

1969

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

## REPORT

relating to the proposed development of

## R.A.A.F. BASE

at

## Wagga, New South Wales

(Fourteenth Report of 1969)

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

R.A.A.F. BASE, WAGGA, NEW SOUTH WALES

R E P O R T

By resolution on 21 August 1969, the House of Representatives referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report, proposals for the development of the R.A.A.F. Base, Wagga, New South Wales.

The Committee have the honour to report as follows:

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

1. The Committee received written submissions and drawings from the Departments of Air and Works and took evidence from their representatives at a public hearing in Canberra. We inspected the existing facilities at the base and the sites for the proposed buildings.

THE REFERENCE

2. The proposals referred to the Committee are for the erection of
- an electrical instrument and armament training building;
  - two lecture room buildings;
  - a catering training building;
  - an airmen's recreation centre;
  - a senior N.C.O.s' mess and kitchen;
  - a senior N.C.O.s' laundry;

- a W.R.A.A.F. accommodation block, recreation centre and laundry;
- a senior officers' and female officers' accommodation block;
- an officers' laundry;
- an airmen's accommodation block;
- an airmen's laundry; and
- an emergency power house.

Existing huts on the sites of proposed buildings are to be removed. The best of these huts are to be relocated in the temporary accommodation area for use as temporary sleeping quarters to relieve occasional peak loadings at the base.

3. The work is estimated to cost \$5.5 million.

#### R.A.A.F. BASE, WAGGA

4. History In 1939, 815 acres were acquired at Forest Hill, 6½ miles east of the City of Wagga, for the establishment of a Flying Training School. A further acquisition increased the total area to 866 acres. The site offered suitable weather conditions for flying training and was well served by road and rail links with Sydney and Melbourne.

5. In 1940, buildings were constructed for the establishment of No. 2 Service Flying Training School. Operations continued until 1942 when the unit was replaced by No. 5 Aircraft Depot. Subsequently, No. 60 Reserve Squadron, No. 61 Reserve Squadron, No. 2 Communications Flight, No. 5 Operational Training Unit and a Care and Maintenance Unit were formed and located at Wagga, but all were disbanded before 1946.

6. The R.A.A.F. Ground Training School, later renamed R.A.A.F. School of Technical Training, was formed at Wagga in 1946 from the disbanded

No. 1 Engineering School which had been based at Ascot Vale, Victoria, and where it assisted in providing the expanded wartime technical training needs of the R.A.A.F.

7. Since 1946, besides being used for R.A.A.F. technical training purposes, Wagga has been used for national service training and also basic recruit training. This latter function has now been transferred to the R.A.A.F. base at Edinburgh, South Australia.

8. Functions Wagga is the main ground training centre for the R.A.A.F. and is responsible for training most adult airmen and apprentices. The School of Technical Training provides basic, continuation and conversion courses in the aviation engineering fields of engines, airframes, electrics, electronics, instruments and armament. Mechanical transport training as well as training in technical administration for engineer officers is also provided. In addition, courses are conducted in equipment and clerical work, catering, N.C.O. supervision and management, and instructional techniques.

9. R.A.A.F. Wagga is not now an active flying base. However, it is used occasionally for helicopter training purposes and the Department of Civil Aviation maintains the airport facilities at the base for civilian air services.

10. The base establishment at Wagga in June 1969 was 80 officers, 503 other ranks and 37 civilians, spread over three units, viz. Formation Headquarters, Base Squadron and the School of Technical Training. At the same time, there were 515 adult trainees, 459 apprentices and 71 trainees awaiting courses, making a total trainee population of 1,045.

11. The number of trainees varies from time to time. The 1964 peak figure was 1,025, whilst in 1968 it was 1,340, but forecasts indicate that

the 1968 figure will be more than maintained due to the R.A.A.F.'s expansion programme over recent years. In this connection, we noted that the size of the R.A.A.F. has increased from 16,560 in 1964 to 22,700 in June 1969.

12. The expansion has made considerable demands on the training organization and facilities at Wagga and this trend is expected to continue in future. Not only will it be necessary to provide specialised training in the skills required to maintain the increasingly complex equipment but also to sustain the force at its higher manning levels.

13. Apprenticeship Training The apprenticeship training scheme in six electrical and mechanical engineering trades is designed to provide skilled tradesmen and ultimately senior N.C.O.s. Applicants are 15 or 16 years of age on entry.

14. Recruits are trained as airframe, engine, mechanical transport, instrument, armament or electrical fitters. Formal training covers a period of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years and is followed by a further  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years of field employment before apprentices qualify for the R.A.A.F. Apprenticeship Proficiency Certificate.

15. Adult Entrant Engineering Training Recruits for this scheme are between 17 and 34 years. After basic recruit training at Edinburgh, South Australia, they are posted to Wagga for a ten weeks trainee mechanics course, followed by three to six months of specialty training, depending on the trade. After successful completion of this training, members are posted to units for six to twelve months on-the-job training and experience as mechanics. Depending on the trade, a further four to eight months conversion training to a higher trade level at Wagga follows.

