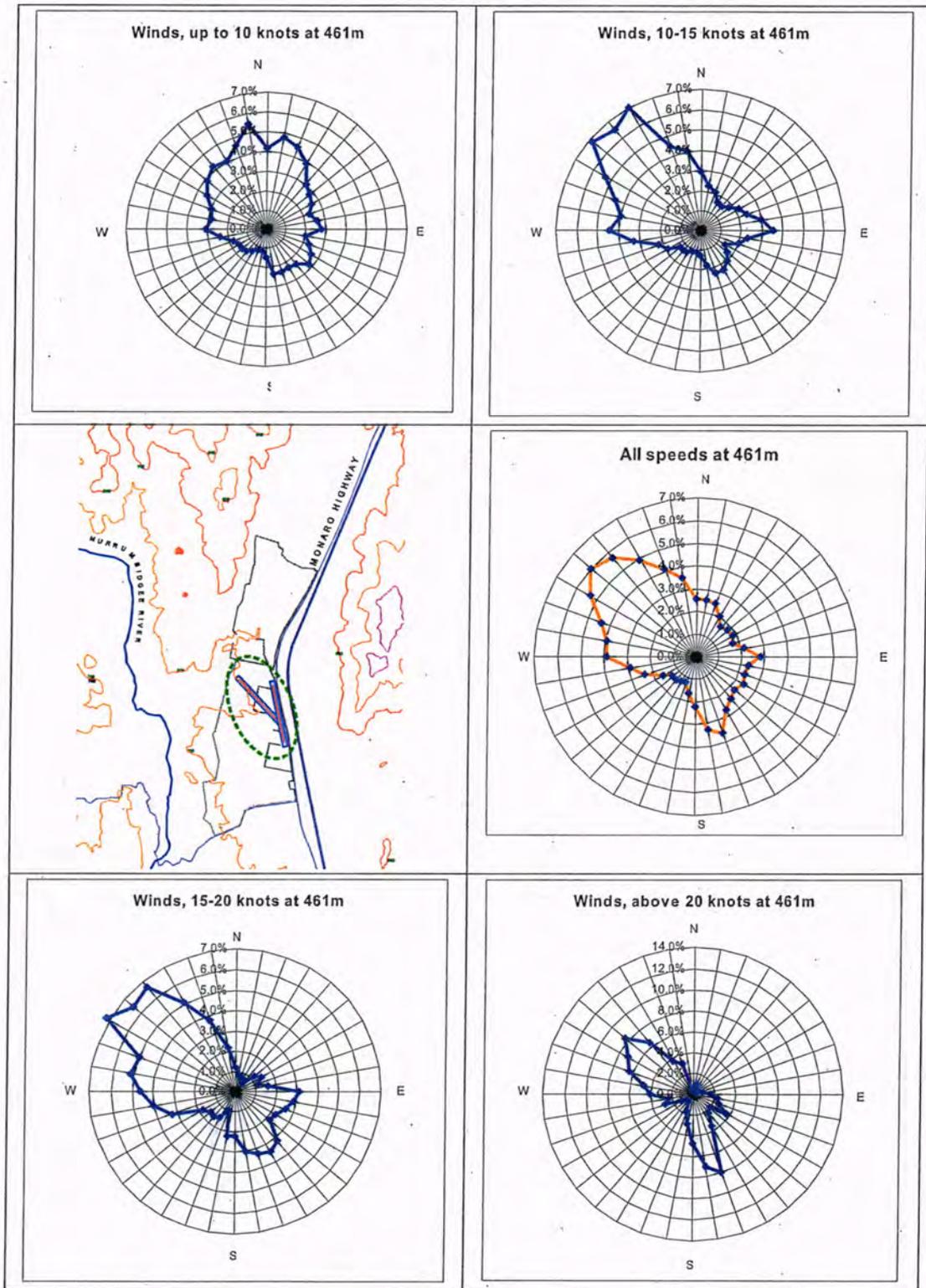
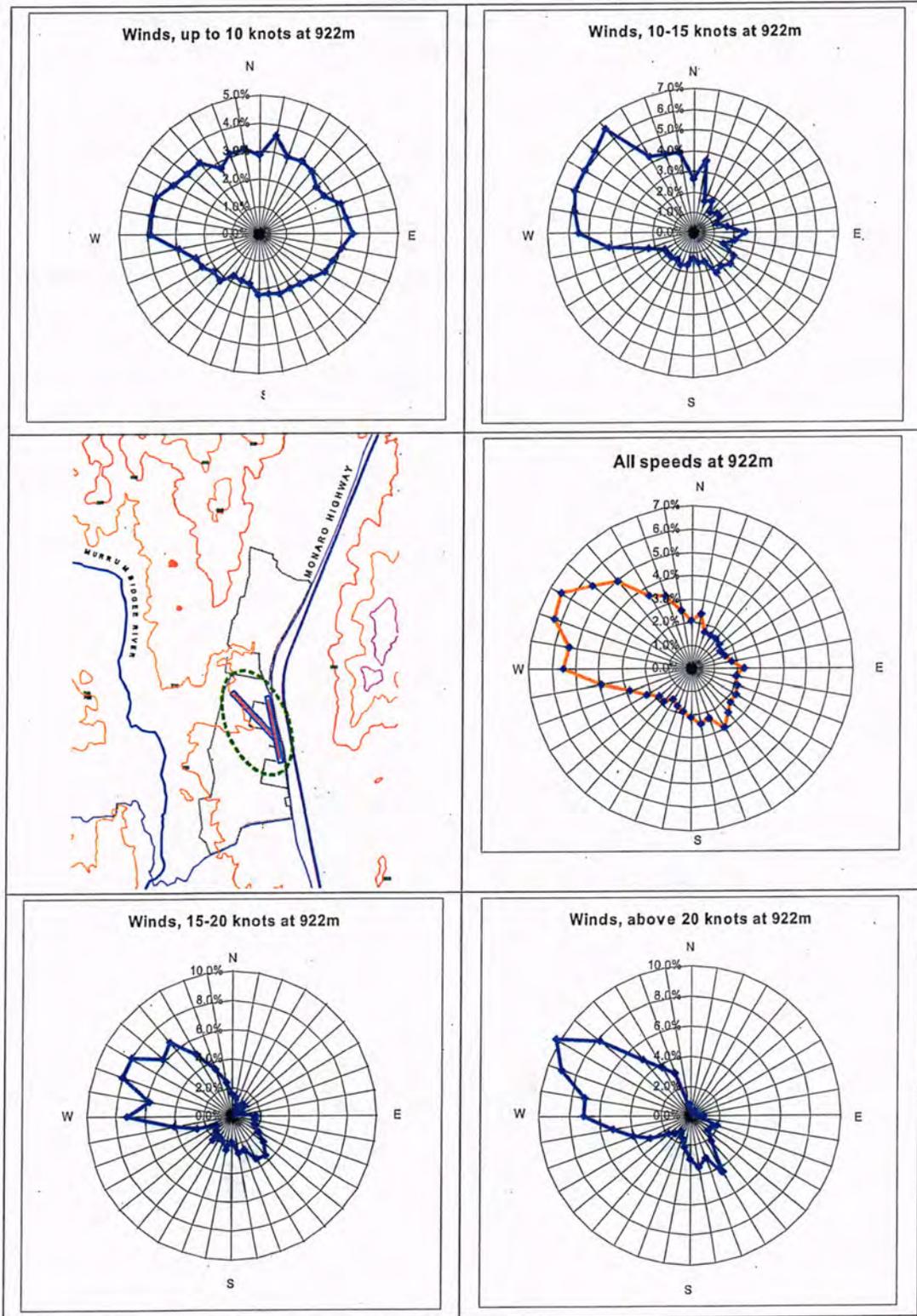


