



**Australian Government**

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**Defence**

# AIR7000 Phase 1B Remotely Piloted Aircraft System Facilities Project

RAAF Base Edinburgh, Adelaide (SA)

RAAF Base Tindal, Katherine (NT)

## **STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE TO THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS**

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# **AIR7000 Phase 1B Remotely Piloted Aircraft System Facilities Project**

1. The purpose of this Statement of Evidence is to provide information for the Australian public to comment on, and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to enquire into, proposed works under AIR7000 Phase 1B Remotely Piloted Aircraft System Facilities Project (the Project).

## **Executive Summary**

2. The aim of the Project is to provide fit for purpose facilities and infrastructure to support the introduction into service of the MQ-4C Triton aircraft system (Triton). The primary role of the Triton will be to provide high altitude, long endurance, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. The Triton will complement the in-service P-8A Poseidon aircraft system (Poseidon) acquired under Project AIR 7000 Phase 2B and forms a ‘family of systems’ that provides an integrated maritime intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and response capability for Defence. The Project will be delivered at RAAF Base Edinburgh (SA) and RAAF Base Tindal (NT).

3. Proposed works include a control centre, training facilities, squadron headquarters, hangars, airfield pavements, aircraft wash point, and site wide engineering services.

4. The estimated total capital out-turned cost is \$427.1 million (excluding Goods and Services Tax). The cost includes management and design fees, construction, information and communications technology, furniture, fittings, equipment, contingencies and a provision for escalation. As a result of these works, there will be ongoing operating and sustainment costs. No revenue is expected to be generated by these works.

5. Defence anticipates that, over the life of the Project, around 1,150 personnel will be provided with employment opportunities across both sites. Defence, together with the Managing Contractor and Head Contactor, will actively promote opportunities for small to medium local enterprises through construction trade packages. There will also be opportunities for Indigenous business involvement in accordance with the Government’s Indigenous Procurement Policy.

6. Accredited building certifiers will certify the compliance of the design and the compliance of the completed works, and a Work Health and Safety Plan will be required to

be developed for the construction phase prior to the commencement of any construction activities.

7. Environmental and heritage investigations have been completed.

## **Purpose of the Works**

### Locations of the Project

8. The Project will be delivered at:
  - a. RAAF Base Edinburgh (Triton operational headquarters) located approximately 25 kilometres north of Adelaide's Central Business District in South Australia.
  - b. RAAF Base Tindal (Triton home base) located approximately 15 kilometres south-east of Katherine in the Northern Territory.
9. Attachment 1 depicts the two proposed locations.

### Need for the Project

10. The 2020 Defence Strategic Update highlighted the need for enhanced situational awareness through a strengthened intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and space capability, and the need to strengthen maritime, electronic warfare and cyber capabilities. The Triton will partially replace intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities previously provided by the AP-3C Orion aircraft system, and, together with MC-55A Peregrine aircraft system (Peregrine) and Poseidon, will enhance Australia's defence by strengthening these capability needs, as highlighted in the 2020 Defence Strategic Update.

11. The Triton will leverage facilities delivered for Poseidon under the AIR 7000 Phase 2B - Facilities Requirements for the Maritime Patrol Aircraft Replacement Capability Project that was approved by Parliament in March 2015. The Triton will also leverage facilities currently being delivered for Peregrine under the AIR555 Phase 1 Airborne Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance Electronic Warfare Capability Facilities Works that was approved by Parliament in August 2020.

### Requirements of the Triton (AIR7000 Phase 1B Capability)

12. Facilities elements under the Project can be categorised into the following functional groups:
  - a. working facilities
  - b. operational support facilities

- c. Triton Control Centre
- d. airfield works.

## Proposed Facilities Solution

13. The Department of Defence undertook master planning, site investigations, stakeholder consultation, whole-of-life cost analysis and design development to establish the capital facilities and infrastructure works required for the Project. This involves dedicated facilities at RAAF Base Tindal, and integrating the proposed Triton facilities into an existing ISR precinct at RAAF Base Edinburgh:

- a. integrating the Triton Control Centre into the Poseidon facilities
- b. providing:
  - (1) network infrastructure
  - (2) facilities infrastructure
  - (3) Explosive Ordnance storage.

