



Civil Aviation Historical Society & Airways Museum

Civil Aviation Historical Society Inc. A0036253R

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The Secretariat

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee

Management of Defence estate assets

The Civil Aviation Historical Society operates the Airways Museum at Essendon Airport, Melbourne. The Society's role is to preserve the history and heritage, and tell the story of, the Australian Government's involvement in Civil Aviation, particularly the Airways system.

RAAF Point Cook is one of 60 ADF sites identified by the Government for Full Divestment. Point Cook is Australia's most important aviation heritage site, established as the first military flying base in Australia in 1913 and just ten years after the world's first powered flight. It is a site of very significant heritage value, given its still-existing Australian Flying Corps and pre-First World War aerodrome, hangars and buildings, seaplane base on the Southern Tarmac and the original personnel living quarters. The site also retains significant Second World War buildings on the Northern Tarmac. This heritage value is recognised by National Heritage Listing, which places Point Cook alongside the Sydney Opera House, the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the Great Barrier Reef as a part of what makes Australia unique in the world.

In the years following the First World War, civil aviation was regulated by the Civil Aviation Branch of the Department of Defence. In that period, the Civil Aviation Branch drew many of its personnel from, and worked closely with, the RAAF. Some of the Branch's first aircraft were based at or operated from Point Cook. In the 1920s, cadres of civil commercial pilots were trained by the RAAF at Point Cook. The site therefore has heritage significance for civil aviation in addition to its purely military heritage.

Furthermore, although public access to and use of the site and particularly the aerodrome has been severely curtailed in recent years due to the RAAF presence on the site, Point Cook is a valuable aviation asset in the Melbourne basin. The aerodrome should not only be preserved for its heritage value, but also for its value as a community aviation asset.



Research Partners, Heritage of the Air Project

An Australian Research Council funded project investigating how aviation has changed Australian society over the last 100 years

The Society considers that most appropriate way to preserve and maintain this important national heritage site is through transfer to and ongoing operation by a public community trust for the benefit of the nation and all Australians.

Phil Vabre
President

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