



The Hon Dr Mike Kelly AM MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support

- 2 FEB 2009

Mrs Julia Irwin MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

21 JAN 2009

Dear Ms Irwin

Thank you for your letter of 3 November 2008, concerning a petition presented by the Member for Riverina, Mrs Kay Hull MP, for the consideration of the Standing Committee on Petitions, in regards to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Museum at RAAF Wagga.

I am pleased to advise that positive progress is being made towards satisfying the requests of the petitioners for the refurbishment of the building and for the museum to be reopened.

The Director of Air Force Heritage met with the Mayor of Wagga Wagga and several of his Council staff early in November to discuss a number of options. Initial agreement with the Mayor has been reached and Air Force will further consult with the Wagga Wagga City Council and the local community regarding the development, opening and maintenance of an Air Force heritage display at RAAF Wagga. The new display will utilise the previous museum building at the entrance to the Base, which has some minor safety and cosmetic work still to be completed. Defence has approved the re-allocation of funds towards the completion of the building so that it is suitable for housing the display. Depending upon the availability of local contractors, the refurbishment of the building may be completed by the end of February 2009.

On 24 November 2008, the RAAF Heritage Advisory Council endorsed the proposal as developed with the Wagga Wagga City Council. I am pleased to note that the Federal Member for Riverina, Mrs Kay Hull MP, has agreed to play a central role in the engagement with members of her community to develop and implement plans to open and manage a display of Air Force heritage items at RAAF Wagga. I expect initial engagement with the community to start early in the New Year, and that a timeline for opening of the display will be agreed with the community.

I hope this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

MIKE KELLY