Figure 10: Wind distribution at 922 metres (nominal 3000 feet)

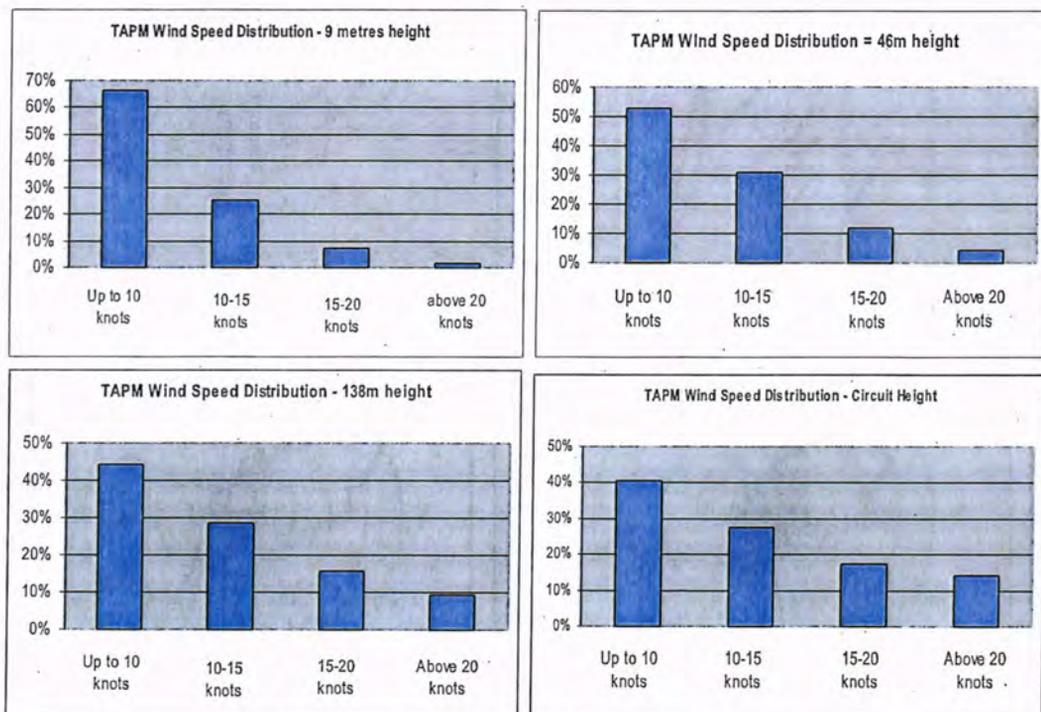


The TAPM analysis of wind data and the comments made in discussions with local stakeholders indicate that the proposed runway direction, parallel to the Monaro highway, would be subject to winds with a westerly dominance for a relatively high proportion of the time.

The analysis of wind distribution in terms of the relative frequency of wind within speed bands, as shown in Figure 11, indicates that the extent of time that the hourly average wind velocity exceeds 15 knots varies between 31% at circuit height to 9% at the runway threshold crossing height. Similarly, the frequency of hourly average winds velocities above 20 knots varies between 14% at circuit height and 2% at the runway threshold height.

Conversely, the analysis indicates that the percentage of time that the hourly average wind velocity is less than 10 knots ranges from 40% at circuit height to 65% at the threshold crossing height. The net effect of this wind distribution pattern is an expectation that the wind velocity would vary with height within the circuit area of the airfield for the majority of times.