14. The integrated facilities solution under the approved AIR555 Phase 1 Facilities Works, and what the Project is proposing for Triton at both Bases, are depicted in Attachments 2 and 3 respectively.

## Options Considered

15. Defence has developed the following four options for the proposed Triton facilities:

- a. **Option 1: Do Nothing.** This option considered the impact of not investing in facilities. However, without the minimum dedicated facilities, Triton operations would be very significantly constrained. In addition, the capability provided by Triton could not be exploited without facilities that link to networked Defence capabilities. As a result, the ‘Do Nothing’ option has been discounted.
- b. **Option 2: Significantly Reduced Facilities.** This option considered significantly reduced facilities to control costs. However, this option cannot meet minimum capability requirements. Subsequently, this option would produce an inefficient facilities investment to support the Triton, and has also been discounted.
- c. **Option 3: Deployable Mission Control Facility (preferred option).** This option is similar to Option 4 but provides a deployable mission

control system facility at RAAF Base Tindal instead of both fixed and deployable mission control facilities, which reduces costs. This option is considered to offer a facilities solution that would successfully support the Triton as intended, and is the preferred option.

- d. **Option 4: Fixed and Deployable Mission Control Facilities.** This option includes new facilities that would provide for:
- (1) remote flight and payload control, operational planning and aircrew training of aircrew at Edinburgh
  - (2) launch, recovery, and maintenance of air vehicles at Tindal.
- This option provides all the necessary facilities to successfully operate the Triton, but was rejected due to higher cost.

16. Option 3 is the preferred option as it satisfies minimum requirements to support the capability and represents the best value for money from both an initial and whole of life perspective.

#### Scope of Works Proposed for the Preferred Option

17. The Project comprises two elements outlined below by location:

##### *Project Element 1 – RAAF Base Edinburgh*

18. RAAF Base Edinburgh has undergone and continues to receive substantial investment to fully develop the ISR precinct for the Poseidon, incoming Peregrine and Triton capabilities. The proposed facilities requirements to support the Triton at Edinburgh include:

- a. a new Control Centre
- b. training facilities and classrooms
- c. Squadron Headquarters
- d. internal access roads, car parking, general pavements and landscaping
- e. local building services plant
- f. site wide engineering services (reticulated services including high and low voltage electricity distribution, ICT, water and sewer connections).

##### *Project Element 2 – RAAF Base Tindal*

19. RAAF Base Tindal is a major Airbase with existing airfield infrastructure and support systems that will be used by Triton. New purpose designed facilities at Tindal that

will be integrated with existing services and support infrastructure arrangements to support the Triton include:

- a. two maintenance hangars
- b. a building for support and maintenance
- c. a deployable mission control system to support operations
- d. aircraft pavements
- e. an aircraft wash and engine run-up area
- f. a ground support equipment shelter
- g. internal access roads, car parking, general pavements and landscaping
- h. local building services plant
- i. site wide engineering services (reticulated services including high and low voltage power distribution, ICT, water and sewer connections).

#### Planning and Design Concepts

20. The general philosophy for the design of the proposed works is based on:
  - a. addressing functional requirements derived from the manufacturer (Northrop Grumman Corporation)
  - b. providing cost-effective, functional, low-maintenance, energy-efficient design options compatible with proposed functions and existing aesthetics
  - c. adopting conventional construction techniques and materials commonly used by the construction industry and consistent with those already used where possible
  - d. applying appropriate durability measures to reduce ongoing maintenance and achieve the proposed design life
  - e. maximising the use of existing infrastructure and facilities, including integrating into existing facilities at RAAF Base Edinburgh
  - f. working with site constraints, master planning relationship to other facilities, security requirements and approved Estate Base Plans for each location
  - g. providing flexible services and infrastructure to accommodate an appropriate level of growth.

