



SUBMISSION11.....

Infrastructure Division
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Russell Offices
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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The Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Attention: Ms Margaret Swieringa

RESPONSE TO PWC FROM MR. E.T.R. POLHILL

1. Thank you for referring a copy of the letter dated 12 July 2002 from Mr Polhill concerning the RAAF Base Williamtown Redevelopment Stage 1 and Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) Aircraft Facilities project.
2. AEW&C aircraft conduct surveillance over a wide area and coordinate tactical operations of other combat forces such as fighter or strike aircraft and surface combatants. Because of the capability of the onboard systems, AEW&C aircraft have the capacity to make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of air and maritime operations. Important to the core AEW&C capability is a close operational and training relationship with fighter operations.
3. Williamtown was selected as the AEW&C Home Maintenance Base because it is central to most of the F/A-18, F-111 and Navy fleet training areas and because of the significant benefits of collocating the AEW&C aircraft with our air defence and fighter training. Approximately 60% of peacetime training activities will be conducted on the East Coast between Townsville and Jervis Bay. Effective training requires interaction with other aircraft and ships and basing the AEW&C aircraft elsewhere would result in long, continuous and unproductive transits to the primary operating areas. While Williamtown is the Home Maintenance Base, AEW&C aircraft will deploy when required both within Australia and world wide as directed by Government.
4. Approximately 250 extra RAAF personnel and 100 contractors will be at Williamtown to operate and maintain the aircraft. The quality of life and family support for these personnel was an important part of the basing consideration for AEW&C. As such, the Newcastle region offers a high standard of community infrastructure for personnel and their families which is not necessarily available in other locations, especially remote locations.

5. The AEW&C aircraft design is based on a modern commercial Boeing 737 airliner and complies with stringent Government noise regulations. Qantas currently operate a significant number of similar aircraft Australia-wide.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. R. Beck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underlining the name.

G. R. Beck
Brigadier
Director General Capital Infrastructure
62657481

2 August 2002