

WELCOME TO **WILLIAMTOWN**



ANNUAL GUIDE 2026 **RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN & THE HUNTER REGION**

ABOUT THE BASE
History, operational units
and community

FAMILY ESSENTIALS
Services, housing, health
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LIFESTYLE
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PHOTO: Destination NSW

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A RAAF No.77 Squadron F-35A Lightning II aircraft is inspected before flight during Exercise Bamboo Eagle 25-1. PHOTO: ACW Laura Flower.

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PHOTO: Destination NSW



PHOTO: Destination NSW

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WELCOME TO WILLIAMTOWN



RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN is one of the largest and busiest Air Force bases in Australia with over 3,800 employees, ranging from permanent and reserve members to Australian public servants and industry partners.

The role of the Senior Australian Defence Force Officer (SADFO) at RAAF Base Williamtown is to represent the base and its people. At Williamtown, the Commanding Officer No.26 Squadron fulfils the

role and responsibilities of the SADFO appointment.

As a leading contributor of air power, RAAF Base Williamtown and, importantly, its workforce, continues to generate and deliver highly effective air power and is responsive and adaptable to directed tasks. It is a team effort and, year after year, the Williamtown workforce demonstrates professionalism, enthusiasm and selfless commitment to the task.

It is also important to thank and appreciate the Defence families supporting that workforce – your support enables us to deliver that air power and deploy on exercises and tasks – sometimes at relatively short notice.

Community support is crucial for us on this base. It fosters a sense of belonging and wellbeing among our ADF members and their families, directly affecting operational effectiveness and morale. I encourage you all to get involved with the local community, as you will find your participation both enriching and rewarding – and it is a great way to connect and meet new friends as part of a network of community support. I encourage families to engage with the Defence Member and Family Support (DMFS) community and for aviators to consider joining one of the local welfare clubs – details provided in this guide.

WELCOME FROM THE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW POSTING LOCATION.

Be this your first, or one of many, each posting brings unique opportunities and challenges.

Defence offers support services to help you and your family throughout your posting and career in the Australian Defence Force.

Defence Member and Family Support (DMFS) has a range of programs and services to assist with long periods of absence, children's education and wellbeing, partner employment, and connecting with the community.

The Defence Member and Family Information Guide provides further information about the support services and programs DMFS offers to help ADF families with the demands of service life and the needs of the family. I encourage you to read the guide and keep it as a reference. You and your family may wish to visit the Defence website (www.defence.gov.au/adf-membersfamilies)

to learn more about the locations and details of DMFS offices. It can be valuable to connect with your local DMFS office and join the regional mailing list to ensure you receive regular information about your local Defence community.

Additionally, at any time, and from any location, you and your family can call the 24/7 DMFS Helpline on 1800 624 608. The helpline can provide assessment, assistance, advice or referral depending on the needs, support, and information you may require.

I acknowledge the incredible strength of ADF families who navigate service life and continue to support our military personnel.

Thank you for your service and, importantly, for the ongoing support from your family.

DAVID JOHNSTON AC
Admiral RAN
Chief of the Defence Force

I would also like to highlight a number of other local organisations whose support to our Defence community is very important and goes hand in hand with the DMFS. These include the Hunter Defence Support Network, Invictus Australia (formerly Veteran Sport Australia), Soldier On, Open Arms, your local RSL and, of course, the Air Force Association, just to highlight a few.

No doubt, you will also find during your posting at Williamtown that this base and its aviators are held in high regard. On a daily basis, our aircraft – those based here and those transiting – still draw a huge crowd at the main road leading into the base. The year 2026 will see the base continuing with its high-tempo of activities as well as ongoing support to any whole-of-government tasks that may arise.

To those new to the base in 2026, a warm welcome to you and I hope you find this posting truly rewarding. Make the most of the beautiful surroundings of Port Stephens, the Upper Hunter, Lake Macquarie and Newcastle.

For those returning to work at Williamtown in 2026, I extend my thanks for your continued contributions to the base and our community, and I look forward to working with you again.

WGCDR VICKY BEZUIDENHOUT
Senior Australian Defence Force Officer
RAAF Base Williamtown

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

GUUDJI-YIIGU WORIMI BARRAY. In the local Gathang language that means welcome to Worimi Country. My name is Neville Lilley and along with Uncle John Ridgeway, Worimi Elders of Port Stephens and Traditional Custodians, we extend to you this welcome. We thank the RAAF for acknowledging country.

As with tradition, I pay my respects to my Elders, past, present and future.

There is overwhelming evidence that the Worimi have occupied this area for hundreds of generations. Some ceremonial and meeting grounds, burial sites, artefacts and artwork can still be seen. We continue to walk on this land today. We are a part of this great land, which defines us as a people, including our languages, and our stories, which are the foundation of our culture.

We are spiritually connected to this land that has sustained our people for many thousands of years. Our desire is to care for the land and for the environment. This is our commitment to our forefathers and to future generations.

On behalf of my people, I welcome you all to our God-given country. I trust that our journey together, both now and into the future will continue to be pleasant and productive.



LEAH ANDERSON
Mayor of Port Stephens

WELCOME TO PORT STEPHENS, known for its incredible natural beauty and vibrant community, where our Defence families play an essential role in shaping our region.

Whether you're arriving here for the first time or returning, I know you'll quickly see why so many people fall in love with Port Stephens. From our stunning beaches and coastal villages to our riverside suburbs and rural hinterland, there's so much to explore and enjoy.

We're proud to have the defence industry as one of our largest employers, and proud of the strength and vibrancy it brings to our local community.

As you settle in, I encourage you to get involved in what Port Stephens has to offer. Spend time with family and new friends at our parks and playgrounds, visit our libraries, join a local sporting team, or take part in the many

events and programs we host throughout the year.

We want you to feel at home here, and it's important to us that you have access to the facilities, services and connections you need. Council can help you connect with a wide range of community and interest groups to make your transition as smooth as possible.

To keep up to date with what's happening across Port Stephens, visit portstephens.nsw.gov.au, subscribe to our e-newsletter, Your Port, follow us on Facebook @PortStephensCouncil or Instagram @psCouncil. You can also email council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au or call us on 02 4988 0255.

On behalf of our community, I warmly welcome you to Port Stephens. I hope you quickly feel at home here and enjoy everything this special place has to offer.



MERYL SWANSON MP
Federal Member for Paterson

I'D LIKE TO PERSONALLY WELCOME you to Williamstown, beautiful Port Stephens and the broader Hunter Valley. We are blessed to live here.

I understand what an upheaval it can be to relocate repeatedly, especially with small children. I did it several times to follow my husband's work and I remember how overwhelming it can be.

We have great schools and educational facilities, sporting facilities, shopping centres and health and professional services. Plus, there are many community groups and organisations where you might find a kindred spirit.

We are only 30 minutes from Newcastle and less than two hours from Sydney, so all of those opportunities are also at your fingertips. Rest assured, we will do our best to help you settle in. Please reach out if you need help.

I am a big supporter of our Defence forces.

I appreciate the sacrifice and commitment serving personnel and their families make for our nation, and I am grateful. I work hard for my community and the Defence community is a strong part of that.

As your elected representative in Federal Parliament, I can help you with enquiries that relate to social services such as Centrelink, immigration, taxation, superannuation, telecommunications, including the NBN, employment and disability services including the NDIS.

Please contact me at any time if I can be of assistance. I am on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, you can phone me on 02 4983 2401, email me on meryl.swanson.mp@aph.gov.au, write to me at PO Box 156 Raymond Terrace, NSW, 2324, visit my office at 35 Sturgeon Street, Raymond Terrace, or visit my website merylswanson.com.au.



KATE WASHINGTON MP
State Member for Port Stephens

A VERY WARM WELCOME to Port Stephens. I am honoured to represent the residents of Port Stephens in the Parliament of NSW, a role that I've been privileged to hold for a decade now.

Having raised my family here, where so many RAAF families call home, I have an enormous amount of respect for the work you do and understand the challenges of the RAAF lifestyle. I genuinely appreciate the enormous contribution made by the RAAF Base Williamstown to our community, not only by being a local employer, but because RAAF personnel make significant contributions to our community in many ways.

If I can assist you in navigating any of the NSW

Government agencies such as Transport for NSW, NSW Health, Department of Education, Homes NSW or Fair Trading, I and my team are here to assist.

I encourage you to get involved with any of the impressive local community organisations that are across Port Stephens. If you would like any information or assistance connecting with any activities or groups, please get in touch.

I hope you enjoy your time in beautiful Port Stephens. If I can be of any assistance while you are here, please don't hesitate to contact me on 02 4987 4455 or email portstephens@parliament.nsw.gov.au.



PHOTO: LAC Kurt Lewis

AUSTRALIA'S **F A S T - J E T B A S E** PRIMARY

The busiest and most complex Australian Air Force base, RAAF Williamtown is the nation's main fighter training base and is home to air combat group, surveillance response group, and the majority of the RAAF's F-35A Lightning II aircraft.





↑ **RAAF E-7A Wedgetail (A30-001) departs RAAF Base Williamtown.**

← **RAAF F-35A Lightning II aircraft conduct an elephant walk prior to departing on a sortie at RAAF Base Williamtown.**

PHOTO: LAC Kurt Lewis

RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN is located north of the coastal city of Newcastle, NSW, in the local government area of Port Stephens. The military base leases its military airfield to Newcastle Airport for scheduled regular passenger transport. The nearest towns are Raymond Terrace, located west of the base, and Medowie to the north, which is home to many of the base's staff.

Today, the base is the primary fighter base for the RAAF, covering flying commitments and technical and training programs. The airfield handles, on average, just under 1,000 military and civilian air movements a week; and during busy periods, up to 1,200-1,300 movements a week.

HISTORY

RAAF Station Williamtown was established on 15 February 1941 to provide protection for the strategic port and steel manufacturing facilities of the Hunter region. The base was initially served by four runways, each 1,100m in length, to meet the needs of the Williamtown Flying School. The school consisted of

62 buildings, which accommodated 366 officers and men.

A number of Australian Empire Air Training Scheme squadrons were formed at Williamtown before proceeding overseas and No.4 Operational Training Unit was located at Williamtown from October 1942 until the unit was disbanded in April 1944. Following World War II, Williamtown was retained as the RAAF's main fighter base and was equipped with squadrons of Gloster Meteor and F-86 Sabre fighters.

In 1961, the Meteors were replaced with the Dassault Mirage aircraft. On-base facilities were gradually expanded post war and through until the late 1960s.

In 1983, the role of Williamtown was upgraded to a tactical fighter base in preparation for the replacement of the Mirages with 75 F/A-18 Hornets in 1989. The following year Williamtown became headquarters for the Tactical Fighter Group and acquired new headquarter buildings, hangars, workshops, stores, medical facilities and a base chapel.

THE BASE TODAY

RAAF Base Williamtown employs approximately 3,800 personnel (military and civilians) and a significant number of contractors. It generates more than \$280 million per annum by way of salaries in the Hunter region economy.

Williamtown is home to the F-35A Lightning II (operated by No.3 Squadron, No.77 Squadron and No.2 Operational Conversion Unit), Hawk 127 Lead-In Fighters (operated by No.76 Squadron), B737 E-7A Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft (operated by No.2 Squadron) and Pilatus PC-21 training aircraft (operated by No.4 Squadron).

It is also home to Air Combat Group; Surveillance and Response Group; elements of Combat Support Group, Air Warfare Centre and Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group; the Australian Defence Force Warfare Training Centre and the Williamtown Aviation Heritage Centre (an element of History and Heritage Branch – Air Force).

As the nation's main fighter pilot training base, RAAF Williamtown is home to the majority of the Royal Australian Air Force's F-35A Lightning II aircraft.

WOMEN'S INTEGRATED NETWORKING GROUP

Providing mutual support, ongoing engagement and advice for a long-lasting career

THE WILLIAMTOWN WOMEN'S INTEGRATED NETWORKING GROUP (WINGS) has been providing Air Force women of all ranks and employment categories unique leadership and growth opportunities through support, mentoring, networking and guest lecturers for more than a decade.

The program offers ongoing engagement with Air Force women throughout their career. It is designed as a retention initiative and is a localised program that enables female aviators to build the support and networks required to sustain a long-term career in the Air Force.

RAAF Williamtown WINGS sessions are generally held every six to eight weeks, over a lunch period, and provide a great opportunity to meet other Air Force women on base in a friendly, non-judgemental environment. While face-to-face participation is crucial for networking, there may be times when attendance is not possible: when working from home or on leave. For that reason, most WINGS sessions are available through Microsoft Teams and this may also extend to participating in other base WINGS sessions as well with guest presenters.

WINGS covers a variety of topics including imposter syndrome, assertive communication, resilience, leadership, unconscious bias, effective networking, health and wellness, mentoring, DiSC profiling and much more.

Opportunities are also available to participate in specialised professional workshops.

The WINGS program is inclusive of all ranks and occupational groups and encourages

male aviators to contribute to the discussion. Information on Williamtown WINGS (including resources and past presentations) can be found on the Williamtown WING's website, http://drnet/raaf/AirForce/RAAFWLM/BaseFunctions/RAAFWLMWINGS/pages/RAAF_WLM_WINGS.aspx, or by emailing the Williamtown WINGS Committee at WLMWINGS@defence.gov.au.

The WINGS National Program Coordinator, WGCdr Sue Yates, is also based here at RAAF FSGT Morsink SNCOIC P&RT presenting fitness tips and advice for female aviators.



↑ Air Commodore Louise desJardins CSC speaking during an International Women's Day event hosted by WLM WINGS.

MATERNITY SUPPORT & NETWORKING GROUP



RAAF Williamtown has an established Maternity Support & Networking Group (MSNG) for Air Force women proceeding on, or currently on, maternity leave or returned from maternity leave. The group provides opportunity for women to come together to navigate all aspects of parenting including navigating the policies, returning to work, fitness, child-care considerations, dealing with partner absence/deployments and more. Details about the group and resources can be found on the DOBC Webpage under the Maternity and Working Parents tab or by contacting the WLM MSNG Committee at WLM.MSNG@defence.gov.au

Maternity and Extended Leave Coordinators have also been established across various bases to provide individual support on maternity and paternity policies, health, financial considerations and personnel policies tailored to each aviator's specific situation. Initial contact is via email to CBR 28SQN – Maternity and Extended Leave Support (@defence.gov.au).



AIR COMBAT GROUP

PHOTO: LAC Campbell Latch



AIR COMBAT GROUP (ACG) is one of the largest Force Element Groups in the RAAF, with more than 2,000 personnel across three wings; comprising nine squadrons.

ACG provides a single command structure for all of the RAAF's fast-jet combat aircraft: the F-35A Lightning, F/A-18F Hornet, EA-18G Growler, Hawk 127 and the PC-21 Forward Air Control; and the Australian Defence Force's Combat Controller Teams. ACG's mission is to deliver Australia's capability to control the air and to conduct precision strike and airborne electronic attack.

↑ RAAF F-35A Lightning II aircraft transit to Indonesia for Exercise Elang Ausindo 2025.

↓ Two RAAF PC-21 aircraft from No.4 Squadron, conduct sorties over the Newcastle region.



PHOTO: LAC SAMUEL MILLER



NO.78 WING

No.78 Wing provides lead-in Fighter training and Air-Surface Integration in support of Australia's air combat capability. It comprises three squadrons:

No.4 Squadron, No.76 Squadron (based at RAAF

Base Williamtown) and No.79 Squadron (based at RAAF Base Pearce, WA). Both No.76 Squadron and No.79 Squadron operate the Hawk 127 aircraft and are responsible for the Lead-In Fighter training continuum as well as broader ADF support for Land and Maritime training activities. No.4 Squadron operates the PC-21 aircraft, provides the Combat Control capability to the Joint force and is the ADF training and standardisation establishment for Joint Terminal Attack Control and Forward Air Control (Airborne).



NO.4 SQUADRON

No.4 Squadron supports a diverse range of Air Force capabilities and operations, both domestically and internationally. Located at RAAF Base Williamtown and organisationally part of 78 Wing, the

squadron consists of three flights as well as operational support sections including logistics, administration, intelligence, operations and human performance.

A Flight comprises aircrew responsible for operating the Pilatus PC-21 aircraft in the Forward Air Control and Close Air Support roles.

B Flight personnel are trained in specialist insertion techniques, ground combat skills, assault zone survey, and control of strike aircraft

to enable air support to ground elements in close proximity to hostile forces. With these skills personnel execute the operational Combat Controller role which integrates and controls elements of air and space power to enable precision strike and advanced military force operations.

C Flight personnel train future Combat Controllers as well as delivering all ADF training for the internationally accredited Joint Terminal Attack Controller course and facilitating continual development and assessment.



NO.79 SQUADRON (BASED AT PEARCE WA)

No.79 Squadron converts graduates from No.2 Flying Training School onto the Hawk 127 while also further

advancing their skills in formation and night flying. It also conducts air support for ADF agencies as required on the west coast in the form of adversary air, fleet support and close air support.



NO.76 SQUADRON

The role of No.76 Squadron is to train fast-jet aircrew on tactical applied flying prior to their conversion to operational types. It also conducts air support for

ADF agencies in the form of adversary air, fleet support and close air support. There are two introductory fighter courses (IFC) conducted by 76 Squadron – one for pilots and a separate one for air combat officers (rear-seat aircrew in the F/A-18F or E/A-18G). There are three flights at 76 Squadron: A Flight responsible for the pilots' IFC; B Flight responsible for the air combat officers' IFC; and C Flight responsible for graduate progression and ADF support tasking.

↓ No.76 Squadron Introductory Fighter Course pilot graduates from course 25-1 and 25-1A at RAAF Base Williamtown



NO.81 WING

No.81 Wing's purpose is to provide effective joint force combat air power in support of Australia's national interests. No.81 Wing is the sole operator of Australia's F-35A Lightning II, from two main

operating bases: RAAF Base Williamtown, NSW and RAAF Base Tindal, NT. The transition from the AF/A-18A/B to the F-35A was completed in December 2021, when 75SQN commenced F-35A operations. HQ 81 Wing supports four flying units, comprising in total approximately 1,200 defence personnel and 150 contractors.

The squadrons that make up No.81 Wing are: No.2 Operational Conversion Unit, No.3 Squadron and No.77 Squadron, at RAAF Williamtown, and No.75 Squadron at RAAF Tindal. The professionalism, expertise and dedication of the aviators serving in all roles in No.81 Wing, maintenance, administration, supply and supporting sections, is essential to the capability and dependability of No.81 Wing in fulfilling its *Prepared to Fight* motto.