#### Relevant Legislation, Codes and Standards

21. The following legislation, standards, codes and guidelines are applicable:
  - a. *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*



- b. *Fair Work (Building Industry) Act 2012 (Cth)*
- c. *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)*
- d. *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- e. *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*
- f. *Public Works Committee Act 1969 (Cth)*
- g. National Construction Code - Building Code of Australia
- h. Defence Manual for Infrastructure Engineering Electrical
- i. Defence Smart Infrastructure Manual
- j. Defence Estate Quality Management System
- k. Defence Manual of Fire Protection Engineering
- l. Defence Security Principles Framework
- m. Defence Pollution Prevention Management Manual
- n. CASA Manual of Operating Standards 139.

22. Accredited Building Certifiers will certify the compliance of the design and the compliance of the completed works.

#### Land and Zoning

23. The proposed works are consistent with uses prescribed in relevant Defence zoning instruments, including the Edinburgh Defence Precinct Estate Base Plan, RAAF Base Tindal Flightline Master Plan, and the Defence Estate Principles of Development.

24. The proposed facilities at both Bases have been the subject of Defence site selection processes to ensure compliance with relevant Defence policies and regulations.

#### Leased Properties

25. The proposed works at RAAF Base Tindal will impact a current property lease. Construction of the new Triton facilities will be immediately south of Commonwealth land leased to the Katherine Airport Corporation and access is required to a taxiway that forms part of that lease. Defence is in discussion with the Katherine Town Council and does not anticipate any difficulties with adjusting the lease to achieve required access.

#### Structures

26. The structures have been designed according to the local geotechnical profile at the two Bases. The proposed new facilities will be a combination of reinforced concrete substructure with structural steel and precast concrete superstructure, and steel framed

structures with foundation designs tailored to the conditions of each site. The Squadron Headquarters facility structure is designed to allow for future expansion. The internal walls are non-load bearing frames, lined with plasterboard to provide maximum flexibility in future layout changes.

#### Mechanical Services

27. The mechanical services have been designed according to the functional requirements of each building and the mandatory requirements of the Building Code of Australia. The proposed mechanical services will also meet specific user needs, relevant ventilation, thermal comfort and air quality requirements.

#### Hydraulic Services

28. Existing potable water, sewerage and stormwater services would be extended to each facility to suit design requirements. Potable water will be connected to the existing supply via sub-metering to each new building.

#### Electrical Services

29. Lighting, electricity and lightning protection will be provided in accordance with Australian Standards and Defence engineering requirements. Electrical infrastructure and switchboards will have appropriate spare capacity. Sub-metering will be included to each re-used and new building and be monitored through a new Building Management System, which will support an active energy management program on the site.

30. Local emergency generators will provide backup power to critical facilities.

#### Fire Protection

31. The Project has assessed asset classification and criticality to determine the fire protection systems to be installed in each facility. Fire protection has been addressed through compliance with the Department of Defence Manual of Fire Protection Engineering and the Building Code of Australia. In accordance with Defence and Government policy, a low-level foam protection system in air vehicle hangars will be free of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

32. Measures have been implemented to mitigate against bushfire risk at RAAF Base Tindal, including required clearances from adjacent bush.

### Security Measures

33. The security design of the sites will ensure that any new facilities conform to the existing security system employed by the Base. To ensure the Base's continuous protection by a commercial grade system, the Project will install an internal access system, and where required, CCTV coverage, intruder detection systems and internal field detection devices. The Project will integrate with the existing site-wide security monitoring system.

### Acoustics

34. New facilities will comply with the National Construction Code and Australian Standards for noise and acoustics. Acoustic separation has been considered between rooms, and walls are being designed to meet user requirements.