Figure 11 – Wind Speed Distribution by Velocity



6 SITE TERRAIN CHARACTERISTICS

The significance of the terrain in the vicinity of the aerodrome site has been assessed with reference to the obstacle limitation surfaces (OLS) for the airfield for the projected range of aircraft that would use the facility.

The OLS is a series of surfaces that define the airspace around an aerodrome that needs to remain free of obstacles so as to permit the intended aeroplane operations at the aerodrome to be conducted in safety and to prevent the aerodrome from becoming unusable by the growth of obstacles around the aerodrome (*ICAO – Annex 14*). An obstacle is an object that penetrates the OLS for an aerodrome.

The dimensions of each element in the OLS are prescribed by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) with reference to the standard runway length requirements of the aircraft intended to use the aerodrome. The standard runway length requirements relate to the performance of the aircraft at sea level under standard atmospheric conditions. The elevation of the site and the consideration of ambient temperatures, particularly in summer, dictate an increased runway length requirement over the standard value.

The OLS parameters for a Code 2 runway has been adopted in this analysis to determine the significance of terrain in the vicinity of the site.

The location of the standard circuit track has also been used to assess the significance of local terrain. The dimensions of the circuit pattern have been derived from the track definitions used in noise models at a range of aerodromes for the types of aircraft nominated as potential users of the airfield.

Figure 12 shows a filled area indicating the extent of OLS penetration by terrain more than 500 feet (150 metres) above the aerodrome elevation, the usual height at which aircraft turn at the end of the upwind and final legs of the circuit pattern. Figure 13 similarly shows the terrain penetration of the Inner Horizontal element of the OLS, 45 metres above the aerodrome elevation. Figures 12 and 13 also indicate in yellow the final approach and departure climb elements of the OLS.

The analysis of the local terrain indicates that the OLS is penetrated to the extent that the standard circuit tracks to the east of the airfield

would not be available. The alternate crosswind runway alignment indicated a similar situation with regard to OLS penetrations to the north and also adds terrain penetrations on the south-eastern end of the OLS as indicated in Figure 14.

The significance of the OLS penetrations identified in this study has been reviewed, in consultation with CASA, and found to be acceptable for the intended use, including ab-initio flying training, of the airfield with a 1000 metre runway

A study of alternate aerodrome sites was undertaken by Maunsell McIntyre (MMI) in 2001 that considered 16 potential sites around the ACT Region. A detailed review of that report has not been undertaken in this study but it is noted that the majority of sites considered had OLS penetrations that resulted in the rejection of 12 of the sites and the acceptance of some inner horizontal surface penetrations for the four sites nominated as suitable for further consideration.

The acceptability criteria for OLS penetrations adopted in the MMI study were not specified but it appears likely that the extent of OLS penetration identified in this study would have excluded the Williamsdale site had it been considered in the earlier work. Conversely, the sites identified in the MMI study may not have been rejected if alternative criteria has been used to assess the acceptable extent of OLS penetrations.