16. This scheme has been the R.A.A.F.'s main source of trained technical airmen, as in recent years it has provided some 70% of trained mechanical and electrical fitters, compared to 30% from the apprentice scheme.

17. Other Training Cocks, stewards, clerks and stores personnel are also trained at Wagga, some returning later for advanced courses. Other training includes courses for N.C.O.s supervision and management, and in instructional techniques.

18. Existing Facilities Over recent years, married quarters, a science block, an airmen's kitchen, mess and ration store, sleeping quarters for officers, senior N.C.O.s and airmen, annexe lecture rooms and a swimming pool have been constructed in permanent materials at Wagga.

19. Nevertheless, 90% of all buildings, except married quarters are World War II structures either in corrugated iron, timber or fibre and timber construction. Some buildings in this category, such as the hangars which are now used for practical technical instruction, are still quite sound and will continue to serve a useful purpose for many years. Others, and particularly those in the domestic and instructional areas, are now reaching the end of their useful lives and are becoming uneconomic to maintain.

#### THE NEED

20. The rebuilding works now proposed are mainly required for domestic or instructional purposes. The buildings which are to be replaced were all of temporary construction when built over 25 years ago. They have been well maintained in the past, but in all cases have reached the end of their economic life and in the view of the Committee should be replaced.



21. After an inspection of the base, the Committee found that there is a need for the buildings in this reference.

22. The proposals submitted to the Committee on this occasion represent the more immediate works required over a three to four year period to replace inadequate and unsatisfactory facilities. We noted that additional works will be necessary subsequently, and that the reference of these proposals to the Committee, if required, will occur when the need arises.

#### THE BUILDING PROPOSALS

23. The Committee noted that the "Scales and Standards of Accommodation for the Services in Peace" have been adhered to where applicable. Outlines of the building proposals are given below.

24. Electrical Instrument and Armament Training Building This two-storey building of three wings will provide technical training facilities for about 500 trainees. The northern wing will house the electrical and instrument flights and will have controlled environment areas for special equipment. Electronic and armament training will be in the southern wing whilst the centre wing will accommodate the education section, administrative staff, classrooms and staff common rooms. The links between the wings will contain toilets, and open areas for use by trainees during breaks in instruction. Provision for future expansion is to be made by designing the structure to carry one additional floor.

25. Lecture Room Buildings These buildings, adjacent to hangars, will comprise a two-storey drawing office block equipped for training in engineering drafting and a single-storey building containing six lecture rooms.

26. Catering Training Building Training facilities and space for 40 cooks and stewards and a staff of ten will be provided in this single-storey building. Two fully equipped kitchens for practical training, two classrooms, a dining room for 50 persons, ancillary food preparation and storage areas, toilets, and locker rooms for staff and trainees will be included. An adjacent fly-screened shelter will house field cooking training facilities.

27. Airman's Recreation Centre Separate provision for 115 corporals, 518 apprentices and 748 airmen, together with common trading areas for all ranks is planned in this single-storey building. It will have a dry canteen and a milk and snack bar for use by all ranks, a tavern and mixed lounge for airmen and airwomen, and a corporals' club. Space will also be available for approved private trading concessions.

28. The building, to be located in the community centre, will feature a central courtyard and will be sited so that the milk and snack bars overlook, and are readily accessible from, the swimming pool.

29. Senior N.C.O.s' Mess and Kitchen This single-storey building of standard design will provide mess and kitchen facilities for 127 and 151 persons respectively. Recreation rooms, bar, ante room, toilets, stores and food preparation rooms will also be included.

30. Senior N.C.O.s' Laundry The building will be a standard type and will cater for the laundry, drying and ironing requirements of 108 senior N.C.O.s.

31. W.R.A.A.F. Accommodation Block, Recreation Centre and Laundry This building, which is designed for easy extension, will accommodate three senior N.C.O.s in a single-storey wing and 64 airwomen in two two-storey wings

with ablutions and toilet blocks on each floor. H.C.O.s and airwomen will have separate recreation rooms, and covered ways will enclose private courtyards. A laundry and drying yard will also be included.

32. Senior Officers' and Female Officers' Accommodation Block This two-storey building will accommodate six male senior officers, one female senior officer and four female junior officers. Male and female sections will be separate, each with their own entrance, staircase, toilets and other facilities.

33. Officers' Laundry This standard building will have laundry, drying and ironing facilities for 61 officers.

34. Airmen's Accommodation Block The three-storey building proposed is similar to the standard quarters recently constructed at the base and will provide accommodation for four corporals and 144 airmen.

35. Airmen's Laundry The standard facilities planned will meet the laundry, drying and ironing needs of 692 airmen.

36. Emergency Power House This single-storey building will house emergency generating plant and a small electrical substation.

#### CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED BUILDINGS

37. Siting A master plan for the development of the base has been agreed jointly by the Departments of Works and Air. The Committee noted that the sitings of the individual buildings in this reference accord with the agreed master plan and are not likely to prejudice future development proposals.

38. The sites adjoin buildings with similar functions and are convenient to working and recreation areas. The Committee consider that the sites selected are suitable.

39. Building Work Generally, the buildings will be brick with concrete floors and insulated metal roof decking. The accommodation blocks and domestic buildings will be in load bearing brick construction, whilst the training buildings and the airmen's recreation centre will be framed in either concrete or steel. External walls generally will be face brickwork, with aluminium framed windows and timber or aluminium doors.

40. Internal finishes will be selected to provide a durable but low maintenance cost finish. Where appropriate, internal walls will be face brick. Elsewhere they will be cement rendered and painted or have a vinyl finish. Walls in the kitchens, toilets and similar areas will be tiled. Generally, vinyl will be used for floors, but kitchens, toilets and wet areas will have ceramic tiles. Ceilings will be mainly painted plaster board, but classrooms and other special training areas will have suspended acoustic tiles.

41. Mechanical Services Controlled environment areas in the electrical instrument and armament training building will be air conditioned. Other occupied areas such as classrooms, workshops, laboratories, dining and recreation areas, and sleeping quarters will be heated for winter comfort. Kitchens, dining and ante rooms, recreation rooms and toilets will be mechanically ventilated and ceiling fans will be installed in messes.

42. Other mechanical services will include kitchen, cool room and laundry equipment, refrigerated water coolers and gas, compressed air, oxygen and vacuum services, at selected points.

43. The emergency power house will accommodate a new 250 kW emergency generating set and two 100 kW sets to be relocated from the existing power house. A 500 kVA transformer is to be installed in the substation in the new building.

44. A new underground high voltage supply to the power house will be provided and will be reticulated by two ring mains to the various substations on the base. Existing substations and underground cabling will be modified as necessary to supply electricity to the new medium voltage network which will provide normal and emergency supply.

45. Provision for new and improved street and car park lighting will be made.

46. Water Supply The water supply for the base is obtained from two boros on nearby private property and is pumped to a 150,000 gallon elevated tank and reticulated as necessary. Two 100,000 gallon ground level tanks provide storage for fire fighting and other emergencies.

47. As the supply from the boros is barely adequate for present needs and to meet increased future requirements to 1975, two additional boros are to be installed. The storage capacity will be increased to 800,000 gallons by providing a 150,000 gallon elevated tank at the southern end of the base and a new 300,000 gallon ground level storage.

48. Sewerage The sewage treatment plant at the base is being used to full capacity and because of its proximity to buildings, problems are being encountered with the transmission of odours and with flies. This situation would be accentuated by the planned future development of the base and the nearby Forest Hill township.

49. It is therefore proposed that ultimately all sewage will be treated at a new plant to be built about one mile north of the base. This proposal has the concurrence of the interested authorities and provision is being made in the design for the possible future requirements of the Kyeamba Shire Council which may use the system on a proportional payment basis.

50. This reference includes the initial stage of the scheme. Reticulation at the base will be enlarged as necessary and a main approximately 7,000 feet long will be constructed from the base to the treatment site.

51. When the base population exceeds 3,400, all treatment will be carried out at the proposed plant.

52. Fire Protection Generally, the new buildings will be provided with thermal fire alarms, connected to the central warning system. An automatic sprinkler system will be installed in the electrical instrument and armament training building, except in selected areas where carbon dioxide extinguishing is necessary.

53. Hose reels, fire hydrants and portable fire extinguishers will be installed at strategic points.

54. Civil Works Road connections to the new buildings, an assembly area, car parks, kerbs and gutters, concrete paths and service yards will be provided as necessary.

55. Areas in the vicinity of the new buildings will be grassed and landscaped.

56. Committee's Conclusion The Committee recommend the construction of the work in this reference.

ESTIMATE OF COST

57. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was

\$5.5 million made up as follows:

	\$
Building work	2,554,000
Hydraulic services	1,325,000
Electrical services	585,000
Mechanical services	894,000
Civil works	142,000
	5,500,000

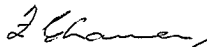
PROGRAMME

58. The buildings will be programmed for construction progressively and it is expected that the work will be completed over a period of three to four years.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

59. The summary of recommendations and conclusions of the Committee is set out below. Alongside each is shown the paragraph in the report to which it refers.

	<u>Paragraph</u>
1. THERE IS A NEED FOR THE BUILDINGS IN THIS REFERENCE.	21
2. THE SITES SELECTED ARE SUITABLE.	38
3. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORK IN THIS REFERENCE.	56
4. THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE WORK WHEN REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE WAS \$5.5 MILLION.	57



(F.C. CHANEY)  
Chairman

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,  
Parliament House,  
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

16 September 1969.