### Work Health and Safety

35. The Project will comply with the *Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2011 (Cth)*, Work Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment – National Standards) Regulations, and relevant Defence policies. In accordance with Section 35 (4) of the Building and Construction Industry Improvement Act 2005 (Cth), project contractors will also be required to hold full work health and safety accreditation from the Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner under the Australian Government Building and Construction Work Health and Safety Accreditation Scheme. Safety aspects of the Project have been addressed during the design development process and have been documented in a Safety in Design Report. A Work Health and Safety Plan will be required to be developed for the construction phase prior to the commencement of any construction activities.

36. For airside works at RAAF Base Tindal, a specific Airfield Safety Plan will be developed by the appointed construction contractor to ensure the safety of personnel and air vehicles operating in the vicinity of an active airfield.

### Materials and Furnishings

37. Materials and furnishings will be sought from what is readily available locally and selected against functionality, durability, low maintenance and ecologically sustainable design properties.

38. External walls for new buildings will be a mixture of concrete panels and metal cladding with glazing. Structural framing is mainly steel and where exposed will be coated in a low maintenance finish. Internal walls will consist of concrete and plasterboard fixed

to steel studs. Floors will be low maintenance and mainly consist of sealed concrete in hangars, workshops and plantrooms. Floors in other areas will be a combination of vinyl, ceramic tiles, carpet tiles and sealed concrete.

### Landscaping

39. The proposed new landscape works will complement and enhance the character of each site. The landscape design will focus on a functional, low maintenance, water sensitive approach with the use of native plants. Plants that do not attract birds will be selected due to the close proximity to the airfield. Precautions will be taken to avoid compromising environmental sensitivities by adopting landscaping practices in accordance with local environmental conditions and Defence policies.

### Childcare Provisions

40. As there is minimal increase in personnel numbers on both Bases, there is no requirement to provide additional childcare facilities under the Project.

### Provisions for People with Disabilities

41. Access for people with disabilities will be provided in accordance with the Building Code of Australia, Australia Standard 1428 and the *Disability and Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*.

### Environmental Sustainability

42. Defence is committed to ecologically sustainable development and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and has adopted cost effective measures as a key objective in the design and development of the proposed works. These include:

- a. **Energy targets.** The requirements of Defence's Smart Infrastructure Manual: Design and Construction Version 1.0 (April 2015) and Building Energy Performance Manual Version 4 (December 2012) and the 2019 National Construction Code have been adopted for the Project. Energy targets include a minimum 4.5 star NABERS rating for office spaces.
- b. **Measures to reduce energy and water use.** Measures proposed to reduce energy use include adopting passive building design principles for new facilities; using energy efficient heating ventilation and air conditioning systems, lighting and intelligent control systems; maximising natural ventilation and installing energy management

systems. Measures proposed to reduce water use include specifying water efficient fixtures and fittings and incorporating water consumption targets into the design. Where landscaping works are proposed, water-sensitive urban design principles will be adopted and native, low-water usage plant species will be selected.

- c. **Improving indoor environments.** Measures proposed include high quality lighting systems; providing shading for heat and glare control; optimising building orientation; and using low volatile organic compound paints, carpets and adhesives, and low emission wood products.
- d. **Installing metering.** Electrical services will be metered in accordance with the requirements of the Defence National Sub-meter Program. They will be suitable to connect to the Defence National Resource Data Management System. Hydraulic services will be metered and connected directly to the Base's building management system.
- e. **Minimising waste.** A minimum of 80% of construction and demolition waste, by weight, will be either reused or recycled at RAAF Base Edinburgh. There are no recycling facilities in Katherine for RAAF Base Tindal so a greater emphasis will be placed on 'designing out' waste and providing flexible waste provisions that will facilitate recycling in the future. This follows the Defence Smart Infrastructure Handbook's approach to minimising waste to landfill.

## Potential Impacts

43. Defence has conducted rigorous assessments to identify potential environmental and local community impacts and propose suitable mitigation measures. These include:

- a. **Visual impacts.** There would be no potential visual impacts to the local community due to RAAF Bases Edinburgh and Tindal being physically removed from local residential and commercial areas.
- b. **Noise impacts.** Facilities delivered under this Project will be co-located with existing aviation capabilities that have a higher noise signature and greater mission frequency so noise generated by the operational use of the new facilities will not impact the local community.