Figure 12: OLS Penetration by Terrain More Than 500 Feet Above Runway

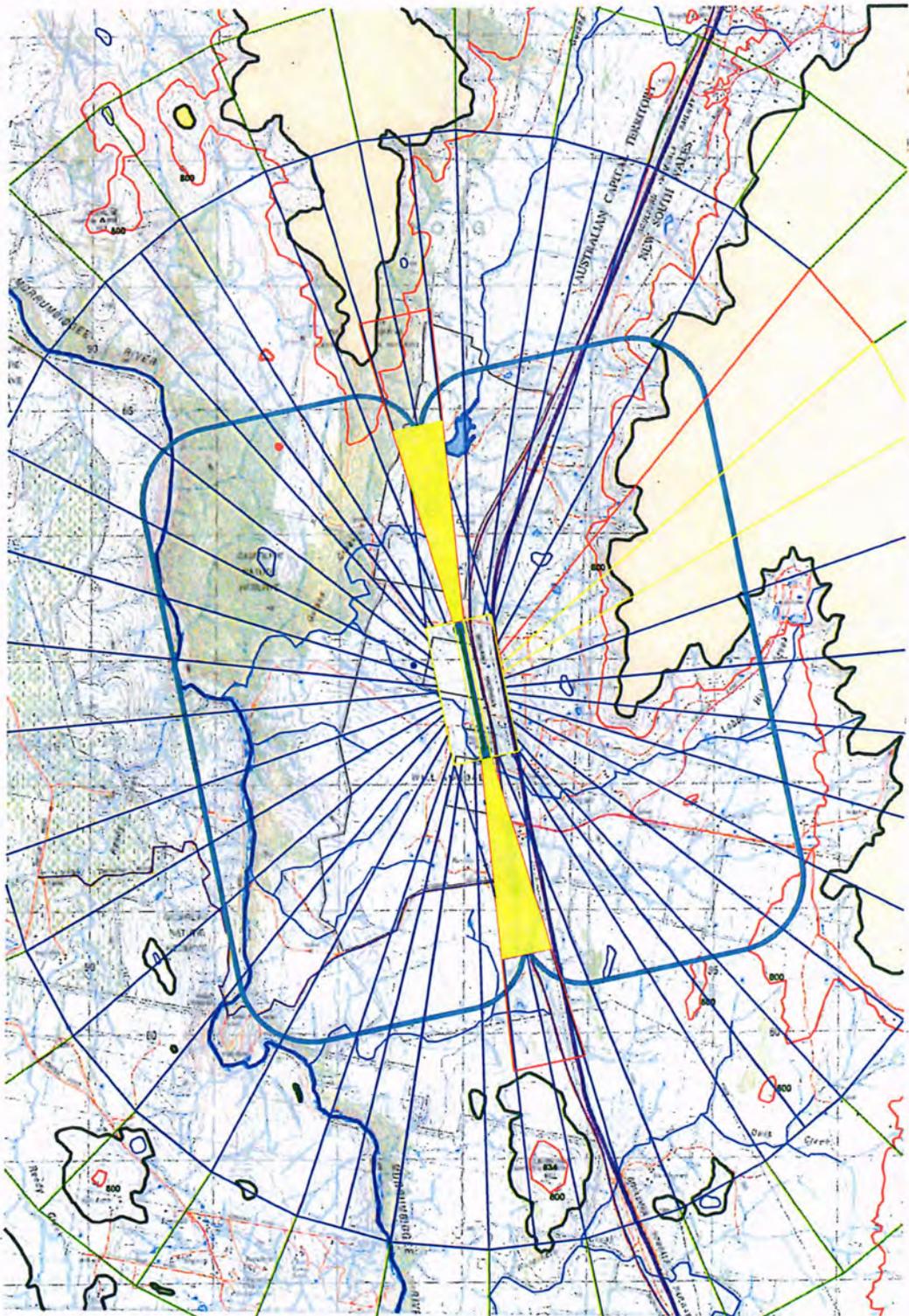


Figure 13: Terrain Penetration of the Inner Horizontal OLS Element

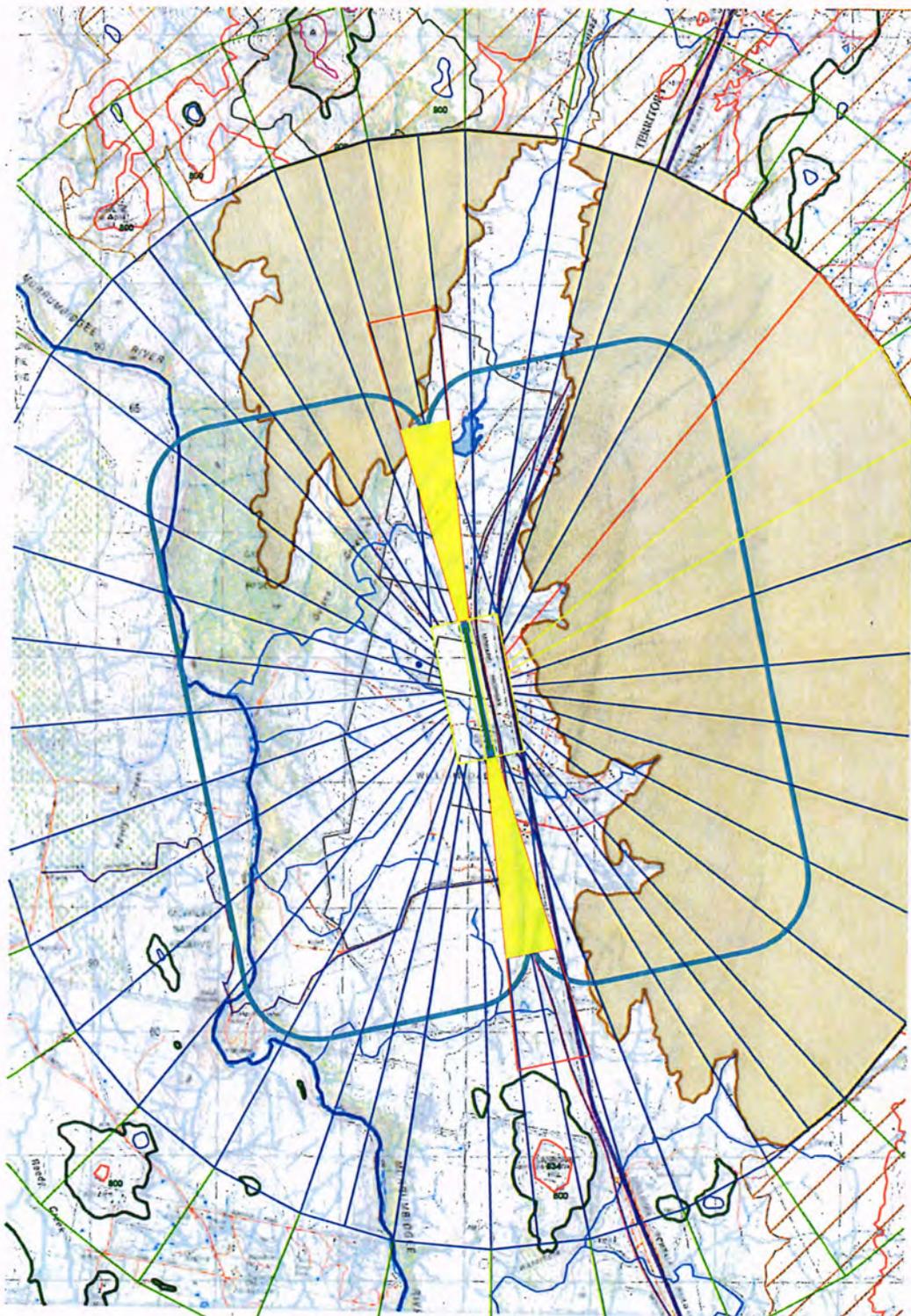
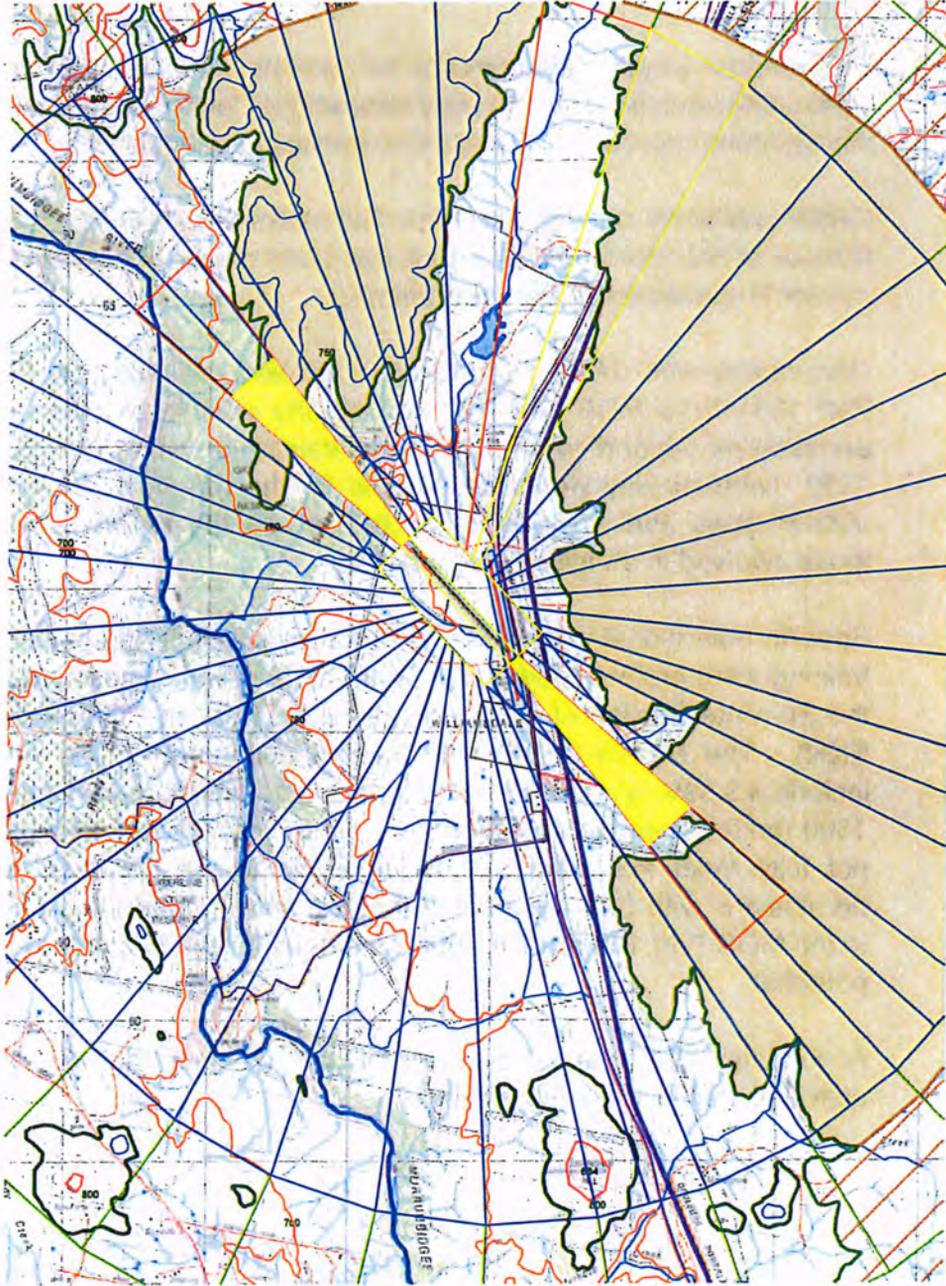


