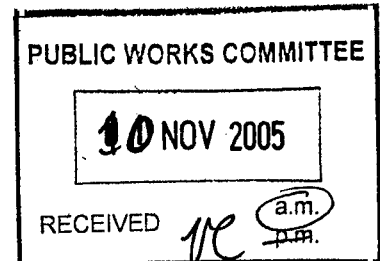




# THARAWAL

## LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

Ms Vivienne Courto  
 Inquiry Secretary  
 Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
 House of Representatives  
 Parliament of Australia  
 Canberra ACT 2600



**Re: Relocation of 171<sup>st</sup> Aviation Squadron to Holsworthy Barracks.**

The Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council submits the attached submission to the standing committee on Public works.

We submit:

- The proposed works are within the boundary of our Aboriginal Land Council
- We proposed the original nomination of the Cubbitch Barta national estate Area onto register of the National Estate
- The proposed works area are part of the Cubbitch Barta National Estate area
- The area is of high Aboriginal cultural significance
- The area is of historic significance and substantial military history.
- The area is named after the Native Title claimant group associated with the area
- Because the area is a military reserve, this isolation has helped preserve the cultural, historic, military, aesthetic values of the area.
- Any development or public works in the area may impact on the areas' significance
- Any additional or alternative uses of the military range may impact on the Aboriginal places and sites of the area.
- These matters and others need to be taken into consideration if these proposed works are to be undertaken.

For consideration

*Cliff Foley*  
 Cliff Foley  
**CHAIRPERSON**  
 Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council  
 Email: [clifffoley@hotmail.com](mailto:clifffoley@hotmail.com)  
 9<sup>th</sup> November 2005

PO BOX 20, BUXTON NSW 2571  
 220 WEST PARADE COURIDJAH NSW 2571  
 TEL: 0246 810059 FAX: 0246 831 375  
 Tharawal@ideal.net.au

## **Submission by the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council**

**Inquiry Secretary  
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
House of Representatives  
Parliament of Australia Canberra ACT 2600**

### **Relocation of 171<sup>st</sup> Aviation Squadron to Holsworthy Barracks, NSW**

#### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>1. The Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council:</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Our Boundary:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>3. What is Cultural Significance?</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>4. Indigenous Cultural Significance:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>5. Our Relationship with this particular Land:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>6. Aboriginal Cultural Significance Statement on Cubbitch Barta:</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>7. Other Significant Values - Historic &amp; Military:</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>8. Relevance of Cultural Significance to Study Area:</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>9. Comment:</b> .....	<b>5</b>

#### **1. The Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council:**

The Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council was constituted on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1984, in accordance with the provisions of the (NSW) Aboriginal Land Rights Act, 1983 as amended.

The Aim of the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council is to pursue and provide a range of services, and to improve and foster the best interest of our members and all Aboriginal persons within our boundary.

Under Section 51 of the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act provides for Tharawal LALC, amongst other matters, to have the following functions:

- To acquire, manage, use, control or dispose of land
- Acquire, establish and operate enterprises
- To consider mining leases and exploration licenses
- To make claim to vacant Crown Lands
- Protect the interests of Aboriginal people; and
- With consent of the affected parties, conciliate disputes

The contact details of the Tharawal LALC are:

Physical Location: 220 West Parade, Couridjah  
Postal Address: PO Box 20 Buxton NSW 2571  
Telephone: 0246 81 0059  
Facsimile: 0246 83 1375

## **2. Our Boundary:**

Our boundary defines our place although we involve ourselves in partnerships with all parties for the benefit and best interests of our members and their families.

Our relationship with the inquiry area is that the Holsworthy Army range is within the boundary of the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council; which encompasses the Campbelltown, Camden, Wolondilly LGA's and a part of Liverpool LGA (the part that includes the Holsworthy Army Range).

## **3. What Is Cultural Significance?**

Cultural significance is a concept that defines the value of an object or place. Different people and communities value things in different ways. The international definition defines cultural significance as an item which has "aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for its past, present or future generations. In general terms the significance of items are those that either help us understand our past, enrich our present, or is to be of importance to future generations.

## **4. Indigenous Cultural Significance:**

Aboriginal significance gives an understanding of our past; enriches our presence and continues to be of important to our future. Items of significance can be some of the types of evidence of a relationship of a people with their land; their country that they know and gives us our place; an understanding of the World.