NO.2 OPERATIONAL CONVERSION UNIT

The primary mission of No.2 Operational Conversion Unit (2OCU) is to train the F-35A Warfighter. The unit conducts Operational Conversion Course, qualifying pilots on the F-35A Lightning II.

The unit also hosts the F-35A Fighter Combat Instructor course, which is a component of the Air Force Air Warfare Instructors Course. Additionally, all initial technical training to sustain the F-35A fleet is undertaken at the 2OCU Integrated Training Centre, directly supporting all F-35A operations.



NO.3 SQUADRON

No.3 Squadron is Australia's oldest fighter squadron, forming in 1916 prior to the RAAF itself, and was the first RAAF squadron to operate the F-35A Lightning II.

Across domestic and international exercises in 2023, No.3 Squadron continued to hone the logistics and operational systems which support the aircraft and permits the execution of advanced air operations across Australia and internationally.



NO.77 SQUADRON

No.77 Squadron (77SQN) was formed on 16 March 1942 in defence of Australia after the bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942. 77SQN defended Darwin and participated

in the WWII Pacific campaign. After the Japanese surrender in 1945, 77SQN was selected to form part of the occupation force in Japan.

In June 1950, it was the first Commonwealth unit committed to fight the war in Korea, undertaking the remarkable feat of transitioning from the piston engine P-51D fighter into the jet age with the Gloster Meteor in just two months and from where it received the Presidential Citation for Meritorious service.

77SQN finally returned to Australia in November 1954, 12 years after leaving its shores, returning to RAAF Williamtown where it is now based, firmly establishing its reputation and motto *Swift to Destroy* along with the iconic Asian temple Lion as its logo – signifying protector of peace, from where the squadron got its nickname, the Grumpy Monkeys.

77SQN is one of the three front-line F-35A Lightning II squadrons, charged with defending Australia and delivering lethal and survivable combat air power when and where called to do so. Team Grumpy Monkey regularly deploys abroad, operating with partner and allied forces in the delivery of integrated effects across the full range of combat roles, both offensive and defensive.



PHOTO: LAC Kurt Lewis

↓ A RAAF No. 2 Squadron E-7A Wedgetail aircraft takes off for a mission during Exercise Bamboo Eagle 25-1.

SURVEILLANCE AND RESPONSE GROUP

PHOTO: ACW Laura Flower



APPROPRIATELY, THE SURVEILLANCE AND RESPONSE GROUP (SRG) motto is *Foremost Sentinel*. While retaining the individual combat capabilities of both the Maritime Patrol and Surveillance and Control

groups, SRG is also developing and delivering intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and electronic warfare capabilities to prepare the Air Force for the introduction of new systems including maritime unmanned aerial systems. SRG also supports the ongoing development and enhancement of information assurance and space capabilities to ensure Air Force and the ADF are mission-ready across multiple domains.



PHOTO: SGT Clinton Dwyer

↑ **Personnel from No.3 Control and Reporting Unit with their communications equipment during Exercise Pitch Black 24 at Bradshaw Field Training Area, Northern Territory.**



NO.41 WING

No.41 Wing comprises five units that provide surveillance, air battle management, airborne early warning and control and specialist

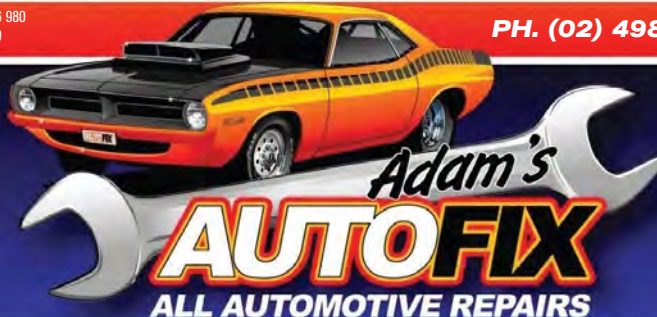
operator and technical training. Williamstown-based No.41 Wing units include No.3 Control and Reporting Unit, Surveillance and Control Training Unit and No.2 Squadron.

The capabilities delivered by these units contribute to the No.41 Wing Mission, which is to deliver persistent multi-domain understanding and control to the joint force.

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NO.3 CONTROL AND REPORTING UNIT

No.3 Control and Reporting Unit (3CRU) operates from the Control and Reporting Centre providing air battle management to coordinate and deliver integrated air

and missile defence effects. The unit conducts air surveillance and air battle management for operations and training from the Eastern Region Operations Centre. 3CRU deploys the new HPAR radar system, as well as tactical datalink and communications assets across the country using a suite of specialist vehicles to provide sensor and communications coverage wherever required.

The unit employs a variety of RAAF specialists, from air battle managers and air surveillance operators to engineers, technicians and logistics and personnel capability staff. 3CRU is home to the Navy's Fleet Fighter Control Element, which provides RAN fighter controllers with training and experience to meet at-sea requirements, and also personnel from the Army's 16 Regiment RAA, working closely to build experience and relationships as part of the new air and missile defence capability.



SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL TRAINING UNIT

Surveillance and Control Training Unit (SACTU) mission is to train air and space power professionals ready to provide battle management capability for the joint force. SACTU

was formed at Williamtown on 9 August 1999.

Currently consisting of approximately 90 staff, the unit conducts initial entry and post-graduate training for officer aviation (air battle managers) and air surveillance operators, in addition to driver training and specialist technical training for maintainers. Furthermore, various Integrated air and missile defence courses are managed and delivered to air and missile defence professionals employed across the ADF.

SACTU comprises administration, training development, quality management, technician training, driver training, air warfare simulation, air battle management training, air surveillance operator training and SACTU Detachment Edinburgh. The unit manages and delivers more than 90 courses a year to ensure graduates have the underpinning knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them and supported units to deliver integrated airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance effects and decision superiority to the joint force.



PHOTO: LAC Kurt Lewis

↑ Air Battle Managers conduct taskings during Exercise Diamond Shield 24, No.3 Control and Reporting Unit, RAAF Base Williamtown.



NO.2 SQUADRON

Formed in 1916 as one of the RAAF's oldest squadrons, No.2 Squadron (2SQN) is also the RAAF's most decorated squadron with citations from WWII and the Vietnam War. Through the operation of the E-7A Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft, 2SQN provides the ADF with the critical element of integrated air and missile defence and long-range strike in the defence of the nation. The E-7A Wedgetail is the most advanced airborne battlespace management capability in the world, providing command and control and threat warning for the joint and combined force, across air, land and surface environments.



NO.44 WING

No.44 Wing's (44WG) mission is to deliver joint battlefield airspace control and air navigation services for ADF operations and national tasking. 44WG provides the tactical control of forward airfields and the control, coordination and deconfliction of battlefield airspace and aviation activity throughout the ADF's area of operations both ashore and afloat. The wing is also responsible for the delivery of air base air traffic services, communication and navigation services, and aeronautical information services to all three arms of the ADF and the civil aviation industry. 44WG's Williamtown-based unit is No.453 Squadron (Williamtown Flight)

with wing and squadron headquarters also based at RAAF Base Williamtown.



NO.453 SQUADRON – HEADQUARTERS & WILLIAMTOWN FLIGHT

Having a distinguished history as a WWII fighter squadron, No.453 Squadron was reformed in 2010

as an air traffic control (ATC) squadron. No.453 Squadron – Williamtown Flight provides ATC for RAAF Base Williamtown/Newcastle Airport. It has more than 50 personnel comprising ATC officers, communications electronics technicians and logistical staff. The Williamtown flight is responsible for managing Williamtown's airspace, roughly the size of England, and for the separation and sequencing of all aircraft movements, civil and military, that use the air base. Headquarters 453 Squadron is staffed by a small but critical nucleus, comprising the commanding officer, executive officer, senior engineering officer, personnel capability officer, orderly room and CAMM2 maintenance management cells. Their principal function is to command, support and report on the squadron's operational capability, which includes five other ATC Flights at Richmond, East Sale, Edinburgh, Pearce and Naval Air Station Nowra.

PHOTO: FLTLT P Hartley



↑ No. 44 Wing Deployable Defence Air Traffic Management and Control System Radar set up at RAAF Base Curtin, WA, during Exercise Talisman Sabre.

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PHOTO: ACW Laura Flower

← No.26 Squadron firefighters test their fire hose during HAZMAT drills at RAAF Base Williamtown.



COMBAT SUPPORT GROUP (CSG) was formed on 29 September 1998 at Headquarters Air Command and then relocated to RAAF Base Amberley on 6 December 1999. CSG prepares for and conducts flexible combat

support operations and provides the ADF with an expeditionary airbase capability in either a joint or combined environment. CSG is able to employ a range of flexible combat support capabilities to meet joint or coalition operational requirements.



NO.26 SQUADRON

No.26 Squadron (26SQN) has a proud history at RAAF Base Williamtown, being formed at the base on 1 July 1981. The unit is Williamtown's Airbase Operations Squadron

(AOS), forming part of No.96 Wing within CSG.

As an AOS, the squadron has over 340 Air Force and APS members; responsible for providing coordinated support for air and ground operations at RAAF Base Williamtown, with members of the unit also tasked to deploy in support of the CSG AOS expeditionary capability in Australia and overseas.

At Williamtown, 26SQN delivers a wide range of functions to maintain base operations, including management of the Air Base Operations Centre,

aerodrome security, airfield engineering and support, aerodrome management, aviation safety, air movements, road movements, aviation refuelling, aerodrome rescue and firefighting and facility fire firefighting services, aviation search and rescue, tactical vehicle and aviation support equipment operations and maintenance, base armament, and logistics support functions. The squadron also provides chaplaincy, indigenous liaison, base visits coordination, physical training, and weapons training to all resident units and personnel at RAAF Base Williamtown.

The Commanding Officer of 26SQN is appointed as the Senior ADF Officer and is also responsible for airfield operations and airbase emergency management, in coordination with Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd and local emergency services.



NO.381 SQUADRON

No.381 Squadron is one of two Contingency Response Squadrons (CRS) under the command of 95WG. CRS provide a scalable airfield capability, to establish and operate expeditionary airfields or airbases to

project air power. The unit can be activated at very short notice and is capable of deploying to austere and uncertain security environments.

381SQN personnel are highly trained to provide deployed air base operations in support of the Joint Force. Tasking includes humanitarian assistance and disaster relief support, provision of Evacuation Handling Centres, and Non-combatant

Evacuation Operations. 381SQN has 32 core cadre staff who form the foundation of the CRS capability. Personnel come from a range of Air Force backgrounds including personnel capability specialists, suppliers, air movements, chefs, firefighters, physical training instructor, network technician and integrated security elements. When activated, the squadron is augmented by other CSG personnel to achieve directed missions.



PHOTO: LAC Kurt Lewis

↑ RAAF aviators prepare to begin the Combat Support Group Charity Group Workout at RAAF Base Williamtown.



PHOTO: ELCOFF Michael Thomas

↑ Executive Officer of No.381 Squadron briefing aviators from No.381 Squadron and No.17 Squadron during Exercise Stoic Gauntlet 24.



NO.1 SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON

The origins of No.1 Security Forces Squadron (1SECFOR SQN) extend back to World War II and the Northern Territory. In 2022, Chief of Air Force

initiated an Air Force Security Transformation, which tasked 1SECFOR with the expeditionary responsibility for security effects, protecting deployed Air Force assets on exercises and operations globally.

1SECFOR SQN continues to focus on supporting aircraft and other assets that deploy. 1SECFOR is a highly capable, agile and air-minded expeditionary security effects provider anytime, anywhere.



NO.2 EXPEDITIONARY HEALTH SQUADRON

No.2 Expeditionary Health Squadron (2EHS) generates aerospace health capabilities to advance the Air Force mission as part of

the integrated force. 2EHS provides specialist health personnel, teams and larger capabilities to support aviators operating across the national airbase network, at remote locations and globally at diverse operating environments.

On base, 2EHS partners with Joint Health Command (JHC) across Australia where we are co-located at RAAF Base Williamtown with detachments at Darwin, Pearce and Tindal, providing complementary services in the delivery of garrison health services at JHC health facilities that support flying operations. In addition to treating patients, 2EHS provides public health and occupational hygiene assessments and remediation advice to Commanders to ensure the inherent risk of what Air Force does is appropriately managed and our aviators stay as safe as they can be in the service of our nation.

2EHS operates using a total workforce system, whereby our outputs are achieved using a mix of full-time and part-time personnel across a range of professions and diverse backgrounds. Our reserve personnel make a valuable contribution in enabling and delivering our capability.



NO.1 COMBAT COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON – WILLIAMTOWN DETACHMENT

No.1 Combat Communications Squadron (1CCS) is Air Force's only specialist expeditionary

communication and information systems (CIS) squadron. Headquartered at RAAF Base Amberley, the squadron has detachments at Amberley, Edinburgh and at Williamtown. Formed in 1965, the squadron's role has evolved from basic field communication centres and radio networks, to now providing IT systems through deployable networking solutions. The CIS elements from 1CCS scale from small, agile teams supporting a few users, to providing CIS solutions for large scale, expeditionary airbase activations. The 1CCS mission is to provide assured network operations capability to enable the conduct of expeditionary air operations in support of the joint force.



WILLIAMTOWN HEALTH CENTRE

WLMHC provides health care to ADF members and ensures the health preparedness of all ADF personnel posted to the Newcastle area. Health Service delivery is provided by a mix of ADF, APS and contracted civilian staff. WLMHC is part of Joint Health Unit Northern NSW, Joint Health Command.

The Health Centre, on the corner of McNamara and Henderson Roads, provides sick parade, dental, pharmacy, mental health and psychology services, and occupational rehabilitation support for ADF personnel. With augmentation from 2EHS, WLMHC enables a health response for local military flying and an airfield emergency health response.

Opening Hours

7.30am-3.30pm Monday to Thursday,
7.30am-2.30pm Friday.

Medical sick parade: 7.30-9.30am daily.

Dental: 7.30am-3.30pm Monday to Friday.

Dental sick parade: 7.45-8.30am daily.

Mental health: 7.30am-3.30pm Monday to Friday.

Physiotherapy: 7.30am-3.30pm Monday to Friday, 7.30am-3.30pm Friday.

Physiotherapy sick parade: 7.30am-10.00am daily.

Pharmacy: 7.30am-2.30pm Monday to Thursday, 7.30am-3.30pm Friday.

For general enquiries and appointments call 02 4078 5048 or email jhunns.williamtownhc@defence.gov.au

For After Hours advice call 1800 IMSICK

In an emergency, please call 000.

→ A patient is assessed by a team of No. 2 Expeditionary Health Squadron personnel in a field medical tent during a simulated mass-casualty event at RAAF Base Williamtown.



WILLIAMTOWN SERVICE CONNECT HUB is located on the ground floor of the Len Waters Building (958) and includes representatives

from service groups across RAAF Base Williamtown. Each customer service group provides its services direct to customers through the one physical location and through a number of individual access channels. Within Williamtown Service Connect Hub you will find the following services.

BASE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Service Delivery – East & West zone is a part of the Security and Estate Group and provides base management support to RAAF Williamtown.

Led by the base manager, the team has responsibility for the allocation and purpose of facilities, base security and access control, estate maintenance and upkeep, cleaning, land management, War on Waste, hospitality and catering. The Base Management Team is responsible for the coordination of base-wide plans which cover emergency management, security and work health and safety. The team can be contacted on 02 4034 5999 or basemanagement.wlm@defence.gov.au.

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

The Customer Service Centre is part of the Customer Service Network (CSN) providing information and assistance to ADO members, their families, visitors and external service providers on a wide range of products and services. Friendly staff are there to help with a range of enquiries including: pay, allowance, leave, change of name, personal data, DI self-service, travel and individual readiness.

Depending on the nature, urgency and complexity of your enquiry, the team will be able to provide you with detailed information, resolve your enquiry or refer your enquiry to the appropriate specialist area. DPN terminals are available for you to access and staff can guide you through a range of self-service products.

Visit CSN at the hub 0800-1600 Monday to Friday or call the Defence Service Centre on 1800defence or email yourcustomer.service@defence.gov.au.

REGIONAL ICT

The Regional ICT team is your local team reacting to jobs logged through the ICT service desk or online. To log a job please call 133 272 or click on the ICT symbol on your Defence Projected Network home page.

If you are experiencing difficulties with jobs that have already been logged or need urgent assistance, you can contact WLM ICT Connect via Skype instant message, just type **WLM ICT Connect** into your Skype window.

RELOCATIONS & HOUSING TEAM

At RAAF Williamtown, the Directorate of Relocations and Housing (DRH) is represented by a small number of dedicated staff. The team is part of a network of defence relocations and housing officers who assist DRH with the provision of quality housing and related services to ADF members under national contracts and in accordance with Defence policy.

The DRH team assists ADF members and families with their relocations and housing enquiries. The key services offered by the DRH team to members and the Defence community include:

- Providing relocation and housing support to ADF members and their families
- Engaging with customers and service providers to assist in resolving issues relating to ADF housing benefits, maintenance, and removals
- Delivering essential functions including validation, invoicing, purchase order support and payments
- ADF tenant and removal services dispute resolution.

Enquiries can be directed to seg.drhm@defence.gov.au. Further information regarding accommodation options, application forms and to access DHA online services, visit DHA's website dha.gov.au or phone 139 342. For information regarding your removal and relocation queries, visit the Toll Transitions website tws.defenceuniform.movemaestro.com or phone 1800 819 167.

You can now manage your posting through Posting Connect, a dedicated portal that supports members through their domestic posting. The site provides a step-by-step guide through the posting process, with direct access to Toll Transitions and DHA.

HR SERVICES TEAM

The HR Services team works with APS employees and their supervisors regarding APS HR matters, including coaching on how to manage staff, difficult situations and difficult conversations, to workshop approaches to resolve your particular HR issues or concerns, will assist you in drafting responses where difficult messages may need to be given; work with you to find the answer to your HR query and provide advice and guidance on HR policy and procedures and much more.

Visit the team in the Service Connect Hub, phone 1800 333 362 or email yourcustomer.service@defence.gov.au.

BASE MAIL SERVICES

The Williamtown Base Mail Room is located in the retail precinct (Building A0960) and is open 0600 -1800 Monday to Friday. Please undertake safety checks of the mail while in the mail room, before taking to your workplace. Collection of mail is self-service only. All mail must meet Australia Post address standards and have a return to sender clearly identified (including unit name and box number). Outgoing mail is to be placed in one of the Street Post Boxes located outside of AAFCANs or in the NACC precinct carpark. To ensure you receive mail while at Williamtown, it is important that it is addressed correctly including your full name and unit details (including unit allocated box number). Additionally, on both arrival and posting out, it is important that you also update the Corporate Directory with your new details. For further information on Williamtown mail services visit **My Base**.