Figure 14: Terrain Penetration of the Inner Horizontal OLS Element for a crosswind runway



7 OPERATIONAL CRITERIA FOR AB-INITIO FLYING TRAINING

The runway length requirements for aircraft used in flight training, particularly ab-initio training rarely exceed the Code 1 criteria for which the standard approach and departure surface gradient is 5%.

CASA publishes current standards for aerodrome in Part 139 of the Manual of Standards (MOS) which has been developed as part of the current Regulatory Review Programme.

Discussions with CASA undertaken in relation this study confirm that Part 139 of the MOS does not include any specific requirements for aerodromes supporting ab-initio flying training and that the proposed 1000 metre runway would be suitable for the range of single engine aircraft types that would be expected to use the facility, particularly those involved in ab-initio flying training..

Specific operational criteria for aerodromes conducting ab-initio flying training were promulgated by CASA in the past with details included in the En-route Section of the Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP-ENR). The criteria for ab-initio training nominated in the AIP-ENR include a 3.33% gradient in the approach and departure surfaces within 1600 metres from the runway ends. Whilst the Williamsdale site does not fully meet this criterion due to terrain to the north of the site, discussions with CASA indicated that the current standards published in the MOS Part 139 are the applicable ones for the analysis of the site potential.

Accordingly, the site is suitable for the conduct of flying training activities, including ab-initio training.

8 FLIGHTPATH OPTIONS FOR ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE AND CIRCUIT OPERATIONS

The analysis of terrain effects discussed above indicates that the circuit pattern for the runway will need to be on the western side of the runway only. Arrival and departure traffic join or depart the airfield area by following one or more legs of the circuit pattern.

The flight tracks that would need to be flown in the vicinity of the Williamsdale site are controlled by the local terrain. A further consideration in determining options for flight tracks is the location of the controlled airspace serving Canberra Airport.

The capability of operating outside controlled airspace to avoid potential delays was nominated as a selection criterion in the MMI study of alternate sites. The Williamsdale site is outside the Canberra control area (CTA) but a CTA step overlies the site at an elevation of 4500 feet, 2150 feet (655m) above the nominal site elevation of 715 metres. The CTA boundary steps down by 1000 feet to 3500 feet approximately 4 nautical miles (7.4 kilometres) to the north of the site (1 mile north of Royalla). The terrain in the vicinity of Royalla includes hills with elevations that effectively prevent aircraft operations without entering controlled airspace.