- c. **Heritage impacts.** Assessment of potential impacts to Indigenous heritage concluded that each of the site locations proposed have a low risk of impact on known areas of cultural significance.
- d. **Traffic, transportation and road impacts – RAAF Base Edinburgh.**  
The public Adelaide Metro Bus Service stops at the main gate of RAAF Base Edinburgh, approximately 1.4 kilometres from the proposed building site. The Base is accessed from West Avenue, which runs through the Edinburgh Defence Precinct in a south-west/north-east direction. West Avenue also services the Edinburgh South and Edinburgh North industrial areas but is not considered a busy road. Accordingly, there are no traffic concerns created by this proposal.
- e. **Traffic, transportation and road impacts – RAAF Base Tindal.**  
Carson Drive is the primary access road for RAAF Base Tindal and is accessed from the Stuart Highway, which is the main road between Darwin, Alice Springs and Port Augusta. The selected site option south of the existing Katherine Airport (leased Defence land) will utilise an access road that will pass around the Katherine Airport.
- f. **Relevant local facilities.** There are no potential impacts on existing local facilities at both project locations. This is due to the operational use and location of the proposed facilities within the respective Bases, both of which are removed from any local residential or commercial areas.
- g. **Katherine Airport.** At RAAF Base Tindal the impact of the proposed facilities on the Katherine Airport, adjacent to Runway 14 and west of the main Base area, has been the subject of consultation and no adverse impacts are anticipated.

44. Defence has determined that the Project will not have a significant impact on existing environmental and heritage values and is not required to be referred to the Minister for the Environment and/or the Minister for Energy under the [\*Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 \(Cth\)\*](#).

## **Consultation with Key Stakeholders**

45. Defence has developed a community consultation and communications strategy that recognises the importance of providing local residents and other interested

stakeholders an opportunity to provide input into, or raise concerns relating to, the proposed works.

46. Defence has engaged with, or will engage with, a variety of internal and external stakeholders during Project development, and further consultation will be conducted to support the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works' inquiry into the proposed works.

47. For RAAF Base Edinburgh, stakeholders include:

- a. Martin Haese, Chief Executive Office, Business SA, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, South Australia
- b. Matt Burnell, Federal Member for Spence
- c. Nick Champion, South Australian Member for Taylor
- d. Gillian Aldridge, Mayor of the City of Salisbury
- e. Peter Malinauskas, Premier of South Australia
- f. The Kurna People.

48. For RAAF Base Tindal, stakeholders include:

- a. Greg Ireland, Chief Executive Office, Chamber Commerce of the Northern Territory
- b. Marion Scrymgour, Federal Member for Lingiari
- c. Jo Hersey, Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory Member for Katherine
- d. Selena Uiibo, Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory Member for Arnhem
- e. Elisabeth Clark, Mayor Katherine Town Council
- f. The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority
- g. Natasha Fyles, the Northern Territory Chief Minister.

## **Related Projects**

49. AIR7000 Phase 2B Maritime Patrol and Response Facilities Project (Poseidon), approved by Parliament in March 2015, planned for the integration of the following Triton facilities into the ISR precinct at RAAF Base Edinburgh:

- a. Control Centre
- b. training facilities.

50. The AIR555 Airborne Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance Electronic Warfare Facilities Works (Peregrine) at RAAF Base Edinburgh, approved by Parliament in August 2020, planned for the integration of the Triton System and facilities as follows:

- a. an initial operating facility which the Project proposes to transition to a shared data hub
- b. shared infrastructure services
- c. new explosive ordnance storage to replace storage capacity unavoidably lost through the siting of new AIR555 and AIR7000 Phase 1B facilities.

## **Cost Effectiveness and Public Value**

### Project Costs

51. The estimated total capital out-turned cost of the Project is \$427.1 million (excluding Goods and Services Tax). This cost includes management and design fees, construction, information and communications technology, furniture, fittings, equipment, contingencies and a provision for escalation.