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER

The Regional Environment and Sustainability Officer role is to ensure compliance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1975*, as well as look for creative ways to work sustainably for long-term usability of our Defence estate. That can be challenging when we work across highly industrialised sites. However, working with ADF and APS personnel alongside base contractors, the committed team is making small and big gains in land management.



PHOTO: LAC Kurt Lewis

↑ RAAF Williamtown Ngarralbaa (Yarning Circle).

AIR WARFARE CENTRE



HEADQUARTERS TACTICS AND TRAINING DIRECTORATE

The Tactics and Training Directorate (TTD) came into operation within the Air Warfare Centre in 2017. It is tasked with the development of

multi-discipline, high-end integrated tactics and training across the Air Force and the joint force through a combination of training, education and integrated exercises. TTD will transform the way Air Force thinks about and teaches air warfare. It will also conduct operational analysis to inform integrated tactics analysis to better enhance war fighter effects. TTD incorporates No.88 Squadron and the Air Warfare School. The crest features Athena, the Ancient Greek goddess of war and wisdom, as well as an owl. Athena combined with the owl is a fitting allegory for TTD and its academic and integration function of the AWC motto, *Warfighter Ascendancy*.

THE EXERCISE CONTROL TEAM

The Exercise Control (EXCON) Team is a specialised workforce, contracted to perform specific tasks and solve complex problems to meet capability needs. EXCON collaboratively deliver specialised tasks and exercise services in the most applicable environment to assist Defence in the generation of superior war fighters and tactics.



NO.88 SQUADRON

No.88 Squadron (88SQN) was formed within the Air Warfare Centre during 2016 and was officially established as a unit on 9 January 2017. The mission of 88SQN is to maximise air

power lethality through the delivery of proven high-end integrated tactics and training. Three core activities of the unit contribute to this mission: the annual Australian Weapons and Tactics Conference; the annual Australian Tactics Analysis Team; and the biennial Air Warfare

Instructors Course. Through these activities 88SQN develops, validates and disseminates the high-end integrated tactics required to give our aviators the winning edge.



NO.87 SQUADRON

No.87 Squadron (87SQN) was re-formed on 1 July 2006 and is Air Force's mission intelligence squadron. Geographically dispersed across seven RAAF bases, 87SQN

comprises 10 tactical intelligence flights (TIFs), the headquarters (HQ) flight and the Training & Standards (T&S) Flight, providing leading-edge mission intelligence for Air Force to fight and win. 87SQN comprises approximately 170 talented and motivated personnel, predominantly air intelligence analysts and officers, with RAAF Base Williamtown being home to 87SQN HQ, T&S Flight, 81 TIF, CCT TIF and IAMD TIF. 87SQN personnel provide air intelligence support to a range of RAAF and ADF operations, exercises and activities across single service and joint domains.



AIR WARFARE SCHOOL

The Air Warfare School (AWS) was established in 2016 to deliver operational level advanced air warfare training (AAWT) in order to develop combat mastery of the tactical war-fighter

in preparation for the operational level of war. To achieve this, AWS offers a suite of AAWT courses that emphasise the challenging facets of integrated multi-domain operations, command and control, joint air planning and targeting all set against the background of a complex, contested and denied environment. The AWS complement of courses is cross-career stream and delivers post initial employment training. Courses are aimed at personnel taking up positions in the Air Operations Centre, Headquarters Joint Operations Command or on Joint Task Force staff.



AIRCRAFT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT

Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU) was formed in 1943 in response to intensifying operations in the Pacific

theatre. Its purpose was to conduct flight testing of aircraft variants and airborne systems for tactics development and aerospace research. Since then ARDU has conducted flight testing in support of Defence, other governmental departments and aircraft manufacturers, with a spin-out unit of ARDU, Air Trials Unit, supporting activities such as missile and drone testing at Woomera and NASA's manned space program, Project Mercury. Ongoing development of the F-111 and F/A-18 Hornet were a cornerstone of its role in the 1990 and 2000s. ARDU now has test and evaluation flights at RAAF Bases Williamtown, Amberley and Edinburgh. Since its origin, ARDU's mission has evolved to focus on flight test of RAAF in-service and developmental aircraft. These operations occur throughout the continuum of test and evaluation from developmental through to operational test and evaluation.

RAAF DISTRIBUTED TRAINING CENTRE

Advanced Test and Training Directorate's RAAF Distributed Training Centre (RAAF DTC) is a fully accredited system capable of connection to the Defence Training and Experimentation Network (DTEN) and the Naval Continuous Training Environment (NCTE). The system provides AWC with a platform to conduct constructive forces generation, synthetic exercise control and exercise scenario development.

The RAAF DTC provides a networked synthetic distributed mission training system interconnecting simulators across Air Force, providing force-level training, experimentation and integration to support fifth-generation capability training and tactics development through exercises like Virtual Pitch Black and Magpie Alpha. The system, capable of running live, virtual and constructive simulations also provides operator development through mission-readiness exercises and work up activities for live exercise preparation. Through the DTEN and NCTE, the RAAF DTC supports connection to US and UK networks, enabling Air Force simulators' participation in Joint and coalition virtual exercises such as Navy's Viking Raider and Coalition Virtual Flag. The system is supported through a blended staff of Air Force personnel and industry partners.



↑ Special Operations Air Warfare in the Field.

OTHER KEY UNITS



SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL SYSTEMS PROGRAM OFFICE (S&CSPO)

S&CSPO, part of the Air

Defence and Space Systems Division within the Capability and Acquisition Sustainment Group, is responsible for acquiring and sustaining air and surface surveillance and control systems on behalf of the ADF, supporting critical infrastructure and installations across the country. S&CSPO is currently delivering major acquisition projects and providing critical sustainment functions across our Air Traffic Management (CAF12), Air Battle Management (CAF14) and Acquisition Project Office teams. With a workforce comprising over 140 Defence personnel and 345 industry partners, S&CSPO operates in a highly complex environment spanning engineering, logistics, cyber, project management and business functions. It is currently managing the rollout of Fixed Defence Air Traffic Control Surveillance Sensors at nine Defence sites, procuring Active Electronically Scanned Array sensors and acquiring Deployable Defence Air Traffic Management and Control Systems.

To support our mission, S&CSPO draws on the specialist expertise of several internal teams. The Cyber, Engineering and Logistics Governance Unit (CELGU) Engineering and Logistics Teams ensure effective management of technical governance and materiel logistics through governance, assurance and strategic oversight, converting complexity into capability safely. The CELGU System Security Team is responsible for supporting, advancing and enhancing S&CSPO security posture through the implementation of the Cyberworthiness Management System. Additionally, the Program Support Office delivers a wide range of enabling services including WHS, risk, security, commercial support, HR and corporate governance, as well as direct support to the S&CSPO executive.



ADF WARFARE TRAINING CENTRE

The Australian Defence Force Warfare Training Centre (ADFWTC) is responsible for the provision of joint

individual training and education for ADO and selected overseas forces staff, and assists with the training of joint headquarters' staff in the concepts of joint warfare. The ADFWTC conducts approximately 30 online and residential courses and other activities annually reaching approximately 1,400 students in joint disciplines ranging from foundational joint concepts through to highly specialised courses.

The training and education is designed to prepare students for appointments in joint HQ and enables them to conduct the planning of operations including supporting functions to those operational plans.

The courses conducted by the ADFWTC are: Introduction to Joint Operations (online), Joint Warfighting Basic, Joint Warfighting Intermediate, Joint Fires Effects and Targeting Staff Officer Course, Introduction to Amphibious Planning Course, Information Operations Staff Officers Course, Joint CIMIC Staff Planning Course, Mortuary Affairs Officer Course, Operations Contract Management Course and Overseas Joint Warfare Course. The ADFWTC also conducts a number of domestic and international mobile training team activities.



AIR WARFARE SYSTEMS PROGRAM OFFICE (AWSPO)

AWSPO is part of Aerospace Combat Systems Branch in Aerospace Systems Division, part of the broader Capability Acquisition and Sustainment

Group inside the Department of Defence. AWSPO is the primary CASG organisation responsible for delivering acquisition and sustainment outcomes to the lead-in fighter training system (LIFTS), Special Operations Air Warfare and advanced training and test environment.

OUR VISION: We drive transformative change to accelerate delivery of world-class capability to the ADF.

OUR MISSION: We acquire and sustain Air Force's operational aircraft fleet and related systems in support of Defence's Mission and Purpose.

Working in close collaboration with our Enterprise partners – capability manager and industry representatives, AWSPO seeks to deliver optimal value by balancing the cost, risk and performance of products and projects.

AWSPO leadership is focused on maturing the asset management of the LIFTS to ensure it is capable of providing Air Force with a training system that is responsive to fast-jet aircrew throughput demand, continues to be relevant and provides value-for-money through to 2032. We are also building advanced training, test and mission rehearsal environments to provide Air Force, Navy and Army with "live" and "synthetic" capabilities that are able to serve the needs of the integrated force over the next decade. We will also continue to evolve the level of coordination support provided to the Special Operations Air Warfare within 4SQN.

AWSPO supports its customers (Air Combat Group, Air Warfare Centre and Maritime Warfare Centre), with an integrated workforce of ADF, public service and major service provider integrated work partner contractor personnel.



AIR COMBAT SYSTEMS PROGRAM OFFICE (ACSPPO)

ACSPPO is the unit within

Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group responsible for the sustainment and modernisation of Australia's F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter capability. Australia's F-35A combat force is currently the largest and most capable fifth-generation fighter force outside of the United States and is at the forefront of Australia's air combat capability. This makes ACSPPO's task of sustaining and modernising the F-35A fleet both exciting and critically important. ACSPPO works closely with 81 Wing to deliver the through-life support for the F-35A capability at their home bases of Williamtown and Tindal, and while they are operating domestically and internationally on exercises.

The ACSPPO work-force consists of approximately 120 ADF, APS and contractor personnel working mostly from RAAF Williamtown with some support provided from Canberra-based personnel and a contingent of RAAF/APS personnel working in USA. ACSPPO partners

with the Australian defence industry to provide engineering, maintenance, supply support, information systems and training services for the F-35A capability. ASCSPO is also the conduit into the US-based support organisations, specifically the F-35A Joint Program Office, providing Australia with a link into the global F-35 Cooperative Program. This ensures Air Combat Group can continue to train and operate Air Force's fifth-generation F-35A aircraft now and into the future.



AIRBORNE SURVEILLANCE CONTROL AND INTELLIGENCE

SYSTEMS PROGRAM OFFICE

Airborne Surveillance Control and Intelligence Systems Program Office (ASCISPO), formerly Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems Program Office, is a unit within Aerospace Surveillance and Response Branch, Aerospace Systems Division of the Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group. ASCISPO is responsible for providing in-service support and upgrades

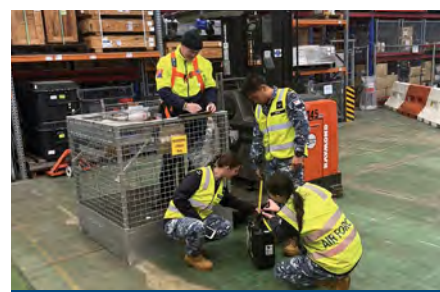
for the E-7A Wedgetail capability and the MC-55A Peregrine airborne intelligence surveillance reconnaissance and electronic warfare capability.

ASCISPO has staff in both Williamtown and Edinburgh, co-located with the respective Air Force operating units. ASCISPO partners with defence industry and international military services to provide the engineering, maintenance, supply, and training services for both E-7A Wedgetail and MC-55A Peregrine capabilities. The ASCISPO motto, *Trusted to Deliver*, is derived from the unit vision, and reflects the importance of assuring capability delivery to Air Force for both programs.



JOINT LOGISTICS UNIT EAST – WILLIAMTOWN

Joint Logistics Unit East – Williamtown (JLU(E)-W) is the primary warehouse facility at RAAF Williamtown and provides the base with an interface into the greater ADF



↑ Commonwealth and Linfox members from JLU(E)-W preparing a consignment.

and JLC supply chain network. The JLU(E)-W footprint consists of 20 RAAF members including two APS, working alongside 15 Linfox members. The role of JLU(E)-W is to provide warehousing and distribution services for all units at RAAF Base Williamtown. A non-exhaustive list of JLU(E)-W functions includes: storage of assets and inventory, distribution, both intra-site (locally) and inter-site (off-base) and dangerous goods storage. JLU(E)-W is committed to supporting units and platforms with their warehousing and distribution to meet their capabilities.

CHAPLAINCY TEAM

RAAF Base Williamtown is served by a team of Chaplains who provide chaplaincy support services to Defence Force personnel and their families.



A WARM WELCOME

to each of you from the RAAF Base Williamtown Chaplaincy team.

There are many reasons why we often need a helping hand or a listening ear to help us deal with relationship problems, wellbeing concerns,

workplace issues, grief and loss, or for when life gets a bit too hard – we all need someone to talk to. The Williamtown Chaplaincy team is here to listen, and can support you in all of those matters, with a primary focus of caring for you and your family as and when needed. Chaplaincy support may also be required by members seeking counsel or advice for specific religious/spiritual matters right through to everyday work and life events.

Chaplains extend a welcoming hand as a friend and fellow member of Defence, so you know that confidentiality is assured (with few exceptions). Chaplains give you the time and space you need to explore options and possibilities in a safe environment. We can also refer you on to other health professionals if need be while continuing to support you through that process as well.

The Chaplaincy Centre is located in the Community and Welfare Hub (BLD 589, near the North Gate), which we share with the teams from Defence Member and Family Support and Joint Transitions Authority, including a Veteran Support Officer from Defence Veterans Association, and representatives from Open Arms, RSL-LifeCare, and Soldier On. The base chapels are still located at BLD 94 and continue to function as the Chapel Precinct. We encourage you to use the facilities there, and the surrounding area and space, as quiet places to sit and reflect, to have lunch or just take some time out.

The chapels are also available to our members for those more sacred ceremonial moments in life, such as baptisms and weddings. The Chaplaincy team can expertly assist you and your families with any of these important life events.

The Williamtown Chaplaincy team is a base asset, and Chaplains therefore provide on call 24/7 phone support if an emergency arises and support is needed. That number is: 0457772854.

Almost every unit on base has a designated chaplain, and so we can join unit/section personnel in sport and fitness sessions, section meetings and social gatherings. We also provide briefings on topics such as good mental health,

healthy relationships, character and values development, and can present wellbeing forums on a wide variety of topics such as resilience, workplace tensions, and moral injury. We also support the promotion and awareness of the profiles of important Defence campaigns such as mental health & wellbeing, and suicide awareness/prevention.

Additionally, we support a number of annual events and activities on base to get to know the wider base community.

RAAF WELFARE TRUST FUND

Chaplains are also agents for the RAAF Welfare Trust Fund loan service. These loans are available to all serving members for professional development expenses, new furniture or vehicles, holidays and travel, and so on. Please chat to us about the RAAF Welfare Trust Fund or check out their website: raafwelfaretrustfund.gov.au.

On behalf of the WLM Chaplaincy team it is a great joy to welcome each of you to Williamtown, and to Newcastle, and to the beautiful Hunter Valley generally. We look forward to meeting you and we do hope your time at Williamtown is a genuinely wonderful experience.

CHAP (WGCDR) Andrew Knox

CLUBS & SPORTS GROUPS

Joining one of the many social, welfare or recreation clubs at the base is a great way to make new friends.

RAAF WILLIAMTOWN BASE (FORMATION) WELFARE

has oversight of a number of clubs and sporting groups that are run by members for the benefit of Defence/veteran personnel. Membership of these clubs normally includes an annual fee, which is incredibly reasonable given the benefits a member can enjoy. Have a look at the following list and see which one – or more – you would like to join. More details can be found by following this link on our RAAF Base Williamtown home page - Pages - Base Welfare.

FISHING CLUB

The Fishing Club clubroom is open every Wednesday from 4pm to 7pm for group discussion on what is biting where, with a monthly competition targeting those hotspots. Single membership is \$30, or \$50 for a family. Additional information can be found at the RAAF Williamtown home page under the Welfare and Base info tab. Visit <http://drnet.defence.gov.au/raaf/AirForce/WLMFISH/Pages/Welcome.aspx>.

FLYING CLUB

The RAAF Williamtown Flying Club runs for the benefit of Defence members and civilian employees of the base. It aims to promote camaraderie and an interest in aviation in a social setting. The club has numerous aircraft available for training and hire at some of the cheapest rates in Australia. Training from *ab initio* through to Private Pilot's Licence is conducted on most weekends. Membership information can be found at rwffc.org.au or just head down to the club (Club Hangar, BLD 170), where on most Saturday mornings you'll find one of our friendly instructors or members to answer all your questions. Email williamtown.flyingclub@defence.gov.au for further information.

CAR AND HOBBY CLUB

The RAAF Williamtown Car and Hobby Club provides a dedicated area for Defence members and civilian employees of RAAF Williamtown to engage in hobbies such as vehicle maintenance, modification and restoration, timber and metal working. The club is well equipped with many specialist tools, metal working equipment and a two-post vehicle hoist. It is a great place to meet and work with like-minded people and to share

knowledge, skills and ideas. For more information, please visit <http://drnet.defence.gov.au/raaf/AirForce/WlmCarClub/Pages/Home-.aspx>, or email wlm.carclub@defence.gov.au.

GOLF CLUB

The RAAF Williamtown Golf Club holds fortnightly events on 'Pay Friday' afternoons from February to November at various courses throughout the region. All levels of golfers are welcome to join and social players are welcome to participate, including visitors to the base (conditions may apply). Membership application forms and information can be found at the RAAF Williamtown home page under the Welfare and Base Info tab. Visit <http://drnet.defence.gov.au/raaf/AirForce/WLMGC/pages/Welcome.aspx>.

TOUCH CLUB

The RAAF Williamtown Touch Club was established for the benefit of Defence members and civilian employees, and operates a number of different grades including a mixed competition for all skill levels. The club runs a summer competition that commences in early February and a winter competition that starts in July, as well as informal touch games most Monday and Thursday lunchtimes. If interested, head to the playing fields and ask for a committee member or visit the webpage at <http://drnet.defence.gov.au/raaf/AirForce/RWTC/pages/Welcomes.aspx>.