The CTA boundary at 4500 feet is 5 nautical miles (9 kilometres) wide and creates a ring around Canberra to Bungendore in the east and Murrumbateman on the western side. The western ring has terrain elements up to 3000 feet in elevation and a restricted area around the Tidbinbilla Tracking Station up to 3600 feet. The eastern ring has terrain above 3000 feet extending within the 3500 feet CTA boundary north of Royalla and includes terrain above 3600 feet at Mount Molonglo.

Air routes to the north of Williamsdale via the eastern or western routes outside controlled airspace would require sound airmanship to negotiate the terrain elements while remaining outside and below the CTA boundary. The option exists however for the traffic to request a clearance and operate within controlled airspace to the north of the Williamsdale site.

The Williamsdale site is approximately 6 miles (11 kilometres) from the navigation aid that marks the commencement of the ILS precision approach to Runway 35 at Canberra Airport. The traffic tracking in controlled airspace to the ILS flightpath will be at a prescribed elevation

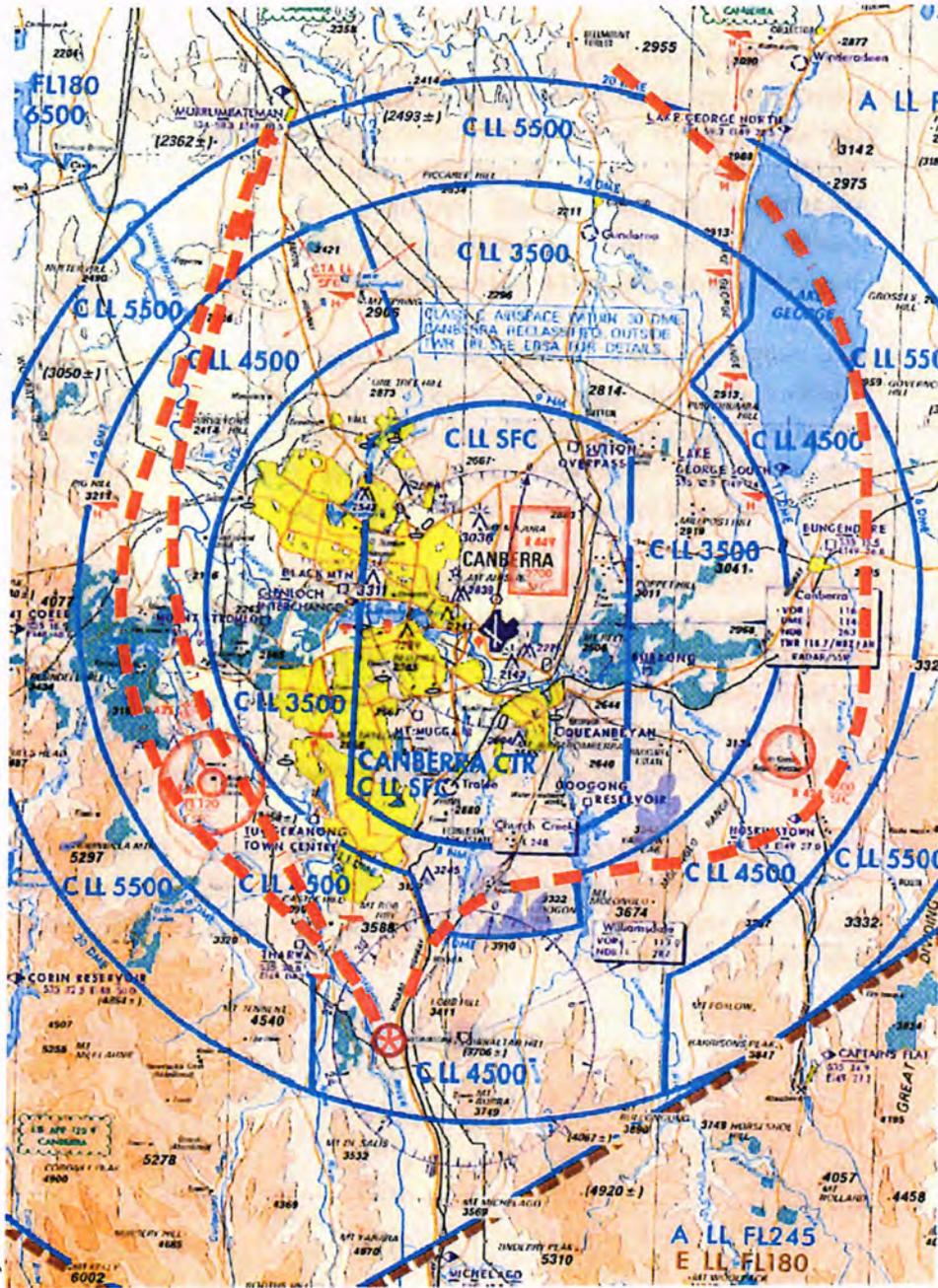
of at least 5000 feet, more than 2650 feet above the airfield elevation and will remain at that height until established on the ILS glide path.

Whilst there is adequate clearance between ILS traffic inside the CTA and Williamsdale traffic operating outside controlled airspace, the potential exists for delays to occur in the issue of ATC clearances to Williamsdale traffic wishing to operate within the CTA due to relative locations in a vertical alignment of the ILS traffic tracks and the Williamsdale site.

The relative locations of the Canberra CTA boundaries, the Williamsdale site and the potential flight tracks outside the CTA for Williamsdale aircraft are indicated in Figure 15.