52. There will be ongoing operating and sustainment costs as a result of the proposed works. This is due to the additional maintenance, cleaning and utilities expenses that will be required to operate and maintain the proposed new facilities and infrastructure.

### Project Delivery System – RAAF Base Edinburgh

53. A Managing Contractor Contract is planned to deliver the works at RAAF Base Edinburgh. A Managing Contractor will be appointed to procure trade sub-contractors and manage the construction works. The Managing Contractor form of delivery provides the Commonwealth with buildability input into the design while promoting opportunities for small to medium enterprises by sub-contracting design and construction trade packages. This form of contract is the most suitable for large, complex projects with multiple stakeholders and inter-dependencies.

### Project Delivery System – RAAF Base Tindal

54. A Head Contractor Contract is planned to deliver the works at RAAF Base Tindal. A Head Contractor will be appointed to construct the works based on a 100% complete design developed by Defence's Design Services Consultant. The Head Contractor form of delivery is considered optimal in order to provide the local industry in the Northern



Territory the maximum opportunity to participate in the construction, including small to medium enterprises.

55. A Project Manager and Contract Administrator will be appointed to manage the contractors delivering the proposed works at both Bases.

#### Construction Program

56. Design activities for RAAF Base Edinburgh are complete. Subject to Parliamentary approval and appointment of the Managing Contractor, construction is expected to commence in early 2023 and be completed by late 2024.

57. The design for RAAF Base Tindal is forecast to be completed in late 2022. A Head Contractor is expected to be appointed to commence construction in early 2023 and be completed by late 2025.

#### Public Value

58. Defence has comprehensively assessed public value, opportunities and benefit to the community as a result of the proposed works:

- a. **Economic impacts.** The Project is expected to employ a diverse range of consultants, contractors and construction workers, and generate opportunities for up-skilling and job training to improve individual skills and employability on future projects.
- b. **Employment opportunities.** Defence anticipates that, over the life of the Project, around 1,150 personnel could be provided with employment opportunities across both sites.
- c. **Local industry and Indigenous business involvement opportunities.** Defence anticipates providing local businesses with opportunities to supply construction materials and labour. Defence, the Managing Contractor and Head Contractor will actively promote opportunities for small to medium local enterprises through construction trade packages. There will be opportunities for Indigenous business involvement in accordance with the Indigenous Procurement Policy. Works to be undertaken must comply with the Government Policy for Local Industry Participation, which requires successful tenderers to provide detailed commitments on how they will utilise and develop Australian industry. These commitments will become contract deliverables and successful

tenderers will be required to report on their performance against them. While the policy does not mandate local suppliers, there are opportunities to engage local industry associated with the Project sites.

- d. **Existing infrastructure services.** Power supply upgrades to RAAF Base Tindal are required for the Project and are being provided by the Power and Water Corporation. There is no other expected impact on SA or NT Government-provided infrastructure services with requirements for power, water and sewer managed within existing on-base capacities.

#### Below the Line Items

59. The Project design is minimalist, austere and focused on supporting the minimum level of facilities and infrastructure to enable the Triton to be operated successfully. As a cost-control measure, and to realise opportunities, the following below-the-line items are identified for potential delivery in the event of trade procurement savings being realised by the Managing Contractor delivery, cost reductions through competitive tender gains for Head Contractor delivery and the retirement of risk provision:

- a. RAAF Base Tindal:
  - (1) shelter over car parking
  - (2) taxiway to provide secondary, alternative access to the runway
  - (3) longer design life internal access road
  - (4) additional emergency power generation capacity at the Base Central Emergency Power Station
  - (5) relocation of the Doppler Very High Frequency Omni Directional Range navigational aid to support further adjacent development
  - (6) infrastructure to support further adjacent development.
- b. RAAF Base Edinburgh:
  - (1) future-proofing of the Squadron Headquarters to support potential future need
  - (2) future-proofing works at the ‘capability hub’ to support potential future need.