WILLIAMTOWN MILITARY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Williamtown Military Christian Fellowship (WLM MCF) is an inclusive, non-denominational Christian group that exists to support anyone with a Christian faith, or who is exploring the Christian faith, and who is working at or associated with RAAF Base Williamtown. The group is open to all uniformed, APS and contractor staff and their families. WLM MCF is supported by the base chaplains and meets every Wednesday between 1135-1230 at the Base Chapel. Email wlm.mcf@defence.gov.au for more information and to sign up to our weekly email distribution, or visit mcf-a.org.au.

HUNTER DEFENCE SUPPORT NETWORK

The Hunter Defence Support Network (HDSN) is a not-for-profit organisation established in 2015 by a group of passionate Hunter business leaders and volunteers. Its key objective is to provide the local business community with an avenue to support the serving members of the ADF, believing it is imperative to develop, promote and maintain positive and productive relations between the Hunter business community and the ADF. The Hunter Community and the ADF have been close neighbours for over 75 years and RAAF Base Williamtown continues to be one of the largest single employers in the region.

HDSN works in partnership with the ADF and the Hunter community to raise support for base programs and activities. It educates the community and advocate for base interests. Each year, HDSN works with Defence leadership to determine specific ways to support the men and women of the ADF. Past initiatives have focused on financial planning, superannuation, health and wellbeing, disability support and employment. Recent events and seminars have included a property seminar, first aid course, multiple health and wellbeing seminars, home-based business, a focus on the NDIS for families with special needs and family fun with a day at Treetops Adventure Park.

As part of our effort to connect the base with its community, HDSN facilitates an Honorary Commanders (HC) Program which strengthens relationships between the leaders of the ADF and leaders within the Hunter community. The HC Program matches voluntary commanders from the Hunter business community with a participating Military Commander from RAAF Base Williamtown. The goal is to provide each unit on the base with an HC. Both community and military leaders personally benefit from the program through a mutual sharing and understanding of the leadership challenges faced by each other in different disciplines.

HDSN is committed to supporting ADF members posted to the Hunter to find appropriate housing, childcare and partner employment, as well as ensuring they are connected to the community as quickly as possible.

For further information or assistance email contact@hdsn.org.au and 'like' the HDSN Facebook page (facebook.com/hunterdefencesupportnetwork) to find out more about events.



RESERVE A CAREER

Defence Reservists have played an important part in Australian history since early colonial days.

THE RESERVE PRE-DATES Federation, when each of the states maintained locally based naval and army militia. Those forces served in the Sudan, in China during the Boxer Rebellion and in South Africa during the Boer War.

The modern Australian Army was drawn from that base at Federation on 1 January 1901, with the Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force following some years later.

Volunteers participated in active service during World Wars I and II, with large numbers transferring to the permanent armed forces.

Since World War II, the role has changed gradually from separate Reserve units and formations, each with their own identities and roles, to a concept where permanent and Reserve personnel have combined to form a strong and viable force.

In early 2001, Federal Parliament passed key legislation to enhance and modernise the Reserve. This legislation affects both Reservists and their employers, and has resulted in significant changes to Reserve conditions of employment.

Reservists join the Navy, Army or Air Force as part-time members of the ADF. There are about 31,000 Reservists (Service Categories 5, 4 and 3 and continuous full-time service (Service Option C) in the ADF. This represents about 53% of the total ADF workforce of 74,834 (uniformed and APS). They are volunteers who bring with them civilian skills and experience and gain new skills as part of their Reserve training.

Reservists can join as new recruits or transfer from the full-time Defence Force. They are motivated individuals who are prepared to take on the challenge of training and, through their dedication and time, show a strong commitment to Australia.

Defence Reservists make a commitment to train and serve in the defence and protection of Australia. Further information can be found at airforce.adfcareers.gov.au/air-force-reserve.



↓ Air Force Cadets next to the Australian Air Force Cadets Diamond DA40 NG during the Australian International Airshow 2025.

PHOTO: LAC Ryan Howell

COULD YOU BE A CADET?

Join the cadets and you'll be offered a taste of life in the Air Force that's like no other.

Joining the Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC) provides an amazing opportunity to experience Air Force life.

As a cadet, you'll be offered inspiring and challenging military-like experiences plus learn valuable life and work skills that may open up new possibilities, opportunities and career options.

You can be a cadet if you're aged between 13 and 17 and most squadrons meet weekly (during school terms) for about three hours in an evening. Training is also conducted on some weekends during the year, and camps and specialist courses are held during most school holidays.

As part of the camps, teenagers swap civilian clothes for RAAF uniform. The General Service Training Camp gives cadets from No.3 Wing, which includes New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, the experience of working on base in the Air Force. You get to see different sections, ask questions of pilots, engineers and other staff, and experience life in barrack accommodation where you mix with other cadets from No.3 Wing.

Becoming a Cadet also means you can try challenging and amazing activities that are partly paid for by the Australian Government through the AAFC. You will gain team-building skills,

develop leadership and survival skills, make new friends, have fun, experience challenges, learn to take responsibility and take part in physical education activities. You'll also learn about aviation through flying, gliding, aerospace studies, communications and navigation skills, air traffic control, aeromodelling, aircraft engineering, orienteering and map reading, safe weapons handling and first aid.

All new cadets are recruits and have the opportunity to be promoted through the ranks after they successfully complete each training stage. Cadets are then required to attend specific training courses for each rank above Leading Cadet. Cadets have the following promotion pattern:

- Cadet (CDT)
- Leading Cadet (LCDT)
- Cadet Corporal (CCPL)
- Cadet Sergeant (CSGT)
- Cadet Flight Sergeant (CFSGT)
- Cadet Warrant Officer (CWOFF)
- Cadet Under Officer (CUO).

If you are interested in joining the AAFC, contact your local Squadron via aafc.org.au. You will receive application forms and an overview of what is expected of you.

INDIGENOUS LIAISON OFFICER

↑ **Peter Detoubet (right) from the Murrook Cultural Centre teaches aviators from RAAF Base Williamtown the history of the local Worimi land during a cultural training day prior to NAIDOC week.**

"If we want to break away from the colonial past, and begin anew, then we have to walk together – hand in hand and side by side – as a truly reconciled nation."

Gatjil Djerrkura OAM, 2004

THE RAAF WILLIAMTOWN INDIGENOUS LIAISON OFFICER (ILO) is valuable in fostering positive relationships between Commanders, Air Force personnel and the Worimi, Awabakal and Wonnarua Traditional Custodians in the Port Stephens, Newcastle and Hunter regions. Through respectful and culturally sensitive engagement, we can ensure that these communities' land, culture and heritage are preserved and cherished for generations to come. This collaboration is crucial in building a brighter future for all.

The Air Force's commitment to 'Our Place, Our Skies' and 'Common Ground' initiatives is fundamental to the service's continued cultural progression. These initiatives are designed to strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities and promote diversity and inclusivity within the Air Force. To achieve this, the Air Force has ILOs who play a pivotal role by working towards quarterly deliverables. These aviators are placed across Australia, at all Air Force bases, which has helped build positive relationships with Indigenous communities. These commitments further enhance the reputation of the Air Force as an inclusive employer of choice.

The ILO provides and complies with the following lines of effort:

1. Cultural guidance and awareness
2. Community engagement
3. Retention
4. Local Indigenous Affairs Administration.

More information can be found on the HQAC Indigenous Affairs or WLM ILO intranet sites.

To download a copy of the 'Our Place, Our Skies' strategy and 'Common Ground' plan, see airforce.gov.au/about-us/overview/indigenous-participation.

CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING

The ILO and RAAF Base Williamtown have a close connection with the Worimi people and the Murrook Cultural Centre. The Murrook Cultural Education team can facilitate cultural awareness training offering members of all backgrounds the

opportunity to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the significance of Worimi Country, the traditional lands where they work and train.

RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN NGARRALBAA – YARNING CIRCLE

RAAF Williamtown Ngarralbaa is a yarning circle with boundless cultural and historical value to the Worimi Traditional Custodians of the Williamtown area. The term Ngarralbaa comes from the Gathang language of the Worimi people and means 'A place of listening and learning'. The Ngarralbaa is a secure and safe location for members to gather and build respectful relationships in accordance with Defence values. The site was established on 4 November 2023, with joint approval from SADFO WLM, Base Welfare, Base Management and Worimi Elders.

First Nations culture has a strong tradition of storytelling and circle-based communication. These practices have been passed down for generations and are a way for people to connect by sharing their stories, memories and wisdom. The circles provide a safe space for individuals from all cultural backgrounds to understand their experiences and places.

INDIGENOUS YOUTH PROGRAM

The Air Force Indigenous Youth Program provides young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with exposure to various skills, trades and lifestyle experiences. Students are exposed to a program of indoor and outdoor activities providing them with an insight into a wide range of careers in the RAAF.

CONTACT

The WLM ILO can be contacted via email wlm26sqn.ilo@defence.gov.au or duty mobile 0484 868 483.

↓ **Participants of the Indigenous Youth Work Experience Program in front of an F-35A Lightning II static display at RAAF Base Williamtown.**



PHOTO: LACW Laura Flower

PHOTO: LACW Cath Kelly

AMPLIFYING OPPORTUNITY

Building the Hunter's most advanced defence precinct to power the future of aerospace.

With outstanding integration of technology and lifestyle, adjacent to RAAF Base Williamtown and Newcastle Airport, this is a unique opportunity to join the world's leading defence, aerospace and innovation precinct.

Enquiries:
+61 423 016 745
enquiries@astraaerolab.com.au

Astra Aerolab Precinct
Aerospace Avenue
Williamtown, NSW, Australia
astraaerolab.com.au

 **ASTRA
AEROLAB**

 **Newcastle
Airport**

*Artists impression

AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE



RAAF WILLIAMTOWN
AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE



↑ RAAF WLM main gate 1988 with gate guardians.

The Williamtown Aviation Heritage Centre (AHC), operated on behalf of Air Force by Fighterworld Inc, is part of Air Force's History and Heritage Branch, and is the public face of RAAF Base Williamtown.



THE GOAL OF THE AHC IS TO SHOWCASE THE HISTORY OF THE AIR FORCE, the history of military aviation in the Hunter/New England region, the evolving role of RAAF

Base Williamtown as the headquarters of Air Combat Group and Surveillance and Response Group and the location of many other RAAF and ADF units, and the special relationship between the base and the local community.

Williamtown AHC began as Fighter World, which itself had its origins in the original RAAF Williamtown Base Museum. Moves began for an aircraft museum at the base in 1966 with the first aircraft, a CAC Boomerang, donated by the Blacktown Squadron of the Air League. The Fighter World display started in the early 1980s with a wartime hut and the aircraft that were on open display at the front gate – the gate guardians consisting of an Avon Sabre, Gloster Meteor and a De Havilland Vampire.

The aircraft were painstakingly restored by squadrons that have proud histories of operations at RAAF Williamtown. The Sabre A94-951 was sponsored by 3 Squadron and is

painted in 3 Squadron colours. The Meteor A77-875 was operated by 77 Squadron in Korea and painted in the original colours of that aircraft. This aircraft was also part of 75SQN's first all jet aerobatic team named the Meteorites, formed at Williamtown in 1955.

During 2023, Meteor 875 was moved to RAAF Wagga AHC and was replaced by A77-851 'Halestorm', a historically significant aircraft for RAAF Williamtown. On 27 March 1953, SGT George Hale, flying his 77SQN Meteor aircraft in Korea, engaged and successfully shot down a MiG 15 fighter aircraft in the last air-to-air engagement of the Korean War and to this date by a RAAF aircraft. 'Halestorm' has been restored and is now on display at the AHC.

The Vampire A79-1 is a tribute to 26 Squadron whose technicians rescued it from severe deterioration related to its time spent sitting in the open and it remains one of the very few intact aircraft of its type. It was also the first Vampire built in Australia.

The AHC is continually expanding the collection of Air Force aircraft and artefacts. In March 2020, the AHC took delivery of



↑ Three Gloster Meteor F.8s (A77-882, 875 and 870) of the Meteorites aerobatic team from No.78 Fighter Wing, RAAF Williamtown c 1957.



↑ CAC Boomerang of 2 Operational Training Unit, 1943.

PC-9A(F) A23-020 from 4SQN. That aircraft completed the 4SQN display from Sopwith Camel to Winjeel to PC-9, showing the history from 4SQN Australian Flying Corps of 1916 to the 4SQN of today.

Other aircraft in the collection include single and dual-seat Mirage IIIs, a Macchi, an F-111 and PC-9, as well as other non-RAAF aircraft and replicas including Spitfire (operated by 452 and 453 Squadrons during World War II). A3-3 was the first Mirage built in Australia and A3-102 is the famous 'Daphne the Dual'. These aircraft are on permanent loan from the RAAF Museum, Point Cook and their superb condition is a testament to the skills of the men and women of 481 Wing who maintained them during their service life.

In 2022, the centre acquired A21-023 Worimi Hornet, which entered RAAF service on 8 February 1988. In February 2015, the Indigenous artwork on this aircraft was unveiled at the Avalon Airshow, demonstrating Air Force's commitment to Indigenous men and women who have served and continue to serve in the ADF. The livery was designed by the Balarinji design agency and the aircraft features the pilot markings of the late Warrant Officer Len Waters, Air Force's first known Aboriginal fighter pilot.

The Williamtown AHC is operated by Fighterworld Inc, under an agreement signed in 2014 for Fighterworld Inc's continued management of the Air Force aircraft collection held at the AHC, under the governance and direction of Reserve staff from History and Heritage Branch – Air Force.

The Newcastle community, local RSLs,

Port Stephens Council and local businesses contributed significant resources to the development of the original premises for Fighterworld, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in February 2021 at a joint event celebrating the 80th anniversary of RAAF Williamtown.

There are plans within Air Force for extensive redevelopment of the facilities in coming years to enable the proper storage and display of the aircraft collection.

The AHC supports numerous RAAF associations and will continue to maintain these strong historical regional links.

The volunteers at the AHC are the lifeblood of the organisation. They provide assistance and advice to restore and preserve our collection, research and catalogue historical artefacts, maintain and improve the facilities and inform and educate the many visitors. Without the volunteers, much of the work, including the restoration of the 'Raymond Terrace Sabre', the construction of the 4SQN AFC Sopwith Camel replica and the restoration of the Spitfire replicas, could not have been achieved.

The Williamtown AHC is part of the network of Air Force Heritage Centres across Australia. Centres are at RAAF Bases Townsville, Amberley and Wagga, with plans for a centre at RAAF Richmond and a heritage park at RAAF Woomera. Centres tell a unique story relevant to their base.

If you need help in managing or preserving your squadron artefacts, or in marking an important squadron event, please contact the AHC via the Manager of the AHC (admin@



↑ A volunteer at work.

fighterworld.com.au) or WGCDCR Linda New, the AF Liaison Officer and Collection Manager for the WLM AHC (Linda.New@defence.gov.au).

The AHC is an excellent training and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) facility showcasing the history of developments in aircraft, armament and other technologies such as radar. Come and talk to one of our volunteers today about joining the team and learning more about the history of your trade.



↑ Worimi F-18 Hornet.



↑ Sabre, Meteor and Link trainer.



↑ Mirage and F-111.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

The squadrons at Williamtown rely on the support of industry partners, including aircraft maintenance and essential services to operate the airfield infrastructure.



↑ A Transportable Air Operations Tower at RAAF Base Curtin, Western Australia.

ROHDE & SCHWARZ

Rohde & Schwarz Australia is a subsidiary of a German company founded in 1933 as a small radio frequency test and measurement company. It now develops and manufactures electronic goods for Defence, industry, infrastructure operators and government customers. Rohde & Schwarz is also among the global technology leaders in integrated secure communications solutions, including air traffic control and military communications, spectrum monitoring, UAV/drone detection, cybersecurity and network technology.

The company employs more than 12,000 people including 100 Australians in Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra, Adelaide, Melbourne and Williamtown.

Three Transportable Air Operations Towers (TAOTs) delivered and maintained by Rohde & Schwarz provide the RAAF with a deployable air traffic control capability to support remote military operations and aid to the community. The TAOTs are based at RAAF Amberley unless deployed.

The Rohde & Schwarz team works closely with the Surveillance and Control Systems Program Office at RAAF Williamtown. Rohde & Schwarz is proud to continue its support to the RAAF and No.44 Wing. rohde-schwarz.com/au

ROLLS-ROYCE

Rolls-Royce has powered the Australian Defence Forces for the past 100 years. The relationship began when the first Rolls-Royce powered aircraft entered service with the Royal Australian Navy in 1920 and the RAAF in 1921. This was the Fairey IID, featuring an Eagle 8 engine.

Throughout the past century, Rolls-Royce has continued to deliver innovative and technological expertise across all Defence sectors within the Commonwealth of Australia. A Rolls-Royce Adour engine powers the Hawk Mk 127 used for lead-in fighter training at No.76 Squadron. The engine is supported on-site by Rolls-Royce Field Service Representatives embedded with the squadron.

Rolls-Royce is proud to be a long-term partner of the ADF, committed to strengthening military capability to support the security and stability of the Commonwealth of Australia.

BOEING

Boeing Defence Australia has operated at Williamtown for more than 20 years in support of critical aircraft and systems. BDA employees support the Wakulda air battlespace management system and Wedgetail in-service support, which covers sustainment, engineering and maintenance.

CAE AUSTRALIA

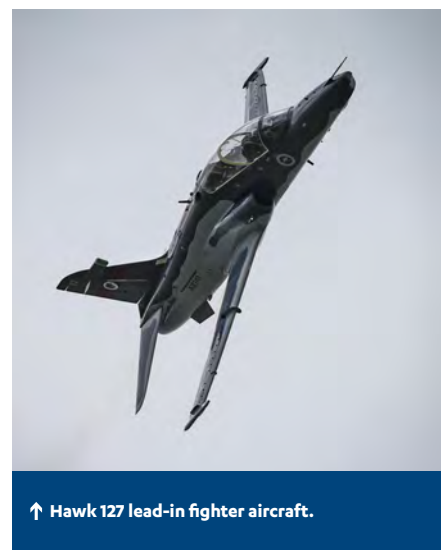
Since 2017, CAE Australia has sustained critical instructional, operational, engineering and maintenance support on the RAAF Lead-In Fighter training program, including two Hawk 127 Full Mission Simulators (FMS) at RAAF Base Williamtown and one at RAAF Base Pearce. Classroom and simulated training ensures Hawk aircrew train in a safe, immersive and high-fidelity environment, experiencing the complexities of individual and collective training. The RAAF Williamtown Hawk 127 FMS completed over 10,000 training events in the first five years of operation.