Whilst the airfield location may constrain the options for aircraft operating to and from the north of the site, the use of the airfield as a fire fighting base would be effectively un-impeded by controlled airspace considerations as the anticipated areas of fire potential are predominantly to the east, south and west of the site.

Figure 15: Canberra Air Traffic Control Area Boundaries



9 SITE AREA AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL FOR GENERAL AVIATION AIRCRAFT

The proposal submitted to the ACT Government was based on the development of an airfield that could be used by single and twin engine general aviation aircraft with the suggested potential to evolve into a facility with a crosswind runway and facilities suitable for handling 40,000 aircraft movements annually. Aerodromes catering for such levels of activity are significant when compared to other GA aerodromes as evident in the aerial photos presented in Attachment 1.

The initial analysis of the proposal has considered a single grassed runway of 1000 metres in length. The additional length required to meet the operational needs of the nominated range of aircraft types to use the facility has been assessed with reference to the performance data contained in the aircraft Flight Manuals.

The performance data available for the range of aircraft engaged in flying training is limited in that the Pilot Operating Handbooks specify runway length requirements for short field performance rather than normal runway operations. The range of data considered for this study indicated that the proposed runway length of 1000 metres was suitable for flying training aircraft, a view supported in discussions with CASA.

The following listing presents the runway length requirements for a range of advanced single engine aircraft operating at maximum take-off weight in standard atmospheric conditions on a sealed runway at an elevation of 2300 feet.

Aircraft	Take-off distance		Landing	
	Ground roll	To 50' obstacle	Ground roll	From 50' obstacle
Cirrus SR20	565	785	435	875
Cessna 210	600	995	280	685
Cessna Caravan	515	940	345	750
Pilatus PC12	600	920	770	1135

The performance criteria for a twin engine Beechcraft BE76 Duchess was reviewed to identify the potential usability of a 1000 metre runway for a typical light twin engine aircraft used for flying training. The data presented in the Pilot Operating Handbook for the aircraft indicated that

whilst it could use the runway with both engines operating, it would need to significantly reduce its takeoff weight to achieve a positive single engine rate of climb, the normal operating criteria for twin engine aircraft.

The accelerate-stop distance requirements for a range of heavier twin engine aircraft operating at maximum take-off weight in standard atmospheric conditions on a sealed runway at an elevation of 2300 feet are listed below and indicate they would also be limited in their operations from a 1000 metre runway at 2300 feet.

Beech Baron	6 seat twin engine	1320m
PA31 Navajo	8 set twin engine	1230m
Cessna 404	12 seat twin engine	1435m
Cessna 441	twin engine turboprop	1530m.

The initial concept for the airfield located the runway between the Williamsdale Recreation Reserve and the Guises Flat leasehold area, extending through two rural leasehold areas and the travelling stock reserve. The northern end of the runway extended into the Guises Flat leasehold area. The creek on the southern boundary of the recreation reserve has been nominated as a physical limit to the southern extent of the runway so that any further development beyond 1000 metres would need to extend to the north in the first instance and closer to the rising terrain.

The inclusion of a crosswind runway in the development increases the area of the airfield site and reduces the overall area available for secondary development such as hangars and facilities for fire fighting operations. The terrain to the east of the site would require the crosswind runway to be located on the southern boundary of the site to optimise the obstacle clear gradients approaching the runway. The analysis of potential usability for a 1000 metre runway and the prevailing wind indicates it may be possible to achieve the desired usability for the aerodrome with a single runway aligned in the north-west direction.

A detailed assessment of the areas needed and available for hangar development has not been undertaken at this stage as the primary focus has been the operational feasibility of the runway. The number of hangars and the associated space requirements has not been calculated at this time but the range of facilities provided at other airports can be identified in the information presented in Attachment A.

10 SITE AREA AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL FOR FIRE FIGHTING AIRCRAFT

The development concept nominated by the ACT Government for this study included the potential use of the site by the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSWRFS) and other agencies as a basing location for aerial fire fighting aircraft during the active periods of the bush fire season.

The operational needs of an airfield for fire fighting activities have been determined after consultation with the Fire Control Officer of the Lake George Zone of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) and with reference to the details of aerial fire fighting aircraft presented in the web sites of the RFS, the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and the Victorian Country Fire Authority (CFA). Additional information has been obtained through discussions with the manager of the DSE State Aircraft Unit and Col Pay of Pay's Air Service Pty Ltd, an aerial firefighting contractor that has operated in the local area.

The RFS does not operate aircraft itself but contracts a number of fixed and rotary wing aircraft for standby during the fire season. In addition, the RFS seeks Expressions of Interest from aircraft operators available to provide aircraft on a call-when-needed basis.

In Victoria, the DSE have established a fleet of fixed wing aircraft and helicopters that are provided to the CFA through an Integrated Firefighting Aircraft Resource (IFAR) arrangement that includes some standard management systems and support arrangements. The DSE maintain a Statewide network of 15 fire bombing bases which are made up of an airstrip, water supply and equipment for mixing retardant.

The location of a firefighting base also needs to be relatively close to the fire sources to be effective. The DSE fire bases provide a network of airfields that can be activated and deactivated in response to the relative location of fires. The significant factor in locating air bases relative to the fire locations is the travel time for aircraft between the fire and the base. If the travel time is excessive, the fire has a chance to re-establish itself between successive drops and the overall efficiency of the fire fighting operation is significantly reduced. Travel times greater than 12 minutes for fixed wing aircraft and 8 minutes for helicopters were suggested as the operational limits that would be considered in the decision to activate a fire base.

The information gathered by ATS in this study indicate the location of the Williamsdale site would be suitable for fires in the local area such as the Tinderry Mountains to the South East, the Brindabellas to the West and the northern end of the Cooma Monaro RFS Zone.

