

## POINT COOK UPDATE

As it is now 12 months since you, as an entity with an interest in the future development of the Point Cook Aviation Heritage Site, endorsed the membership of our Trust Establishment Group and the proposals we raised following the February 2004 announcement by the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, the Hon, Fran Bailey, that the site would not be sold.

As Chairman of the TEG I can understand your frustration and disappointment at the apparent lack of progress so far.

The reasons for this are many and complex. Firstly, Defence has had to complete a number of studies relating to Point Cook, including a Heritage Management Plan; an Airfield Pavement Management Plan; and a detailed building and environmental assessment of the condition of the infrastructure. Secondly, the RAAF has decided to conduct a Strategic Review of its future requirements in the Laverton/Point Cook area. This review has yet to be completed and is obviously a major impediment to further progress by the TEG. Finally, a Federal election intervened with changes to ministerial responsibilities and associated staff. Until all these studies are complete it has just been impossible for the TEG to make substantial progress; there have been just too many unknowns.

In particular, the RAAF study may well result in a slightly different management structure than the one originally envisaged by the TEG; however, I hasten to add that we have been advised that, whatever the outcome, the original intent of the Trust will be preserved.

The TEG met on 7 April, 2005 with the Australian Government Solicitor and Defence officials and it was generally agreed that no substantial progress can now be made until Government decisions have been made on the RAAF's Strategic Review. This review is expected to be completed in about six weeks time. We will then meet again to more closely examine the options available for future management arrangements.

While this is no doubt disappointing news, I do hope that you will agree that it is better to wait until some certainty is possible rather than embark on detailed and costly action now which may well be inappropriate in the longer term.

Please be assured that I will keep you fully informed of future progress.

With best wishes,

Don Hayward  
Chairman  
Point Cook Aviation Heritage Site  
Trust Establishment Group,