The evidence of the manifestations of Aboriginal people relationship with our country is displayed in abundance throughout the valley and ridges of this landscape. Each Aboriginal site has its place; every Aboriginal place has its story in the life of an Aboriginal family. Country is alive with stories; abounding with native flora and fauna; home in their land of the ages.

## **5. Our Relationship with this particular Land:**

These military lands were surveyed as a component of an Environmental Impact Statement to assess the potential area for the 'second' airport site for Sydney. Our Land Council was a major partner in the survey teams that undertook the cursory Archaeological works for Aboriginal and other cultural sites.

The surveyed area is rich in a diverse collection of Aboriginal sites, which represent a complex Aboriginal cultural landscape. This unique opportunity to view these landscapes is because the area was designated for military use, therefore sealing it off limits. Limited access to the area has preserved it and its cultural significance and heritage values.

The Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council nominated the area for inclusion onto the Register of the National Estate. We nominated it on all categories of significance; Aboriginal, Historic, Aesthetic, Military and Natural Values.

The Holsworthy Army Range was included as a component of the **Cubbitch Barta National Estate Area** which was registered on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1998 on the Register of National Estate.

## **6. Aboriginal Cultural Significance Statement on Cubbitch Barta:**

In nominating the areas, including the Holsworthy Army range for listing onto the register of the National Estate, the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council commented on the cultural significance of the area:

*"...The Cubbitch Barta National Estate Area is highly valued by members of the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Dharawal people for its symbolic, cultural, educational and social associations.*

*The Aboriginal cultural landscape of the area reflects the past lifestyle of Aboriginal people in this region and its preservation enables Aboriginal people to maintain cultural links to the area. These connections with the past are particularly important, because Aboriginal people in this part of Australia were among the earliest impacted by European settlement of this continent and their culture has since been disrupted by war, disease and urban development. Throughout the environments of the area the Dharawal see evidence of the relationship between their people and the land.*

*The Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council is also concerned about maintaining the area's natural environment. The area contains a large and diverse collection of Aboriginal sites, which represent a complex Aboriginal cultural landscape. Over 530 sites are known from the area and a further 509 potential archaeological sites have been documented. It is highly likely that the area contains many hundreds more sites. Sites include rock paintings and drawings, engravings, open scatters of artifacts, grinding grooves and scarred trees. The survival of a significant number of scarred trees within the area is important as this is a rare type of site within the Sydney Basin. While rock art sites are well represented in the Sydney Basin, other types of sites are less so. The preservation within the area of scarred trees, open artifact scatters and archaeological sites in particular, offer considerable potential for further developing a picture of day to day activities of Aboriginal people in the Sydney Basin prior to 1788. This large number of sites and the stories they may tell form a landscape in which Aboriginal life prior to 1788 is recorded without the large scale impact of European settlement. There is also a high density of sites in the area. This is particularly important because sites are found in groups or clusters with their relationship to one another largely intact. By examining where they are located in the landscape and their relationship to other types of sites, a more complete picture of the lifestyle of Aboriginal people could be established.*

*There is evidence to suggest that this area formed the cultural landscape of a single residence group whose territory extended over the Georges River and Williams/Mill Creek drainage basins. In this region, it is uncommon to have such a landscape preserved in this way and particularly important, as knowledge of local groups from ethno-history is often incomplete and problematic.*

*The rich collection of more than 300 rock art sites within the area is regionally significant as a group in the Sydney Basin and representative of rock art south of the Georges River. The rock art sites are diverse in terms of technique (paintings, drawings and engravings) and motifs depicted. The art in the area contains a number of motifs which are rare within the Sydney region, such as the engraving of a pregnant woman. The site where this occurs is considered important, as female motifs and gender specific evidence of this kind are relatively rare. The long history of recording the rock art sites by voluntary*

*groups and individuals indicates that they are aesthetically important to groups within the broader community.*