NORTHROP GRUMMAN

Northrop Grumman Australia (NGA) delivers long-term aviation maintenance support for RAAF's KC-30A Multi-Role Tanker Transport, C-27J Spartan and Special Purpose Aircraft fleets and provides sustainment services at its Electronic Sustainment Centre. NGA also contributes to security of RAAF Base Williamtown through maintenance and training support for the Expeditionary Tactical Automated Security System.

LOCKHEED MARTIN

Lockheed Martin designed, built and sustains Australia's fleet of F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighters in partnership with the Australian Department of Defence and industry team. It has established its largest F-35 sustainment footprint outside the USA at Williamtown, providing a range of technical, logistics, training and information support services directly to the RAAF and leading a local industry partnership to support Australian and regional F-35s. It is also actively engaged in the support of the RAAF PC-21 Forward Air Control capability operated by No.4 Squadron and the RAAF Tactical Air Defence Radar System operated by No.41 Wing.



↑ Hawk 127 lead-in fighter aircraft.



It's a new dawn for TAOT

We're now completing mid-life upgrades to the Transportable Air Operations Towers, having delivered the capability more than 10 years ago as prime systems integrator.

These upgrades ensure the RAAF has the latest technology to support deployed operations in defence of Australia for years to come.

PROTECTED. CONNECTED. TRUSTED.

ROHDE & SCHWARZ

Make ideas real





NEW INTERNATIONAL GATEWAY

NEWCASTLE AIRPORT OFFICIALLY OPENED its new international terminal on 25 September 2025. It is the centrepiece of a \$250 million redevelopment of the terminal, runway and surrounds, supported by \$121 million in Federal Government funding. The state-of-the-art facility positions the Hunter Region as a global player, supporting international flights and freight services. The redevelopment is forecast to generate 4,400 jobs and deliver \$12.7 billion in economic activity over the next 20 years.

Newcastle Airport is already a major contributor to the regional economy, servicing approximately 1.2 million passengers in 2024 and supporting more than 5,600 jobs. With the international terminal, the airport's role as the gateway to the largest regional economy in the country has entered a new era.

NEW ROUTES

In September 2025, Newcastle Airport celebrated the launch of direct flights to Perth. On 21 October 2025, the airport marked another milestone with Jetstar's first direct flights to Bali – the airport's inaugural international leisure service and the first of many global connections to come.

Partnering with six leading airlines, Newcastle Airport now offers direct flights to 12 destinations, including Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra. With more than 250 weekly services, the airport provides onward access to 70 international destinations across 39 countries. Plan your trip and book parking at newcastleairport.com.au.

GREEN GATEWAY TO NSW

In 2024, Newcastle Airport achieved net zero emissions (Scope 1 & 2) six years ahead of its 2030 target, through its renewable Power Purchase Agreement with Flow Power and the purchase of Australian Carbon Credit Units via Tasman Environmental Markets. It is the only airport in Australia to achieve Level 4+ Airport Carbon Accreditation and is targeting a 5-Star Green Star certification for the new terminal, making it one of the greenest in the nation.

The new electrical substation connects to 1,236 solar panels installed on the roof of the premium covered car park. The 710kW system is expected to generate more than one million kWh of renewable energy each year, supporting the airport's long-term sustainability goals.

AEROSPACE PRECINCT

Located within the Newcastle Airport Commercial Estate, Astra Aerolab and is set to make a substantial contribution to the region's economic growth over the next 15 years. The precinct will foster an ecosystem of defence primes, SMEs, the ADF and other high-technology industries.

Stage 1 infrastructure has been completed, with Stages 2, 4 and 5 already underway. Construction has commenced on the Kongsberg Defence Australia guided-weapons manufacturing facility, supporting sovereign capability and defence industrial priorities. A range of other projects are also underway, including the expansion of the BAE Systems maintenance, repair and overhaul facility to support the sustainment of the F-35A Lightning II aircraft.



↑ Astra Aerolab.

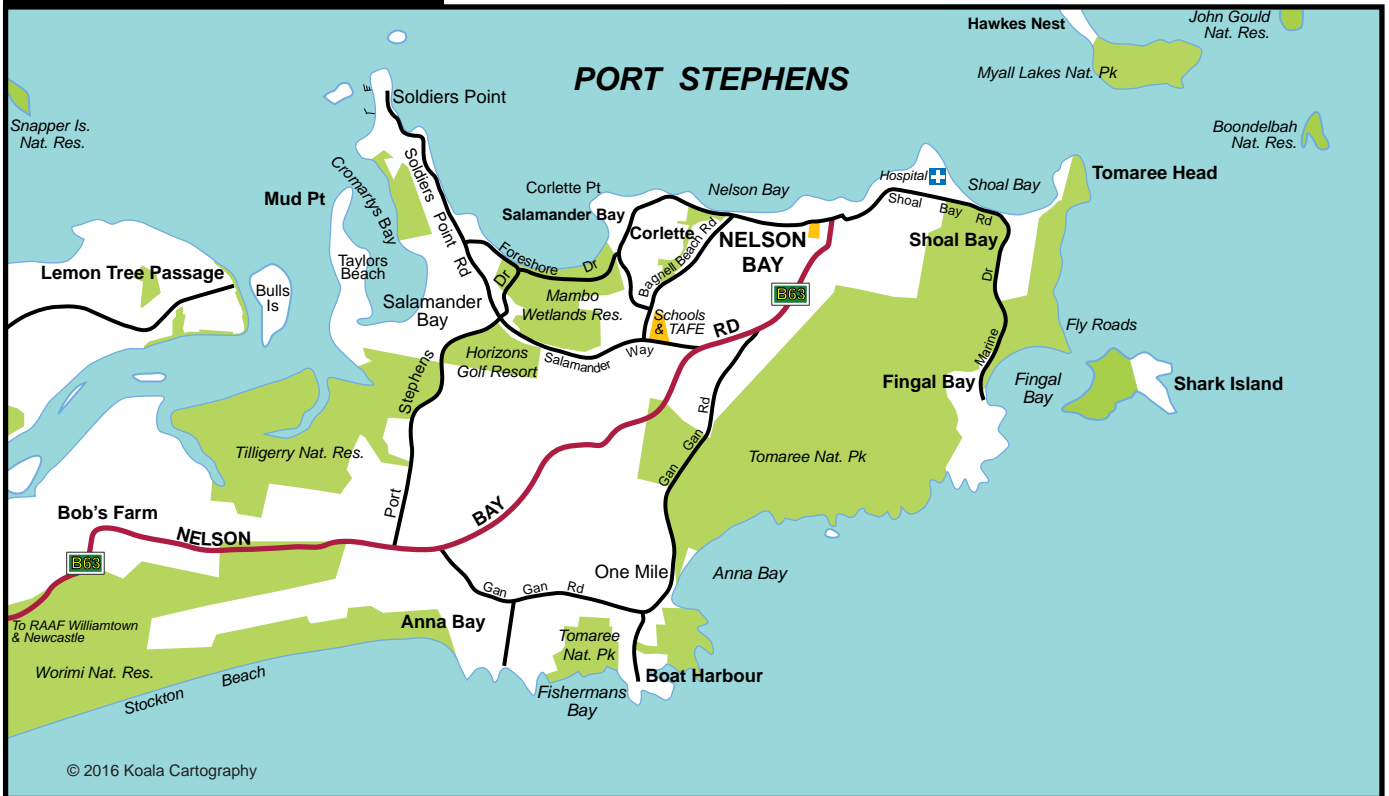


↑ Astra Aerolab – 'The Hub' precinct.



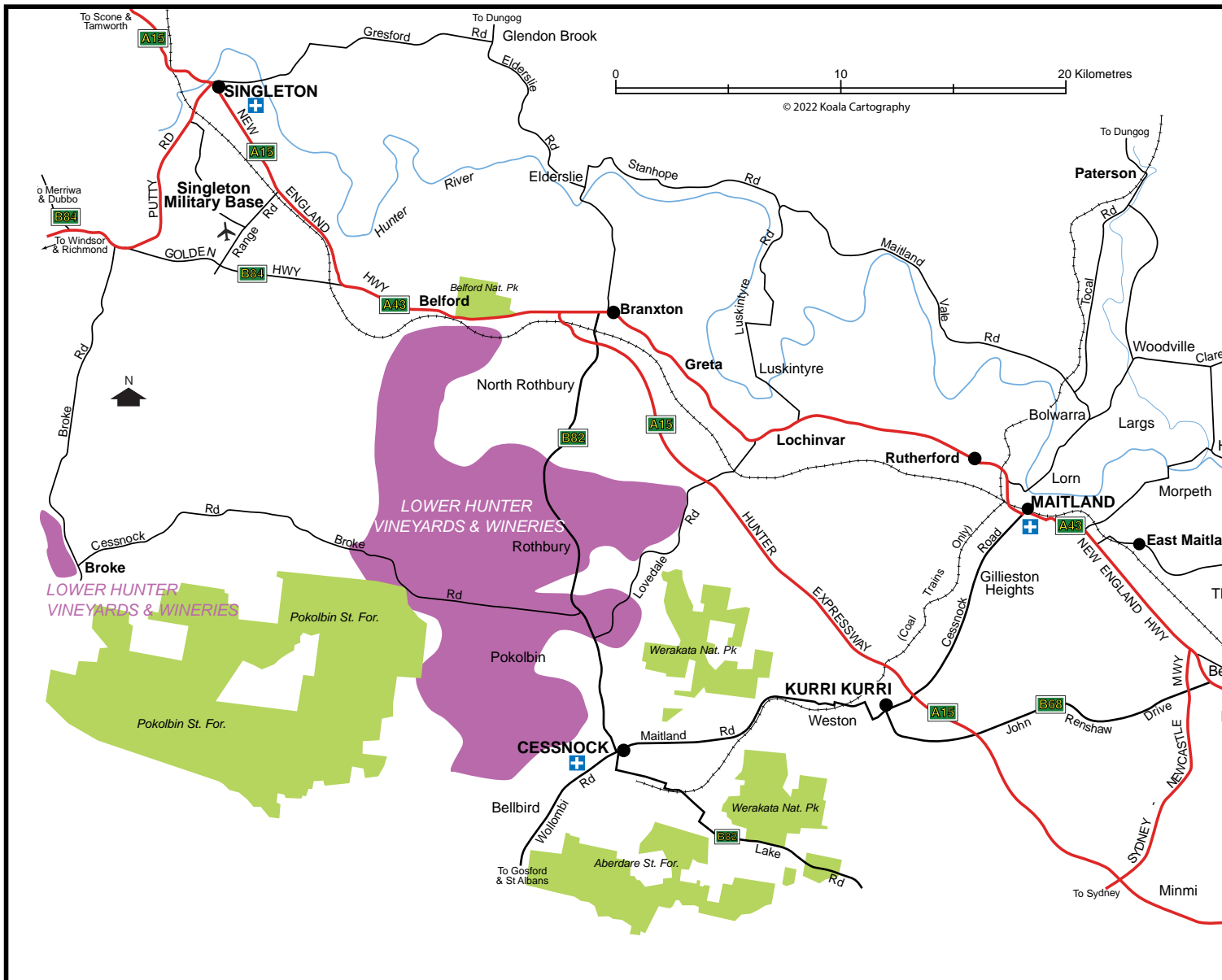
↑ The newly opened arrivals hall.

PORT STEPHENS



MEDOWIE





THE HUNTER

New South Wales, Australia

PHOTO: Destination NSW

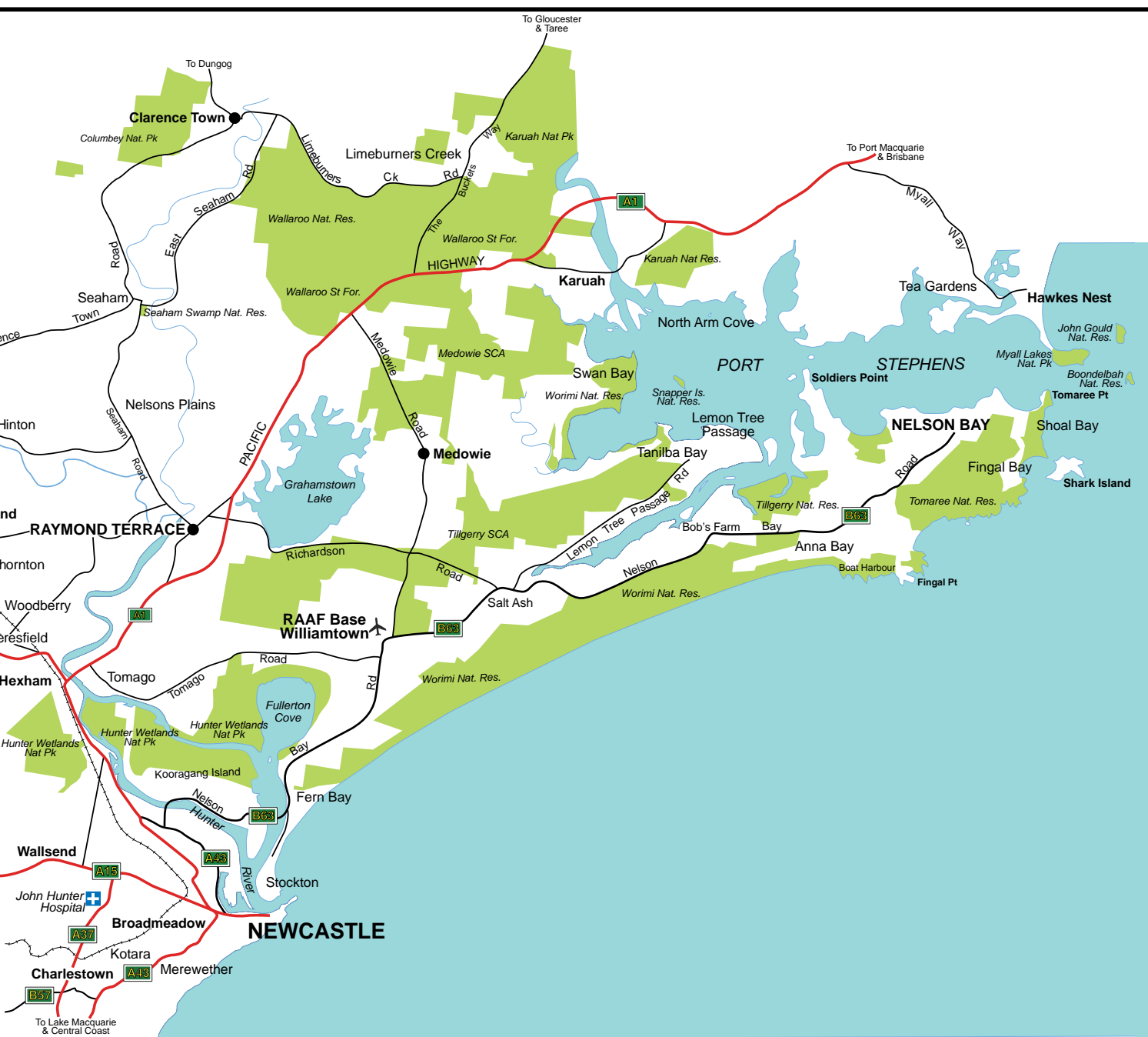


PHOTO: Destination NSW



PHOTO: Destination NSW








THE MARINA ICE CREAMERY is Australia's top independent ice-cream retailer and has served the people of Port Stephens and its visitors for 30 years.

Located on the waterfront at the d'Albora Marina, we source only Australian-made products to offer over 50 flavours of the finest gourmet-quality ice cream, gelato and sorbet.

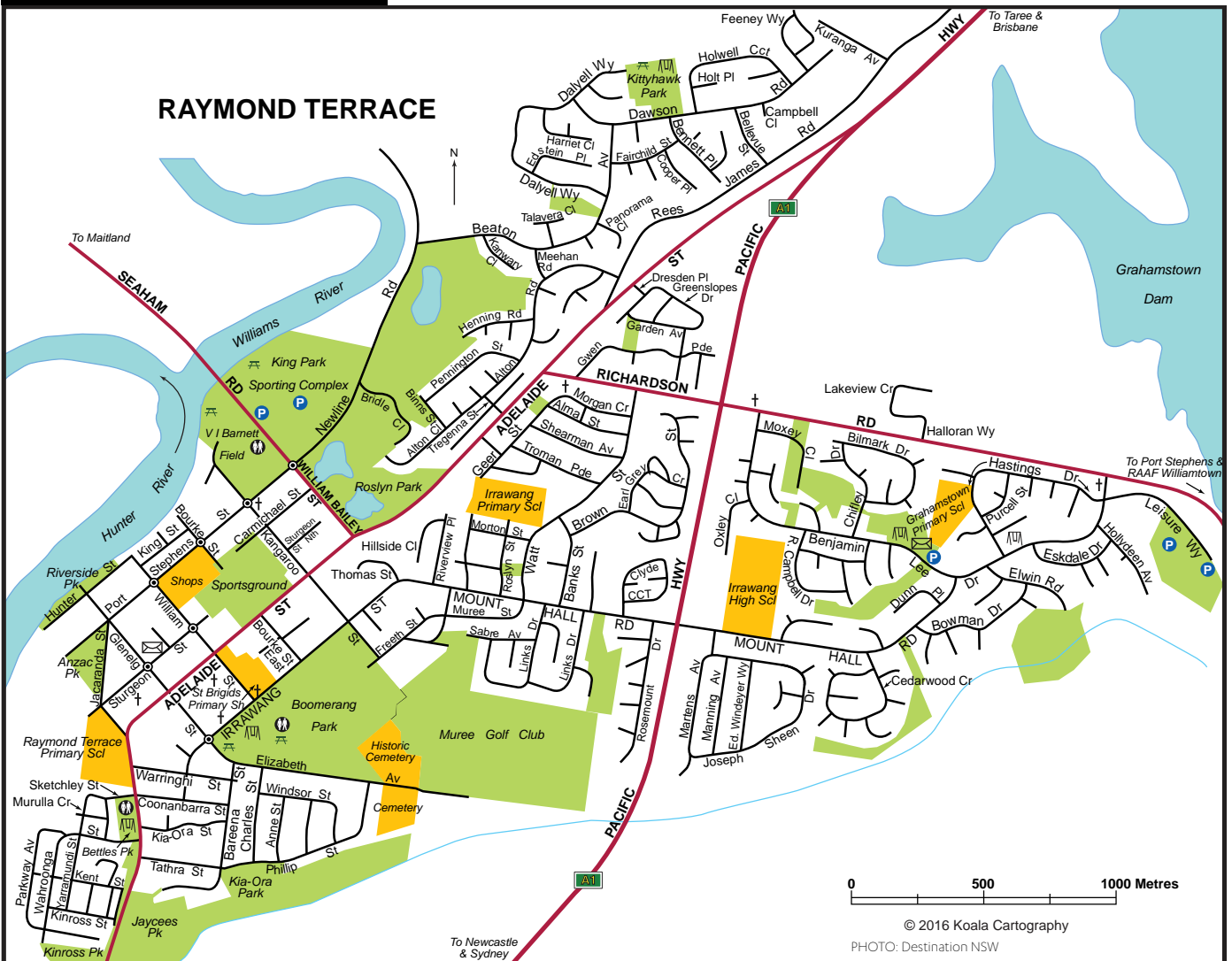
Delicious pancakes, waffles & great coffee too.

