

NT REGIONAL AIRSPACE USERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 10662 Casuarina NT 0810

19th June 2003

The Secretary
Public Works Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

19 JUN 2003

RECEIVED

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SUBMISSION 3

Dear Sir,

**POSITION PAPER ON THE PROPOSAL FOR CO-LOCATION AND RE-EQUIPPING OF THE 1st
AVIATION REGIMENT, DARWIN**

I wish to comment on the above proposal, confining my comments to the possible effect of the Tiger Helicopters flying into and out of Robertson Barracks on the orderly flow of civil aircraft into Darwin Airport.

I am the Convener of the Northern Territory Regional Airspace Advisory Committee, (NT RAPAC) and as such, speak for the civil aviation industry in the NT.

In summary, the potential problem is that the army helicopters will, when within about two kilometres of the Barracks, be within, or could by mistake be within, airspace that the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) designates as airspace that must be reserved for use by aircraft flying instrument approaches onto runway 29 at Darwin Airport.

If the re-location goes ahead, and CASA decides the operation of civil aircraft and army helicopters within the instrument approach airspace is unsafe, the army helicopters, not being controlled by CASA, could continue flying. Civil aircraft would have to wait until the army helicopters vacated the airspace.

This has the potential to cause significant delays to the flow of civil aircraft into Darwin. Delays cost money, and profit margins in civil aviation are slim

The army, in a letter to myself from the then Chief of Army, General Peter Cosgrove, assured me that the army would always defer to civil operations if there was a conflict of interests within the airspace.

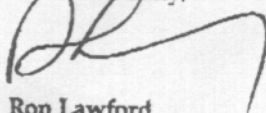
I have doubts as to whether the army in, say 15 years from now would act on and comply with General Cosgrove's assurance dated 2002.

The level of helicopter traffic is predicted by the army to be low - perhaps six or eight movements a day. They cannot predict what the helicopter traffic flow will be in say 2020 or 2030.

The civil aviation industry has had extensive discussions with army on the problem.

A position paper, signed by representatives of NT RAPAC and Darwin International Airport summarising the concerns of the signatories to the proposal, is attached.

Yours faithfully,



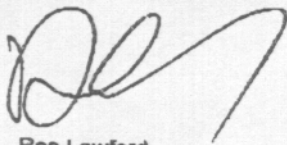
Ron Lawford
Convener NT RAPAC

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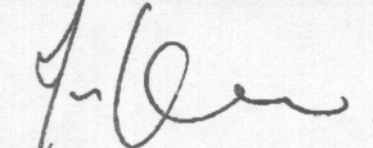
PUBLIC WORKS INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION FOR COLLOCATION AND RE-EQUIPING OF
THE 1st AVIATION REGIMENT, DARWIN

After consideration of the present status of airspace changes to accommodate the helicopters to be used by the 1st Aviation Regiment, the position of the undersigned is as follows:-

1. We support the ADF presence in the NT, and seek to maximise it's efficiency, while minimising the detrimental effects of the ADF on local industry.
2. The possibility exists of short, medium, and long term inefficiencies in the operation of civil aircraft into and out of Darwin airport, due to the location of the helicopter base at Robertson Barracks, which has the potential to cause significant disruption to the flow of civil traffic.
3. The inefficiencies, if they occur, will increase with time as traffic into and out of Darwin increase over the life of the airport being at least 95 years under current lease arrangements
4. Airservices Australia intends to introduce airspace changes to the Darwin area in the next six months that may allow operation of the ADF helicopters from Robertson Barracks without causing inefficiencies to civil traffic. The changes involve a reduction in size of the Darwin Control Zone.
5. The possibility of inefficiencies can be reduced by the carrying out of a safety case investigation of the proposed airspace changes, as they relate to ADF helicopter operations from Robertson Barracks, if the safety case conclusions are favourable and approved by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, and by Civil Aviation Safety Authority approval of the proposed airspace changes.
6. We have no objection to the proposed operation of helicopters from Robertson Barracks, providing the safety case conclusions on the helicopter operations are favourable and are not commented on adversely by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, and the proposed airspace changes are approved by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority. In this respect our support is conditional on the safety case demonstrating that the ADF operation will not compromise the safety of civil operations at Darwin International Airport. If not, we will object to the proposal and request the opportunity to independently review the submitted safety case.
7. We request that the land area influenced by the ADF's operations be safeguarded by appropriate government measures such that it will provide for current and future ADF requirements without the need for potential future operational restraints.
8. We ask the Joint Standing Committee to approve the proposal to construct the base, subject to the safety case conclusions being favourable and approved by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, appropriate land use controls being promulgated by government, and subject to the proposed airspace changes being approved by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority



Ron Lawford
RAPAC Convener
19/6/03.



Ian Kew
CEO DIA