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Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
By email: pwc@aph.gov.au

Submission No. 7

(RAAF East Sale)

Date: 3/11/11

**Committee for Gippsland: Submission to Proposed Royal Australian Air Force Base
East Sale Redevelopment at Sale, Victoria**

The Committee for Gippsland welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Public Works Committee's inquiry into the proposed Royal Australian Air Force Base East Sale Redevelopment in Victoria.

The Committee for Gippsland was established in March this year as an independent, self-funded organisation that provides peak body representation for business and industry across the Gippsland region. With over 40 member businesses; including the stationary energy, transport, dairy, manufacturing, food processing, construction and small business sectors, we seek to positively influence government policy at all levels to help maximise better social and economic outcomes for Gippsland.

Our East Gippsland members include businesses in the food processing, real estate, freight transport, legal services, community, and tourism sectors. The Committee for Gippsland believes the existence and development of the RAAF Base at East Sale provides positive economic and community benefits for the Gippsland region. Our recently released Strategic Plan document also advocates support for the successful bid for the Australian Defence Force Interim Basic Flight Training (RAAF Flight Training School) AIR 5428 Defence contract to Gippsland.

The Gippsland region is proud to host the primary officer-training base of the RAAF at East Sale. The facility's capacity to operate as the RAAF's main air base, where it provides continuous support to two operational squadrons, in addition to visiting operational squadrons, minor exercises and operations, and contracted search and rescue operations is impressive in itself and a significant part of why the region takes pride in its hosting of the base.

The proposal to redevelop this base at an anticipated cost of approximately \$186 million to be completed by 2015 would help improve the functionality, capability and current services of the base, which the Committee for Gippsland is supportive of.

The Committee for Gippsland is also pleased to note that if approved, the project will be able to engage local small to medium sized businesses (who are registered under the National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry) to assist in the work on this expansion. This is another way the local Gippsland economy can further benefit from continuing to host the East Sale RAAF base and its proposed redevelopment.

The Committee for Gippsland is pleased to note from the Department of Defence's submission to this inquiry that the anticipated population growth at the East Sale RAAF base is to grow in the coming years from approximately 1,720 at present to 2,260 personnel. This population increase will add to local community engagement and enhance existing economic spend in surrounding towns in Wellington and East Gippsland shires.

The RAAF's culture and mission are warmly embraced by the East Gippsland community, and RAAF personnel demonstrate a community mindedness and willingness to engage locally that further enhances the reputation and esteem of the RAAF, and in particular the RAAF Base at East Sale.

The Committee for Gippsland is supportive of the proposal put to the Public Works Committee to redevelop the East Sale RAAF Base because of the added community engagement presented by additional personnel in the region, upgrading of an iconic Gippsland facility, potential for local business engagement on the project and the enhancement of the long-term life and functionality of the Base.

Should the Secretariat of the Public Works Committee wish to seek further information on the Committee for Gippsland's submission to this inquiry, please contact Mary Aldred on (03) 5623 3219.

Yours sincerely



Harry Rijs
Chairman



Mary Aldred
Executive Director