

Darren Chester

Federal Member for Gippsland

Submission No. 5

(RAAF East Sale)

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Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**Submission to:
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works inquiry into
Proposed Royal Australian Air Force Base East Sale Redevelopment**

Dear Committee

I write in support of the proposed \$185 million infrastructure redevelopment at the East Sale RAAF Base which I believe will enhance our nation's defence capacity and deliver economic and social benefits to the Gippsland community.

For more than 65 years, the East Sale RAAF Base has been an integral part of the Gippsland community and there is widespread support for the proposed redevelopment.

Committee members will be aware that the East Sale RAAF Base is home to several specialist training schools and is under consideration by the Department of Defence for future expansion.

The current proposal is essential to upgrade the base to meet existing requirements and also to position East Sale to meet our future defence needs.

The development under consideration by the Public Works committee is of enormous importance to Gippsland and has strong support in the defence community, along with local residents and the business sector.

Base personnel have briefed my office on the benefits that will flow to servicemen and women as part of the redevelopment. Providing quality infrastructure is essential for the training of personnel and it also assists in attracting and retaining recruits.

The Gippsland community fully supports the need to provide safe and suitable working conditions for RAAF personnel and to invest in the local base to create an environment more attractive for recruiting future RAAF families.

As committee members would expect, East Sale RAAF Base is highly regarded in Gippsland for both social and economic reasons.



In a social sense, the base personnel along with their partners and children, make a considerable contribution to the region through their involvement in education, sporting and community organizations. Our community has also benefited from skilled partners of defence personnel joining the local workforce.

In return, the Gippsland community has welcomed defence personnel and helped to ensure that they feel valued and their time at East Sale is rewarding for them.

The economic benefits associated with the base are also significant and help to underpin the Gippsland economy.

The Wellington Shire Council, along with various local businesses and trade organizations have regularly expressed support for expansion of the base, including this current proposal.

From previous experience, they understand the opportunities that can flow to local businesses from such redevelopment activity.

I commend managing contractor Thiess Australia for its willingness to work with local tradespeople in the past to maximize the benefits that will be delivered.

I understand that Thiess was able to successfully work with Gippsland tradesmen for 60% of the construction project associated with the RAAF College relocation and there are plans in place to foster that strong connection to the local community if this redevelopment is approved.

It is worth noting that the immediate benefits during the construction phase would come at an opportune time, with Gippsland's trade workforce experiencing a downturn, partly due to uncertainty about government policy relating to the power industry.

I look forward to the committee's visit to East Sale and would be pleased to expand on my submission at the public hearing, if required.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this project which has my complete support.

Yours sincerely



DARREN CHESTER
The Nationals