### Revenue

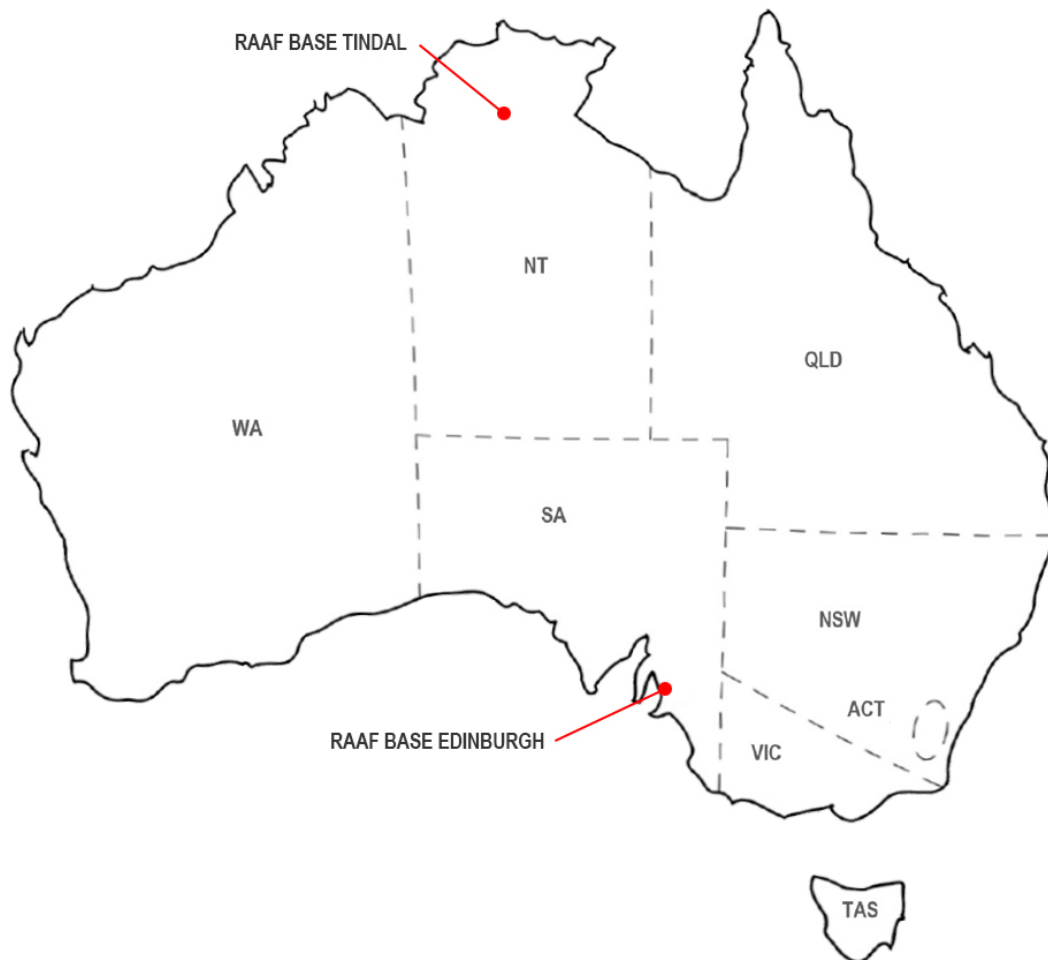
60. No revenue is expected to be derived from the Project.

### **Attachments**

1. Location of Project Works
2. Proposed Location of Facilities RAAF Base Edinburgh (SA)
3. Proposed Location of Facilities RAAF Base Tindal (NT)

# Attachment 1

## Location of Project Works



## Attachment 2

Proposed Location of Facilities RAAF Base Edinburgh (SA)



RAAF Base Edinburgh and ISR Precinct

## Attachment 3

Proposed Location of Facilities RAAF Base Tindal (NT)