*The aesthetic value of these sites is enhanced by their excellent condition and lack of graffiti. The Cubbitch Barta National Estate Area is important as an illustration of a landscape in which changes in the relationship between Aboriginal people and early settlers took place. This is a phase in the cultural history of Australia for which traditional documentation is often poor. The area is associated with Governor Macquarie's war against the Aboriginal people of the Liverpool, Campbelltown and Appin areas from April to November 1816. Despite efforts to move Indigenous people away from this country, documentation indicates Aboriginal people were still visiting sites within the area in the 1830s.*

*Within the area, it is the evidence of the strong Aboriginal presence combined with the nineteenth century history and land use without much twentieth century development, which makes this area unusual for the way it can illustrate this period of history. Potential exists for further research to shed light on this era through research relating to exploration, settlements within the area and information about the adjacent Aboriginal reserve..."*

#### **7. Other Significant Values - Historic & Military:**

Throughout the area important historic sites and relics litter the landscape. The sites include transport routes demonstrate the transport linkages that connected the nineteenth century settlements; development of agriculture in the Liverpool region, including the wine industry and subsistence farming in a bushland setting. The Grodno Settlement site is associated with the activities of migrants in the Liverpool region.

Holsworthy is also significant for its military associations. It was a training site for Australian troops and horses engaged in World War One battles, including Gallipoli. The Holsworthy Military Training Area is also significant for the training activities of the Australian Army after World War Two. The Old Army Internment Camp Group was used to inter Germans and other Europeans, from 1914-19. The internment of migrants in Australia followed Britain's foreign nationals' policy during World War One and this site reflects Australia's strong defense links with Britain.

The Old Army Internment Camp Group survives as evidence of the largest internment camp in Australia during World War One. The guard buildings and structures are rare in demonstrating the guards' section of a World War One internment camp in Australia and are also significant because they were constructed by German and other European internee. This Group has important associations for those who trained there during World War Two and who more recently undertook National Service Training or permanent Army service there during its use as a military camp. It has similar associations for members of the World War One Light Horse Regiments and their families and descendants. It has strong associations for former internees. It also has important associations for Australians as a reminder of a period of conflict and troubled National identity, involving a deep suspicion of non-British immigrants at that time.

## **8. Relevance of Cultural Significance to Study Area:**

The proposal to relocate the 171<sup>st</sup> squadron to Holsworthy will not be limited to the design and refurbishment of the barracks and operational centres of the Holsworthy base.

The "statement of evidence" comments on the base being a centre for "Operational training", meaning off base operations. Also the planning and design concepts of the project are to incorporate "landscaping the preservation of the visual environment". This is, presumably consistent with the use of "introduced species that reinforce the use of, identity and sense of place within specific areas of the precinct."

The Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council would express concern at the potential impact of the 'operational' impact of the base on the cultural sites and places throughout the national estate registered area. We are familiar with large tracts of the land due to our relationship, reestablished during the survey of the lands.

The impact on the land was alleviated with the ceasing of operational matters with the effective withdrawal from service of the military presence. The areas of impact had been confined by the army's use of the area with restricted types of operations; bombing areas; firing lines and dugout and game sites.

The new operational concepts with helicopters will not be restricted and controlled, thus an adverse impact on all areas of the base.

The matters of Indigenous consideration are being addressed by our submission to the committee. The very fact that the area is listed on the register of National Estate, nominated by an Aboriginal group must provide an insight into our interest and concern for the area. Further the name that was used to nominate the area was "Cubbitch Barta", which is the representative of the clan group of the Cowpasture tribes. This body, the Cubbitch Barta Native title Aboriginal Corporation were the only native title body to pass the registration test of the Federal Native Title Act. The Cubbitch Barta Native Title Claimants are an active, representative and acknowledged body, well respected by the Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council.

As indicated earlier, Aboriginal sites are in abundance and found throughout the landscape, because this evidence of Aboriginal occupation demonstrates intricate and close relationship that Aboriginal people had with their 'country'.

Any impact on the land and disturbance of the environment has potential to affect an Aboriginal site, a place of significance; and area of concern.

## **9. Comment:**

We wish to express alarm at the changing role and potential impact on Cubbitch Barta National Estate Area.

The area is of high significance and continuing relevance to members of our community; the native title applicants to these associated areas; and affiliated families with and association to the area.

The area is of such cultural value and significance to community members we would be seeking to ensure that the integrity of the area is protected and remains undisturbed.