Open 7 Days - 02 4984 1788 - d'Albora Marina, Nelson Bay - marinaicecream.com.au

NEWCASTLE CBD



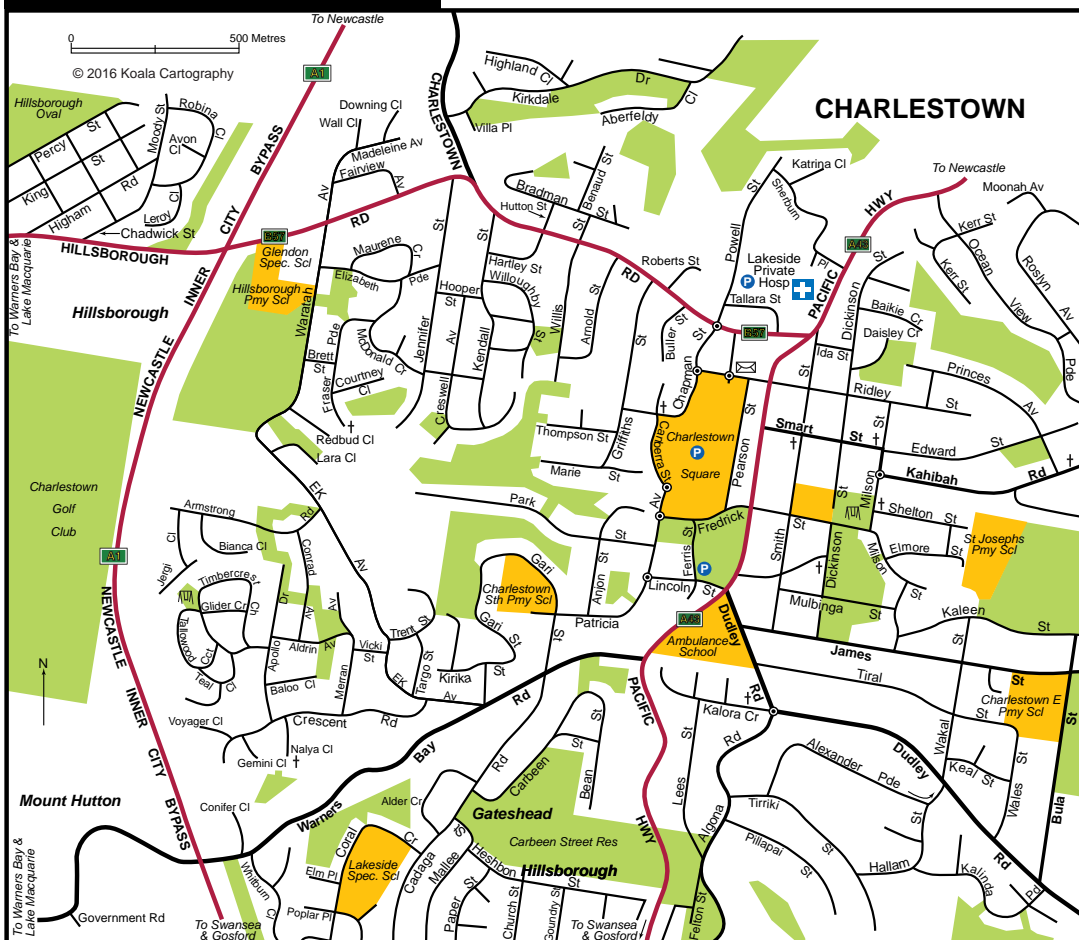
RAYMOND TERRACE



EAST MAITLAND



CHARLESTOWN





LOCAL SERVICES

To help you and your family settle into the Williamstown region, here's a quick guide to local services and amenities.

RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN is in the Port Stephens region, about 30km north of Newcastle and 180km north of Sydney. Many Williamstown personnel live in the Port Stephens Council area.

Surrounding local government areas include:

City of Newcastle 02 4974 2000,

newcastle.nsw.gov.au

Maitland City Council 02 4934 9700,

maitland.nsw.gov.au

Dungog Shire Council 02 4995 7777,

www.dungog.nsw.gov.au

Midcoast Council 02 7955 7777,

www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au.

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL

Administration offices: 116 Adelaide Street, Raymond Terrace, open 8.30am-4.30pm Monday to Friday. Call 02 4988 0255 (including after-hours emergency), portstephens.nsw.gov.au.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Trains run from Sydney and the Central Coast, and from Maitland and the Hunter region, to the Newcastle Interchange. From there a light rail

runs to Newcastle Beach, stopping at Queens Wharf for the Stockton ferry. Newcastle has a good public bus network. See transportnsw.info/regional-travel for maps and timetables.

Various bus lines operate throughout the region. The Newcastle Transport website (newcastletransport.info) has information on Newcastle buses and ferries, while Hunter Valley Buses (cdcbus.com.au) and Port Stephens Coaches (pscoaches.com.au) cover the regional areas.

AIRPORT

Newcastle Airport shares a runway with Williamstown RAAF. It is serviced by Eastern Air Services, FlyPelican, Link Airways, Jetstar, Qantas and Virgin Australia, with direct flights to Bali, Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane, Cairns, Canberra, Cobar, Gold Coast, Lord Howe Island, Melbourne, Narrabri and Sydney. The airport is serviced by two bus companies. For timetables and information see cdcbus.com.au and pscoaches.com.au, or download the Tripview app. Parking is available at the airport from \$12/

hour or \$65/day. For flights and other airport information, see newcastleairport.com.au.

LIBRARIES

Port Stephens Council libraries provide free lending and information assistance. A wide selection of books, magazines, newspapers, audio books and music is available. Computer access, internet and wi-fi are also available free of charge, in addition to printing, photocopying, scanning and charge stations for phones and devices. A mobile printing service allows you to upload documents from your computer, tablet or smartphone to be printed at the Raymond Terrace or Tomaree Library.

- **Raymond Terrace Library**, 18A Sturgeon Street. 02 4988 0111.
- **Tilligerry Community Library**, 46 Meredith Avenue, Lemon Tree Passage. 02 4982 3477.
- **Tomaree Library & Community Centre**, 7 Community Close, Salamander Bay. 02 4988 0670.
- **Mobile library** with 10,000 items on board, the mobile library visits 13 locations

throughout our region. 02 4988 0111.

- **Seed library** – ‘borrow’ and grow, then harvest and share.
- **eLibrary** – library members can access a large collection of ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, news, music and movies. You can view the eLibrary with the Newcastle Libraries app (android and Apple devices).

portstephens.nsw.gov.au/services/library

COMMUNITY CENTRES & HALLS

Council provides community centres and halls, mostly run by volunteers, that are available for hire. For more information go to portstephens.nsw.gov.au and search 'hiring a hall'.

SWIMMING POOLS

- **Lakeside Leisure Centre**, 8 Leisure Way, Raymond Terrace. 02 4987 2039, lakesidelc.com.au
- **Tilligerry Aquatic Centre**, 1195 Lemon Tree Passage Road, Mallabula. 02 4982 4730, tilligerryac.com.au
- **Tomaree Aquatic Centre**, 3 Aquatic Close, Salamander Bay. 02 4981 2848, tomareeac.com.au

DOG OFF-LEASH AREAS

Port Stephens has a number of parks where dogs may be exercised off-lead. portstephens.nsw.gov.au/services/dog-parks

UTILITIES

You will need to arrange your own utilities such as electricity, gas, pay TV, internet services or telephone. You should contact your local service providers, or you may like to take advantage of

the free Fast Connect service, which will arrange for the disconnection and reconnection of utilities on your behalf, see fastconnect.net.au.

FLOOD, FIRE & EMERGENCY

In the event of a life-threatening emergency call 000 to connect to Police, Fire and Ambulance. For assistance or information for:

- floods or storms call 132 500, ses.nsw.gov.au
- Bush fire information line 1800 679 737, rfs.nsw.gov.au

HOSPITALS & HEALTHCARE

Newcastle has public and private hospitals. The largest public hospital is the John Hunter. Port Stephens has Tomaree Community Hospital and Maitland also has a public and private hospital. The Hunter New England Health website (hnehealth.nsw.gov.au) has information on public healthcare services in the region.

To find a GP, hospital or other health service near you, visit the government-funded Health Direct website (healthdirect.gov.au) which also offers approved health information and advice.

SHOPPING

The region around Williamtown is well serviced with supermarkets, shopping centres and retail stores. Newcastle offers all the city amenities, while Raymond Terrace, East Maitland and Charlestown also offer a good range of stores and services. Nearest to RAAF Williamtown Base, Medowie has a variety of shops and services along Ferodale Road, including Coles and Woolworths. Also nearby, Foodworks Salt Ash at the corner of Richardson and Nelson Bay Roads, is open 24 hours, seven days a week (foodworks.com.au).

Here is a quick guide to some of the larger shopping centres in the area.

- **Charlestown Square**, 30 Pearson Street, Charlestown. Aldi, Coles, Woolworths, Dan Murphy's, Liquorland, Myer, Target, Big W, Priceline, retail stores, banks, services, food outlets and cinema. charlestownsquare.com.au
- **MarketPlace Raymond Terrace**, Library Lane, Raymond Terrace. Woolworths, Big W, cafes, retail stores and services. marketplacerraymondterrace.com.au
- **Marketown**, 23 Steel Street, Newcastle West. Coles, Woolworths, Dan Murphy's, Liquorland, Officeworks, Big W, retail stores, cafes, banks and services. marketown.com.au
- **Salamander Bay Square**, 2 Town Centre Circuit, Salamander Bay. Coles, Woolworths, BWS, Liquorland, Kmart, retail stores, banks, services, food outlets. salamanderbaysquare.com.au
- **Stockland Green Hills Shopping Centre**, Molly Morgan Drive, East Maitland. Coles, Woolworths, BWS, Liquorland, David Jones, Kmart, TK Maxx, Big W, Priceline, retail stores, banks, services, food outlets and cinema. stockland.com.au/shopping-centres
- **Thornton Shopping Centre**, Corner Taylor Avenue and Thomas Coke Drive, Thornton. Coles, retail stores and services. thorntonshoppingcentre.com.au
- **Westfield Kotara**, Corner Park Avenue and Northcott Drive, Kotara. Coles, Woolworths, BWS, David Jones, Kmart, Target, retail stores, banks, food outlets and cinema. westfield.com.au/kotara



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↑ Making friends at a DMFS welcome event.

Defence offers a range of programs and services to help ADF members and their families make the most of the opportunities and challenges of military life.

DEFENCE FAMILIES play a vital role in the wellbeing of our ADF members and the success of their missions. To support ADF families, Defence Member and Family Support (DMFS) provide support for ADF personnel and their families to prepare for and respond to military life.

DMFS provide services to assist families with member absence, posting cycles, childcare, children's education, crisis situations, family wellbeing and special needs. They also hold information sessions and events to connect you with your community throughout the year. For more information about the services and programs, visit the website defence.gov.au/members-families, contact the 24/7 Defence Member and Family Helpline on 1800 624 608 or email the Helpline: memberandfamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au.

YOUR LOCAL DMFS TEAM

Your local DMFS team includes military and civilian staff, working across a range of roles

such as military support, social work and family liaison. They provide services designed to support Defence families, including:

- support in times of crisis
- deployment and absence support
- relocation support
- access to social workers
- information sessions, social or support groups
- local education advice and assistance for school-aged children
- information for family with special needs
- partner employment assistance
- help finding childcare.

Stay connected with your local Defence community by attending events hosted by DMFS. These are a great way to meet others and strengthen your support network.

Visit the events page of the website to register for free tickets to ADF family events: www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/local-services-events/events.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram and keep up-to-date with the latest news and events from DMFS.

WHO CAN YOU MEET AT THE LOCAL OFFICE?

When you visit or call your local DMFS office, you'll meet a dedicated team who understand the unique challenges and lifestyle of Defence families:

- **Defence social workers**
Qualified professionals who understand the military lifestyle and support families.
- **Family Liaison Officers**
With in-depth knowledge of the local area, Family Liaison Officers help families connect with community groups and support services. They also coordinate information sessions, welcome events, and social activities to help you feel part of the local community.
- **Education Liaison Officers**
These officers support families with school-aged children by providing guidance on local education options, school transitions and special education needs.
- **Military Support Officers**
Uniformed members who provide advice, assistance and practical support in relation to military matters.

DMFS PROGRAMS & SERVICES 24-HOUR SUPPORT

If you need support, information or advice, contact the Defence Member and Family Helpline on 1800 624 608. The Helpline operates 24-hours a day, seven days a week and is staffed by qualified human services professionals, including social workers and psychologists.

PARTNER EMPLOYMENT

Partners of ADF members can access the Partner Employment Assistance Program (PEAP). PEAP enables eligible partners of ADF members to claim reimbursement of up to \$1,500 per financial year for services including career support and coaching, professional licensing checks and registration and employment-related training.

FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

ADF members who have a recognised family member with special needs can access practical assistance to reduce the impact of relocation and minimise interruption to established services. This includes funding for specialist services, pre posting visits and valet unpack. Defence also works with the Defence Special Needs Support Group (DSNSG) who provide a national support network for Defence families

with special needs. To find a DSNSG group in your local region, visit www.dsnsng.org.au/find-a-dsnsng-group.

SUPPORT DURING DEPLOYMENT

DMFS provides a range of services, practical assistance and products to help inform and prepare ADF members and families for every stage of deployment. Support includes advice and referral to local support services, access to resilience programs, assistance in emergencies and crisis, and connection to community groups. Families can also opt in to receive regular deployment support calls by registering with the Defence Member and Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

ACCESS TO CHILDCARE

Defence maintains a network of childcare centres around Australia, with priority placement for ADF families. Families who are facing difficulties accessing childcare, such as when they move to a new area or change their work or care arrangements, can also access Childcare Connect – a free support service designed to help families find childcare, especially after relocating.

EMERGENCY AND CRISIS SUPPORT

DMFS provides practical and emotional support programs for families facing emergency or crisis,

including assistance in time of illness, injury, domestic crisis or bereavement. Members and their families can access 24-hour support by calling the Defence Member and Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

Joint Transition Authority delivers support to members and their families transitioning to the Reserves or separating from the ADF. There is a range of support programs to assist ADF members and their families when they transition to civilian life, enabled by a transition coach. The coach helps to build a personalised package of support based on the circumstances and post-transition goals of the member and their family, and remains with the member and their family for up to two years post-transition.

SUPPORT FOR RESERVIST FAMILIES

Families of Reserve members can access support services when the Reservist is on continuous full-time service or away on deployment or exercise.

PARENTS

DMFS offers information and support services for the parents of ADF members to help them understand and manage the challenging aspects of having a family member in the services.

CONTACT DMFS

The Defence Member and Family Helpline is your first point of call for support, information and connection with your local community. It is staffed by qualified human services professionals, including social workers and psychologists, who can assist you 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Phone 1800 624 608

Email memberandfamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au

Website defence.gov.au/members-families



MAILING LIST

Scan the QR code to join the DMFS Hunter mailing list and keep up-to-date with information.



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DEFENCE FAMILIES OF AUSTRALIA



DEFENCE FAMILIES OF AUSTRALIA (DFA) is the official ADF families advisory body to

the Minister for Defence Personnel and the Chief of the Defence Force.

DFA advocates for and provides advice to Defence and other stakeholders for ongoing improvement in policy and practical support in the best interests of ADF families across three core areas:

1. Family Readiness

Supporting families to be well-prepared in the face of the unique demands of Defence life. This includes advocating for systems and resources that equip families to manage absences, deployments, and relocations with confidence and stability.

2. Contemporary Families

Recognising and championing evolving family structures within the Defence community. Modern families are diverse, and current policies and supports do not always reflect this. DFA is committed to ensuring inclusive representation that acknowledges single-parent families, blended families, same-sex couples, and other non-traditional configurations.

3. Family Wellbeing

Advocating for services and supports that enhance the overall wellbeing of Defence families. This includes ensuring access to mental health resources, community connection, employment support, and family-friendly policies that are fit for purpose and responsive to real-world challenges.

Follow DFA on social media for advocacy updates or go to our website at dfa.org.au.



DEFENCE SUPPORT GROUPS

ANY DEFENCE FAMILY who has moved to a new location will understand how important it is to establish a strong support network. Having a circle of friends and experienced Defence families to connect with can make a big difference in easing the stress of settling into a new community. We are lucky at RAAF Base Williamtown to have a wide variety of welcoming support groups ready to help new families feel at home.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Williamtown Defence Family Group Inc.

is a volunteer-run group that delivers projects and events designed to help Defence members and their families connect and integrate into the Williamtown community. Email wlm.dfgroup@gmail.com or find them on Facebook at 'Williamtown Defence Family Group'.

Australian Military Wives Choir Newcastle

welcomes all women with a connection to a currently serving ADF member including wives, partners, girlfriends, mothers, daughters, sisters and female ADF members. Connect with others in a fun and supportive environment. No experience is necessary and no auditions are required. Email newcastle@amwchoir.com

Hunter Region Botanic Gardens offers Hunter Defence Families free entry to the gardens including activities or workshops. To find out more, email events@huntergardens.org.au or find them on Facebook at 'Hunter Region Botanic Gardens'.

BUDDIES GROUPS

Buddies are volunteer Defence partners who support others in their local area by managing

a social media page that helps connect families to their community. This network provides a way for families to meet, form friendships, offer support and share local knowledge.

Defence Families in the Bay is a group for Defence families living on the Tomaree Peninsula, Port Stephens. Find them on Facebook at 'Defence Families in the Bay'.

Terrace Buddies is open to all Defence families, predominantly from Medowie, Raymond Terrace and Williamtown. Find them on Facebook at 'Terrace Buddies – Williamtown, Medowie & Raymond Terrace'.

Defence Families Maitland is an informal group of Defence families in the Maitland area. Find them on Facebook at 'Defence Families Maitland'.

Newcastle Buddies is for families who reside in the Newcastle area. Find them on Facebook at 'Newcastle Buddies – for Defence partners & families in Newcastle NSW'.