All of the information collected by ATS for this study indicates that the supply of water is the critical factor in providing an efficient air base for firefighting operations. A range of options exist for the supply of water at the Williamsdale site including permanent and temporary storages.

The larger helicopter types used for firefighting have the ability to 'self-fill' from almost any water source in approximately 50 seconds by a hydraulic pump hanging underneath the aircraft. The provision of water in open dams or specialised storage ponds for self-filling operations would be of advantage for such operations.

The usual method of supplying water to air bases has been with the use of road tankers where permanent dams and water courses are not available or inadequate.

The Williamsdale site offers an alternative option for the supply of water to the storage ponds through the use of rail tankers on the railway line to the east of the site. The railway line at Williamsdale is part of the Queanbeyan to Michelago line operated by the ACT Historical Railway Society but is currently not used south of Royalla. Williamsdale effectively represents a branch line from Royalla where there is a loop and siding track. The proximity of the airfield site to the railway line enables water to be stored in tankers parked on the line during the fire season with the water transferred to the storage ponds when the fire base is activated. Additional tankers of water can be stored at Royalla and refilled from the filling point at Queanbeyan station.

Additional siting requirements identified include adequate space to park aircraft and equipment and a separate area for the mixing of the retardant slurries. In the local context, the need for a westerly aligned runway was identified by Col Pay from his experience of prevailing winds during the local bushfire season.

The space required for aircraft parking depends on the types and number of aircraft involved. A minimum number of ten helicopters plus fixed wing aircraft was indicated in discussions noting that 17 helicopters were operating from the one site during the peak of the Canberra bush fires.

The type of aircraft operated for aerial fire fighting and the experience of the pilots operating the aircraft combine to create a requirement for runways and operating conditions that are much less demanding than those associated with general aviation aircraft. The bases established by the DSE in Victoria include a range of unlicensed airfields with the typical conditions associated with their operation indicated in the listing presented in Table 2. The range of typical operating conditions for fire fighting bases in Victoria indicate that the Williamsdale site would meet the operational requirements of a fire fighting base.

Table 2: Operational Characteristics of Victorian Aerial Fire Bases

Location Elevation	Runways	Operational remarks
Benambra 2200 feet	14/32 Gravel 1250m	Marked power lines on S approach displace RWY32 Threshold. RWY14 takeoff distance 995m. Landing distance RWY 32 1100m. Windmill on E side. Caution ultralight aircraft use dry lake bed 0.5 nm N. PAL Lighting not CASA approved.
Mitta Mitta 820 feet	14/32 grass (610m Nth end gravel) 920m	Strip runs parallel to Omeo highway. High terrain in circuit area. Caution fences and trees on approach both ends. Caution wind shear. Ice in winter. All circuits LH. Turn right after departure from RWY 32. Bird and wombat hazard.
Porepunkah 935 feet	18/36 grass 840m fence to fence.	Strip is located east side of Mt. Buffalo in Buckland Valley. Gradient 1.25% down to N. Caution traffic uses access road which crosses strip at N end. Due to gradients and trees on S boundary, preferred direction is 18 for landing and 36 for takeoffs. Otherwise operating length is 720m. Airfield activities include ultralights and microlights, models, hang gliders. Paragliding and car/winch towing.
Mt Beauty 1100 feet	14/32 Gravel (300m S end sealed) 975m	RH circuits for landing RWY32. SE THR permanently displaced 220m. Powerlines at SE end. High ground 2300 feet 1nm to SE. Due to terrain takeoff RWY 14 not permitted.
Snowy Range 5200 feet	18/36 900m 09/27 700m grass and gravel	Emergency use only. RWY 09/27 has road crossing strip at W end and could have traffic on it. Preferred direction = 18/36 and has hump in the middle. Caution mountains and fences.

Source: *Airfields 2000*, AOPA

11 CONSIDERATION OF STAKEHOLDER SUBMISSIONS

The ACT Government has received written submissions regarding the proposed airfield from a number of people living in the Williamsdale area. Copies of these submissions have been provided to ATS as they identify a number of operational factors in relation to the proposed airfield site.

The operational issues identified in the written submissions received by the ACT Government include:

- Ab-initio training;
- Terrain in the vicinity of the site;
- Prevailing wind conditions;
- Proximity to the controlled airspace serving Canberra Airport;
- Access air routes to and from the north of the site; and
- Consideration of sites rejected in the Maunsell McIntyre 2001 study.

All of these topics have been considered in the analysis undertaken by ATS and discussed in this report.

12 SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

The analysis of the Williamsdale airfield proposal, with reference to the operational feasibility of a 1000 metre runway for general aviation aircraft, indicates the airfield would be suitable for single engine and, with some restrictions, light twin engine aircraft.

The facility and the location would be well suited for the establishment of a base for aerial fire fighting activities that could be activated when needed.

The site has limited potential for use by general aviation twin engine aircraft and for development beyond the nominated 1000 metre runway. Alternative sites would need to be developed for general aviation activities requiring more than a 1000 metre runway.

GOULBURN

Licensed aerodrome

Sealed runway 04/22 1283 metres

Grassed runway 08/26 590m



Hangars for aircraft.

Adjacent motel under construction (for long time, no opening date known)



MITTAGONG

Gravel runway 06/24 1000 metres

Effective operating length 700m in 06 direction, 600m in 24 direction. Circuits to Northwest due to terrain



A few aircraft on parking apron area, most aircraft in hangars.
Fuel facility inside locked shed.



CAMDEN

Licensed aerodrome

Sealed Runway 06/24 1464 metres

Grassed runway 10/28 723 metres

Hangars and apron parking

Glider facilities and runways for gliders