Mid Hunter Defence Buddies is an informal group of Defence families located in the mid Hunter region including Branxton, Greta, North Rothbury, Huntlee, Lochinvar and Cessnock. Find them on Facebook at 'Mid Hunter Defence Buddies'.

Defence Families Central Coast is a network of Defence families providing support, companionship and a sense of belonging to the Defence Community. Find them on Facebook at 'Defence Families Central Coast'.

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HEALTH MATTERS

There are a number of services to help manage your family's health in a new posting.

ADF MEMBER HEALTH

Defence provides essential healthcare to all ADF members, on and off base, including medical and dental, mental health, ambulance transport and hospitalisation. ADF members do not need a Medicare card.

WILLIAMTOWN HEALTH CENTRE

Medical Reception 02 4078 5048

See page 15 for opening hours.

24-HOUR HEALTH SUPPORT

ADF members needing urgent medical treatment when away from base should call 1800 IM SICK (1800 467 425). The IM SICK line is a toll-free, all-hours service for ADF personnel to discuss health concerns over the phone and receive immediate advice on where they need to go to receive appropriate treatment. The service is provided by BUPA under the ADF Health Services Contract.

RECOGNISED DEPENDENTS

Members need to make arrangements for the health care of their families, but note that financial assistance is available (see under: DEFENCE FAMILY HEALTH CARE).

FINDING A GP

To find a GP in your locality, a good place to start is the 'find a health service' tool on the Australian Government's Health Direct website,

healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services, which allows you to filter out GPs who don't bulk bill. GPs who don't bulk bill will charge you for the visit. You can claim the 'schedule fee' from Medicare, but it will probably be less than the GP's account, leaving a residual cost. Many doctors now offer a service called HICAPS that allows you to claim your Medicare rebate when you pay at the doctor's surgery. Joining a Buddies Group (see page 37) to connect with others in your area is also good way to glean advice on local GPs and medical centres.

DEFENCE FAMILY HEALTH CARE

The National ADF Family Health Program will reimburse dependants of ADF members for out-of-pocket expenses for all GP visits. Specialist services will also be reimbursed, up to a total allocation of \$800 per dependent which can be shared between dependents. For more information visit adffamilyhealth.com or phone 02 6266 3547.

PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

Medicare makes adequate provision to cover all Australian citizens for their essential health needs. However, Medicare doesn't cover many 'extras' such as ambulance services, most dental services, spectacles, contact lenses, hearing aids and cosmetic surgery.

You may choose to take out private health insurance to provide your family with a wider range of options and more comprehensive

cover. Health insurance policies can be either hospital or general treatment (extras) or a combination of both. Your decision to purchase private insurance is a personal one and will be based on a number of factors:

- The advantages of having more choices, for instance the ability to choose your surgeon/obstetrician/specialist and the hospital you prefer from the private health insurer's agreed providers
- The probability of obtaining treatment faster than you might do on a public hospital waiting list
- Your desire to be covered for the extras
- The cost of private health cover for different options that are offered by the numerous providers in the health-insurance market.

With respect to the cost, you will also need to consider the tax implications of the Medicare Levy surcharge, which (as distinct from the Medicare Levy) is an additional tax imposed on those with a taxable income above a certain threshold who do not have a prescribed level of private health insurance.

The cost of your private health insurance policy will also be influenced by your age when you commence your policy. Once you turn 31, a Lifetime Health Cover (LHC) loading of two percent is added to your hospital cover premium for every year you're without hospital cover, e.g. if you delay until age 40, your LHC would be 20 percent. Note that permanent ADF members are considered to have had private hospital cover while serving.

This article is published as general education and should not be taken as professional advice.

SOME USEFUL WEBSITES

Health insurance

- www.accc.gov.au/consumers/specific-products-and-activities/private-health-insurance
- www.privatehealth.gov.au
- choice.com.au/money/insurance/health

Medicare Levy

- Go to the Australian Tax Office website, ato.gov.au, and search 'Medicare Levy'.
- See the Pay and Conditions Manual at <https://pay-conditions.defence.gov.au/pacman/tax-alerts/div-4>



MOVING HOUSE CAN be both an exciting and daunting prospect – some big decisions need to be made, the most important one being where you are going to live. Children’s education, distance to work for both the member and spouse/

partner, health care, lifestyle preferences and the amenity of available housing are all factors to be considered.

SERVICE RESIDENCES

Unless you own a suitable home in your new posting locality, your first port of call is Defence

Housing Australia (DHA). DHA provides housing and related services for Australian Defence Force members and their families through its portfolio of service residences (SR). DHA’s portfolio comprises modern houses, townhouses and apartments in selected locations. The majority are off-base, integrated throughout the local community and in reasonably close proximity to Defence bases and establishments, amenities and services. DHA maintains the currency of its portfolio by upgrading existing properties, sourcing new properties through a variety of construction activities, acquiring properties through traditional real estate markets and directly sourcing and leasing properties from private owners. You are eligible for a SR if you fit into any of these groups:

- You have a spouse, recognised interdependent partner or children who live with you (Accompanied Resident Family)
- You are a member with unaccompanied resident family and your dependants need housing (Unaccompanied Resident Family)
- You have Recognised Other Persons who normally live with you.

More detailed information on entitlements can be found in the Pay and Conditions Manual, Chapter 7, pay-conditions.defence.gov.au/pacman/chapter-7, and/or on DHA’s website dha.gov.au. →



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SINGLES

DHA also holds some apartments suitable for single members – called Members Choice accommodation. The process for accessing Members Choice or private rental under Rent Allowance (RA) is the same as for families accessing SR, outlined below.

FINDING A SERVICE RESIDENCE

As soon as you know you require a Service Residence, call DHA on 139 342 to obtain a username and password to access Online Services, a unique online tool that will allow you to select your new home. Online Services will show you:

- Homes within your entitlement
- Interior and exterior photos of the homes
- Property details for each home
- A floor plan
- A map showing the location of the home and nearby facilities.

Once you have researched your options, you can reserve a home on Online Services. Note that, whether you are an Accompanied Resident Family or a single, if you own a home in your current posting location which is suitable for you to live in, you will not be eligible for a SR or RA.

PRIVATE RENTAL

If DHA cannot provide you with a suitable SR,

you may be eligible for RA. While DHA will manage your RA application, it is up to you to find a suitable rental property. Rental properties in the region can be sourced from local real estate agencies or on any of the following commercial websites:

- realestate.com.au/rent
- domain.com.au/rent
- rent.com.au
- property.com.au/rent.

BUYING A HOUSE

You may feel it's time to enter the housing market or wish to sell your home in your losing locality and purchase in the gaining locality. Assistance for home purchase may be available through:

- The Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme pays a monthly subsidy on a member's home loan interest. The scheme is administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, for details see dhoas.gov.au.
- The Home Purchase or Sale Expenses Allowance reimburses reasonable buying and selling costs. For details see the Pay and Conditions Manual, pay-conditions.defence.gov.au/pacman/chapter-7/part-3.

Note that a decision to purchase your own home in your new locality does not need to be made before you proceed on posting, you can decide at any time during your posting. However, if you are

in RA accommodation, you will need to consider the penalties in your lease for early termination.

MORE INFORMATION

For information on all accommodation options, application forms and to access Online Services, visit DHA's website, dha.gov.au.

At times, finding the right housing solution can be challenging. The Directorate of Relocations and Housing is responsible for the provision and delivery of quality housing and related services to ADF members under national contracts and in accordance with Defence Policy. If you require additional support please email DRH.DRHM@defence.gov.au with your enquiry and your local Defence Relocation Manager will be in touch. See 'Relocations and Housing Team', page 16.

POSTINGCONNECT

PostingConnect provides direct access to posting services, including Toll and DHA, and is accessible from any device. It allows members and their families to navigate the many aspects of a posting within one application. See defence.gov.au/about/staff-resources/serviceconnect.



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EARLY LEARNING

Choosing the right childcare and early learning service will depend on your family's needs and the environment with which you and your child will feel most comfortable.

AS WELL AS PROVIDING CARE, child care and early-learning services provide an opportunity for your child to develop social, emotional and learning skills. Approved child care services are required to meet high national standards to ensure children are safe and are given opportunities for learning and development on a regular basis. These services are given National Quality Standard (NQS) quality ratings to help families choose the best service for their child and family. When deciding on the type of care that is best for your child, you may want to ask:

- How many hours of care do I need?
- Do I want my child cared for in a home environment or in a centre?
- What kind of qualifications and experience do the staff members have?
- Does the service offer a preschool program?
- What learning and play opportunities do I want my child to have?
- What kind of routine will my child have?
- Do I want the service to provide lunch?
- What is the carer-to-child ratio?
- Has the service been NQS rated?
- What ages of children are cared for?
- Can I claim the Child Care Subsidy?

LONG DAY CARE

Long day care is also referred to as centre-based care and is generally provided in a building or part of a building that has been created specifically to be used as a child care centre.

Centres usually operate between 7-8am and 6pm and offer professional care for children from birth to six years. Child care is usually available for all day or part of the day.

Centres are run by private companies, local

councils, community organisations, individuals, non-profit organisations or by employers for their staff. The majority are approved child care services, which means families using the service may be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy. Approved services must also show they are meeting certain quality standards. To find and compare services, see startingblocks.gov.au.

FAMILY DAY CARE

Family Day Care services deliver flexible home-based education and care for children aged six weeks to 12 years via a network of family day-care educators. An educator may provide care in their home for the maximum number of children, including their own children, in accordance with the national laws and regulations.

These services can provide flexible care, including all-day, part-time, casual, overnight, before and after school, and during school holidays. The majority of family day-care services are approved child care services. This means families using the service may be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy. nswfdc.org.au

PRESCHOOL

Preschools generally provide early education and care for children aged from three to five years, although some may be licensed to take children from two years of age. Some preschools offer half-day sessions, with children attending either five mornings or five afternoons per week. Others provide full-day attendance for two, three or five days a week.

The preschool program is designed to stimulate children's thinking, communicating, investigating, exploring and problem-solving skills. The program includes play-based activities that help children learn how to interact positively with other children.



It also supports the development of early language, literacy and numeracy skills. Preschools generally operate from 9am to 3.30pm, in line with public school terms, and close during school holidays.

Public preschools provide educational programs for children one year prior to enrolment in kindergarten. A child may be eligible for enrolment in preschool from the beginning of the school year if they turn four years before 31 July that year. For more information, see education.nsw.gov.au and startingblocks.gov.au.

OCCASIONAL CARE

This service is suitable for families who would like someone to look after their children occasionally, for example when they have a medical or other appointment. Most occasional care centres have flexible operating hours and can cater for children whose parents work irregular or unpredictable hours, such as shift workers. With this type of care, you only pay for the hours you use. careforkids.com.au/occasional-care

IN-HOME CARE

In Home Care (IHC) is government-subsidised care provided in the child's home by an approved



- other complex family situations that prevent families from accessing other approved child care types.

IHC services must comply with applicable state regulations and licensing requirements when providing care to children.

australianhomechildcare.com.au

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

The Australian Government provides families with financial assistance to help them cover the costs of approved child care, under the Child Care Subsidy. The Child Care Subsidy is income tested and is usually paid directly to approved child care services to reduce the fees that eligible families pay. You can apply for the Child Care Subsidy online or in person through Centrelink. To apply online, visit the Services Australia website, servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy.

CHILDCARE CONNECT

One Tree Community Services (OTCS) offers a free service called Childcare Connect to help Defence families find appropriate child care, especially after relocating.

Childcare Connect considers individual needs and will engage with local registered child care providers to provide available solutions, including: long daycare; family daycare; the Australian Government In-Home Care Support Agencies; before and after-school care; and vacation care. Additionally, OTCS can provide information on unregistered informal care providers. ADF families finding it difficult to secure child care in a new location can find out more about Childcare Connect by contacting the Defence Member and Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

LOCAL CARE

Backed by Port Stephens Council, Thrive Kids offers a range of child care options across the Hunter region, including family day care, out of school hours and vacation care, plus a government-funded mobile preschool that travels around the Port Stephens region.

portstephens.nsw.gov.au/live/thrive-kids

educator, monitored and supported by an approved agency.

The IHC program provides up to 100 hours of subsidised care per child per fortnight with a capped hourly rate. It is targeted to assist parents or carers who are unable to access mainstream child care options, such as those who work non-standard hours, are geographically isolated or have families with challenging and complex needs.

Families accessing IHC due to challenging or

complex needs may have circumstances which include one or more of the following:

- a child with additional needs or a disability whose early childhood education and care requirements cannot be catered for in another approved child care setting, or through other government-funded or community-based services
- a family where a parent is undergoing treatment for a serious illness



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SCHOOLING

There's a lot to learn about how primary schools and high schools function — especially as different states have different arrangements. Here's some information about New South Wales.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Primary school in New South Wales follows a curriculum based on stages of learning. Each stage is approximately equivalent to two school years. For each learning stage there are skills, knowledge and levels of understanding that each student should develop.

FINDING A SCHOOL

Each NSW public school has a defined local enrolment area. This means your child is designated to a particular school based on the permanent residential address of the primary caregiver. Every public school reserves enough places within their school for students in their local enrolment area. Non-local applications may be considered by the school's enrolment panel, according to the department's policy and subject to selection criteria such as availability of appropriate staff and classroom accommodation. Contact the school to find

out about their out-of-area selection criteria. See schoolfinder.education.nsw.gov.au to find local schools and for information on enrolment.

Alternatively, parents may choose an independent/private school (www.aisnsw.edu.au/finding-a-nsw-independent-school) or a Catholic school (www.csnsw.catholic.edu.au).

STARTING SCHOOL

Starting school is an important step. Children develop at different rates and learn skills in different ways. It is the school's task to respond to the needs, learning styles and rates of progress of individual students. Specialist advice and support is available to parents/caregivers of children with disabilities to help them access educational services. Talk to the school as early as possible about these services.

ORIENTATION DAY

Most schools have orientation days towards

the end of the previous year to welcome children to kindergarten. Many schools also have transition to kindergarten programs over several weeks in the second part of the year.

KINDERGARTEN TO YEAR 6

Children may enter kindergarten at the beginning of the school year in NSW government schools if they turn five before 31 July in that year. By law, all children must start school by their sixth birthday. Kindergarten to Year 6 focuses on the key learning areas of English, mathematics, science and technology, personal development, health and physical education, creative arts, and human society and its environment (history and geography).

OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Outside of school hours care services provide care, play and learning for primary school-age children before and after school, in school holidays and on pupil-free days. In NSW, some services may refer to themselves as out of school hours services. They are located within NSW public schools, private and independent schools and off school sites. Operating hours vary depending on community needs and school hours and can range between: 6.30am to 9.30am; 2.30pm to 6.30pm; and 6.30am to 6.30pm for vacation care (during school holidays). Vacation care includes indoor and outdoor activities and the centres are sometimes run by the same organisation that runs before- and after-school care.

The majority of OSHC centres are approved childcare services. This means families using the service may be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy. Approved services must also show that they are meeting certain quality standards.

HIGH SCHOOL

NSW students enter high school in Year 7. Once you have determined which high school you would like your child to attend, the next step is to complete an expression of interest for placement in Year 7 form. If your child is already attending Year 6 in a public primary school, you will receive this form towards the end of Term 1.

SCHOOL LEAVING AGE

Students must complete Year 10 (or its equivalent) then remain in approved education or training or a combination of education and paid work until the age of 17.

SENIOR YEARS

Students in Year 10 choose the subjects they wish to study for the Higher School Certificate (HSC). There is a lot to consider and support is provided by your school to help students make informed decisions about their future. The school's career adviser is available to guide and support each student's subject choices

in line with individual career and transition planning. Sound advice for young people and their parents/carers about choosing school subjects is available at the My Future website myfuture.edu.au.

STARTING YEAR 11

Students begin to prepare for their Higher School Certificate HSC in Year 11 so it's important to get settled into a good study routine at the beginning of the year. Study requirements will increase markedly in Year 11 and more so in Year 12. To gain their HSC, students must complete at least 12 units of preliminary courses (usually in Year 11) and 10 units of HSC courses (usually in Year 12), including English. Most HSC courses are worth two units.

There are two types of HSC courses: Board-developed courses, which are set and examined externally and can contribute to the calculation of a Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), and Board-endorsed courses, which are developed by schools, TAFE or universities and count towards the HSC, but do not count towards the student's ATAR.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses give students work-related skills in a variety of industry and can count towards the HSC if students sit the HSC exam. Students will receive a nationally recognised qualification when they successfully complete their course. From Year 9, students can study VET courses at school, or through TAFE NSW or other training providers.

YEAR 12

Students and their families can find the HSC year stressful. For study tips and information on preparing for and completing the HSC, see studentonline.nesa.nsw.edu.au.

The most obvious forms of support parents can offer are the practical, physical things:

- Provide a good place to study. Ideally it should be quiet, a comfortable temperature, with

good ventilation, good lighting, adequate desk or table space and free from distractions such as TV, noise, telephone, conversations and little brothers and sisters.

- Provide good, balanced meals. Encourage sensible levels of sleep and some form of regular exercise.
- Of equal, or perhaps greater importance, are the things you can do to provide a positive and understanding emotional environment:
- Be supportive and encouraging. If you have doubts, keep them to yourself.
- Highlight strengths and successes.
- Encourage your child not to dwell on failures.

Appreciate that most students will be experiencing quite a high level of stress, frequently without any obvious indicators. Many fear they might let their family down or will not be able to match the performance of siblings or relatives. There are also many pressures other than exams. Many students experience a sense of impending departure; leaving home, leaving lifelong friends, the prospect of starting university. Appreciate that it is normal for people under pressure to become super-sensitive and explosive from time to time. Family members are usually the first targets. Try not to overreact to such outbursts.

Encourage a reasonable balance between work and leisure. Planned leisure periods are an essential component of a good study program. An occasional total escape for a few days may also be excellent therapy for a student who is feeling excessively stressed.

It is important to encourage and allow your child to be as independent as you can possibly stand. The more independent he or she can be in meeting the demands of Year 12, the better prepared he or she will be to succeed at a tertiary level or in the workforce.



Irrawang High School welcomes all Defence families

Why you have made the best decision to send your child to Irrawang High School.

- Defence School Mentor
- A broad, balanced and relevant curriculum
- Passionate staff who participate in ongoing professional learning
- An outstanding Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) program
- Enrichment and accelerated programs for GAT students
- Senior school – fully staffed Learning & Support centre, senior mentors, and increasing proportion of students achieving Bands 5 & 6 HSC results
- A strong sports culture with vast opportunities for students to excel, and many recess/lunchtime sporting competitions
- State-of-the-art flexible learning spaces in the library
- Numeracy and literacy support & intervention for students in Years 7-10
- Specialised classes catering for students with special needs
- Laptop computer pods in all Key Learning Areas
- Delivering traditional skill areas as well as modern technology education with programs such as STEM, Robotics and Computer Education
- Dedicated Senior Study areas and refurbished outdoor facility
- State-of-the-art Primary Industries facilities and practical opportunities on the school farm
- Strong, ongoing transition programs with our partner primary schools (Stage 3 into Stage 4)
- Targeted wellbeing programs
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership programs
- Excellent communication: website, facebook, SMS and weekly newsletter
- Robust school to work and Vocational Education programs
- Designated school bus
- Homework Centre (Snack n Study) Staffed on a Monday, afternoon tea included
- Free weekly after school art club
- Café Irrawang – school canteen, with qualified chefs serving fresh and healthy food daily
- Filtered water stations to refill bottles

PLUS many more extra-curricular activities

Located 15 minutes from RAAF Base Williamtown

Ph: (02) 4987 4687

Mount Hall Rd Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

E: irrawang-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au

W: irrawang-h.schools.nsw.gov.au

Like us on facebook

SCHOOL DATES FOR 2026

This information is relevant to NSW state schools. Independent and Catholic term dates can vary so check with the relevant school.

PERIOD	START	FINISH
Term 1	Tuesday 27 January	Thursday 2 April
School Holidays	Tuesday 7 April	Friday 17 April
Term 2	Monday 20 April	Friday 3 July
School Holidays	Monday 6 July	Friday 17 July
Term 3	Monday 20 July	Friday 25 September
School Holidays	Monday 28 September	Friday 9 October
Term 4	Monday 12 October	Thursday 17 December
School Holidays	Friday 18 December	Wednesday 27 January 2027

SUPPORT FOR DEFENCE STUDENTS

If you're keen to minimise any disruption to your child's education as a result of your family's relocation, talk to Defence Member and Family Support.

DEFENCE MEMBER AND FAMILY SUPPORT

(DMFS) provides information, resources and programs to help with the transition between schools and education systems when ADF members and their families move, and provides support for the unique needs of Defence children.

ADF EQUIP

The ADF Equip Program is designed to help children manage the challenges associated with Defence life. The program supports children to learn appropriate strategies to help them manage the challenge of parental absence and relocation related to service. It includes facilitated sessions tailored to age group and is open to children aged between five and 18 years.

EDUCATION LIAISON OFFICERS

Education liaison officers are experienced staff who help Defence families as they move around the country, providing information, advice, referral and specialised assistance. They are located in each state and territory and have extensive knowledge about the local schools and education systems as well as the challenges faced by Defence children. The assistance provided includes:

- Informing families about local schools and education systems
- Linking families with special education providers, resources or support agencies according to their children's individual needs (including special needs students)
- Working with schools to ensure a supportive education environment and to raise awareness of issues facing Defence children
- Informing families about Defence support services available, such as financial assistance under the Education Assistance Scheme.

DEFENCE SCHOOL MENTORS

DMFS's school mentor program provides support to the children of ADF members, particularly when moving in and out of a school on posting or when a parent is absent from

home. Under the program, mentors in primary and secondary schools support Defence students transitioning from school to school and during times of parental absence. Mentors help schools, families and children to develop strategies to successfully integrate into the school and community.

Their role also includes:

- Coordinating appropriate welcome and farewell activities
- Smoothing the transition between different schools and different education systems (including minimising the impact of relocation on learning outcomes)
- Monitoring the social, emotional and academic wellbeing of Defence students
- Helping students develop self-confidence, self-reliance and resilience
- Referring students to services or school community programs that meet their needs.

To find out which schools in your area are currently funded under the program, go to www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/family-programs-services/support-for-children/defence-school-mentor-program

CHILDCARE

DMFS maintains a network of childcare centres around Australia and has a range of programs to support the availability of childcare services

to Defence families, who might face difficulties accessing childcare. That includes access to an individual case management service to help them find registered childcare services in their local community.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES

Defence families can access a range of financial support to help minimise the disruption to schooling caused by posting and relocations. The support available includes:

- Tutoring assistance
- Boarding school allowance
- Tertiary accommodation
- Students with special needs
- Reimbursement of a lost scholarship
- Reunion travel.

The aim is to provide students with educational stability or short-term assistance to help overcome any immediate difficulties with education or emotional wellbeing as a result of relocation.

CONTACT DMFS

For more information about these services, contact the 24/7 Defence Member and Family Helpline on 1800 624 608, visit defence.gov.au/members-families or email memberandfamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au.



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mn.catholic.edu.au

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MEDOWIE

NELSON BAY

ST MICHAEL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

STOCKTON

ST PETER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, BULAHDELAH
ALSO FEEDS INTO ST CLARE'S HIGH SCHOOL, TAREE

ST PETER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, STOCKTON
ALSO FEEDS INTO SAN CLEMENTE HIGH SCHOOL, MAYFIELD



PHOTO: LAC Kurt Lewis

THE VETERAN COMMUNITY

↑ Aviators from No.26 Squadron accept the Combat Support Group Charity Group Workout trophy for best performance at RAAF Base Williamtown, NSW.

There is wide range of support available to veterans of all ages.

AS THE EMPLOYER of the Australian military enterprise, the Federal Government has, over time, established a number of agencies and functions to provide post-service support and welfare to military personnel, primarily through the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).

THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION NSW

The NSW Division of the Air Force Association (AFA NSW) has a robust working relationship with DVA. Together with NSW RSL, other high-profile ex-service organisations (ESOs) and agencies, we provide essential supplementary engagement with those government services and work assiduously to promote veteran support and concerns.

Serving veterans are encouraged to engage with their aligned ESO and exploit that network to promote and debate conditions of service and post-service support and welfare. In other words, serving RAAF members are encouraged to participate with, and adopt, the Air Force Association as your equivalent to a workplace

union. AFA NSW has one serving members on its State Council and two serving members on the State Council Support Team.

Membership of AFA NSW provides personal and material benefits derived through:

- Welfare, face-to-face counselling and advocacy support
- Providing assistance to navigate government processes to access DVA support
- Assisting families during times of hardship
- Creating and sponsoring awards and trophies for personal or unit excellence
- Commemorations
- Social functions.

Enabling activities

To maximise our effectiveness, AFA NSW promotes strong working relationships with all ESOs in NSW, particularly the RSL, the Premier's Department, DVA, NSW Ex-Service Organisation Round Table members and local councils. We also keep our members conversant with changes within government and DVA, and local issues that have an effect on their wellbeing.

Regular communication is maintained with our members through our quarterly newsletter

(SITREP), social media sites and our high-quality aviation magazine, *Wings* (wingsmagazine.org), which is published by our own publishing company, RAAFANSW Publications Pty Ltd, the same company that publishes this Welcome guide. For further information visit raafapublications.org.au or raafansw.org.au.

Current AFA NSW projects under development include:

- Provision of transition coaching to civilian employment for serving members
- Supporting and providing Assistance Dog placement programs
- Financial support for RAAF students through a scholarship program
- Development of a Crisis Centre with major partner RSL NSW, other NSW ESOs and Veteran Centres for 24/7 veteran support
- Providing bursaries and educational support for veterans' children where required.

NSW branches

AFA NSW comprises a number of dispersed branches, some based on geographic location, others based on squadron or historical aircraft affiliation. There are also satellite organisations, such as Bomber Command Association in

Australia, formed to retain a camaraderie and solemn remembrance of those who served in respective wartime operations. Those satellite organisations do not aim to function as ESOs, but through the bond of Air Force men and women derive some strength and presence from the AFA.

Until recently, the veteran community was bounded by those military personnel who had served on active operations. Today it encompasses all military personnel, serving and post-service regardless of active operational experience. The family has grown and, while not yet fully acknowledged, has the strength of numbers and the capacity to influence policy direction and implementation.

Contact AFA NSW

If you are in need help or know of someone needing support, contact your local branch listed on the AFA NSW website (raafansw.org.au) or call the NSW President on 0418 261 528.

If you wish to become an Advocate please call the President, who would be happy to discuss and provide assistance in the process to enrol and qualify. For AFA NSW membership enquiries and support, contact the Secretary, Karim Anwar JP, at secretary@raafansw.org.au, phone 0401 154 154, or refer to the website.

HOW THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION BEGAN

More than 100 years ago, members of the Australian flying Corp held a dinner in Melbourne with Sir Ross Macpherson Smith and crew to celebrate their magnificent achievements, in particular, the Great Air Race triumph. That dinner spawned an association to foster and sustain the friendship and comradeship among airmen forged during the war and to establish a support network for veterans of the Air arm. The Australian Flying Corps and Royal Australian Air Force Association was born.

Over time the Association grew and established Divisions in each state and the ACT. The name of the organisation also changed with time, first to Royal Australian Air force Association and now simply, Air force Association. Officially, the NSW Division has retained the Australian Flying Corps and Royal Australian Air Force Association (NSW Division) title but is now commonly referred to as AFA NSW (formerly RAAFA NSW). Air Force Association is now one of the more substantial Ex Service Organisations in Australia and strives to promote the wellbeing and welfare of both serving and post-service Air Force veterans and their families.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) services include:

- pensions and compensation
- funding for health care and treatment
- rehabilitation
- counselling
- support with returning to civilian life
- commemorative and community grants
- home-care assistance
- social health programs
- subsidised loans for housing and other housing related benefits
- commemorative activities and historical information.

The department's services and supports are continually evolving to ensure that DVA looks after veterans, not just during their service, but through their transition into civilian life, and beyond.

Veteran Card

While its primary purpose is providing health and treatment services to veterans, the Veteran Card also provides access to concessions from businesses across Australia as part of a new benefits program. Eligible current and former serving members of the ADF, including reservists, can register for the Veterans' Recognition Program through their MyService account.

Mental health support

DVA has a strong focus on mental health treatment. Under a program called Non-Liability Health Care, DVA funds treatment for all mental health conditions, whether related to service or not, for those with at least one day of continuous full-time service in the ADF, as well as eligible reservists. For further information visit dva.gov.au/get-support/health-support/health-services/mental-health-care/non-liability-health-care-mental-health-veterans. In addition, mental health support including free and confidential counselling is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week through Open Arms (openarms.gov.au).

Finding employment after the ADF

The Veteran Employment Program (VEP) promotes the skills veterans bring to the civilian workforce to increase employment opportunities and supports employers to recruit and retain veterans and to build veteran-inclusive environments. The VEP website offers information and practical advice on moving to civilian employment, finding a job, identifying skills, undertaking further education, or starting your own business. Resources include the Veteran Employment Toolkit, the Core Skills Identifier, and a searchable list of veteran-friendly employers. Visit veteranemployment.gov.au/veterans to find out more.



Veteran Health Check

All ADF members who transition on or after 1 July 2019, and served at least one day of continuous full-time service, can access a comprehensive fully funded health assessment from their GP each year for the first five years following transition. The Veteran Health Check can assist you and your GP identify and support the onset of physical and mental health conditions that are common in the years following transition and organise for early and targeted referrals. For more information, see dva.gov.au/veteranshealthcheck.

Veteran Support Officers

Veteran Support Officers (VSOs) are DVA staff members who deliver services to serving members and their families (including reservists) through one-on-one appointments over the phone or face to face. VSOs tailor support to an individual's circumstances and needs. You can access support from VSOs at any time in your career. A VSO can:

- tell you about the support DVA offers
- help you to apply for benefits and services
- teach you to use MyService and other online services.

If you are injured or have medical issues post-deployment you can contact a VSO for an appointment by emailing VSO@dva.gov.au.

The VSO Office is located within the RAAF WLM Community & Welfare Hub (Chaplains Building) near the North Gate.

Connect with DVA online

DVA's online portal, MyService enables you to manage your business with DVA online. Through MyService you can keep your details up to date, submit claims and view a digital version of your Veteran Card. For more information or to register for MyService visit dva.gov.au/myservice.



OPEN ARMS

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling (Open Arms) provides free and confidential counselling and support services

for Australian veterans and their families.

As with other community-based mental-health services, Open Arms' clients experience depression, anxiety, substance-use challenges, workplace struggles, relationship concerns and parenting and family issues. The difference with Open Arms is that its staff members have specialist training in the military experience. And, while they support families experiencing the routine daily challenges, they also understand the unique stressors military and veteran families experience relating to the posting cycle, training exercises, deployments, partner employment and more.

A unique service offered by Open Arms is its Community and Peer Program, which connects veterans and family members with peers who have served in the ADF – or had family members who have served – and have had the experience of accessing mental-health services for their own wellbeing. Peers work with veterans, family supports, community agencies and mental-health clinicians to complement other services.

There are six Open Arms offices in NSW – the closest to RAAF Base Williamtown is in Newcastle – and a network of professional providers across metropolitan and regional areas.

Contact Open Arms

If you or someone you know wants someone to talk to, even just for a chat, Open Arms is available 24/7 by calling 1800 011 046. The service is free and confidential and there is always a team member who understands the military experience available to answer your call. openarms.gov.au



Legacy supports the families of former

ADF personnel. Its mission is simple – ensuring partners and children of veterans who gave their lives or health in service to our nation can fully realise their potential.

Newcastle Legacy assists about 48,000 widows, widowers, children and dependants with a disability. Legacy is a voluntary organisation supported by veterans, servicemen and women, and volunteers drawn from all walks of life.

To find out more about Legacy and volunteering opportunities around Newcastle, visit legacy.com.au/newcastle.



PHOTO: WOFF Ricky Fuller

↑ Invictus Games Vancouver Whistler 2025 Team Australia before the closing ceremony at Rogers Arena in Vancouver, Canada.

WOUNDED HEROES

Wounded Heroes Australia is a national charity providing 24/7 crisis support for current serving ADF members, veterans and their families. They assist those in financial crisis, who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. Without government funding for crisis funds, they rely solely on public and corporate donations to provide this support.

In 2023, Wounded Heroes supported 2,910 veterans and their families in crisis. In 2024, that number increased to 4,223.

The Royal Commission into Veteran Suicide reported that one serving or ex-serving ADF member has suicide-related contact with emergency services every four hours across Australia. Additionally, on average, there are three deaths by suicide among serving or ex-serving defence members every fortnight across Australia. Wounded Heroes Australia spends \$40,000 a month on Crisis Calls and is determined to reduce the high rates of Defence and veteran suicide.

Through its Veterans Centres, Op Shops, Jim's Cafés, outreach programs and local volunteers, Wounded Heroes is building strong, connected communities for veterans nationwide. For more information see woundedheroes.org.au. For crisis support, call 1300 532 112.

INVICTUS AUSTRALIA

Invictus Australia offers veterans opportunities to get active in competitive or social sports. It connects veterans and their families with individual and team sport, one-off competitive

events, camps and competitions, such as the Invictus Games. It provides pathways to coaching and mentoring training and access to financial assistance for those who need it.

In the Hunter/Newcastle region, Invictus has partnered with a number of sporting groups to offer free come-and-try events. The activities are generally free to veterans, serving members and their families. For more information: invictusaustralia.org; Facebook 'Invictus Australia - Northern NSW Community'.

RSL LIFECARE

At RSL Lifecare we take a personal approach to every person's case. Our trained staff can offer information and advice on the process of making a DVA claim, as well as the government legislation that covers veterans' compensation.

We can help by making the DVA claims lodgement process as easy as possible. We can support you through the entire claims lodgement process or take the lead and manage the process for you. We'll liaise with DVA on your behalf about your claim, and keep in touch with you throughout the process to provide updates and reassurance.

Our support lodging claims covers all three Acts: MRCA, DRCA and VEA. This also includes cases of dual or tri-act eligibility.

For in-person meetings on base on the first and third Tuesdays of each month with RSL LifeCare Veteran Services Claims Advisor DeeJ Wardrop, call 02 8088 0388 for appointment on or email us on info@rsllifecare.org.au.



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

• YOUR ASSOCIATION •



TOGETHER WE CAN
MAKE A DIFFERENCE
BECOME A MEMBER

www.raafansw.org.au



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RAAF Association - NSW Division

www.instagram.com/airforceassociationnsw/

The Air Force Association NSW is run by retired and serving veterans of the Royal Australian Air Force.

We are the voice for the RAAF Veteran and together we advocate for the support and welfare of RAAF personnel and their families with various government bodies. We **honour** and **preserve the history** and memory of those who served and we offer **camaraderie**, **mateship** and foster life-long connections within the RAAF family.



MATES LOOKING AFTER MATES

TIME OUT

From beautiful beaches and national parks to fine wine, dining and culture, there's plenty to enjoy around Williamtown.

PHOTO: Jarryd Salem

↑ Overlooking Shoal Bay, Tomaree Head and Mount Yacaaba in Port Stephens.

PORT STEPHENS

WITH 26 GOLDEN BEACHES, a vast blue bay and many beautiful inlets, Port Stephens is idyllic. Its magnificent bay is twice the size of Sydney Harbour, the monumental sand dunes are the largest in the Southern Hemisphere, and the area has more sightings of humpback whales than anywhere else on the east coast. It is also home to some 150 bottlenose dolphins, a seal colony on Broughton Island and sea-sponge gardens at the famous Fly Point dive site. On top of that, it has a great food scene with fresh seafood including hand-shucked oysters, craft beer and local wine.

NELSON BAY

The main resort area of Port Stephens, Nelson Bay is an attractive town offering freshly caught seafood, waterside dining, shops, cafes, restaurants and a wide range of water activities. Relax on beautiful stretches of beach, go diving or snorkelling at Fly Point Aquatic Reserve, swim with the area's friendly dolphins, and enjoy sailing, kayaking, parasailing, jet-skiing and ferry rides. You'll also find plenty of tours departing from Nelson Bay that offer dolphin and whale-watching cruises and kayak trips.

SHOAL BAY

With shops and restaurants along the waterfront, a white sandy bay and calm turquoise water, Shoal Bay is another popular holiday destination. It is a good base for a fishing trip and the area has several great family beaches, as well as surfing beaches such as Zenith, Wreck and Box Beach.

FINGAL BAY

Surrounded by the Tomaree National Park, Fingal Bay village has a magnificent patrolled beach. It is popular with surfers and is quite protected by the headland in the southern corner. There is good fishing off the beach, spit and headlands. It is also a good spot for whale watching during the annual migration north in June and July, and south from September to November.

WORIMI CONSERVATION LANDS

The Stockton Sand Dunes form the largest sand dune system in Australia, covering 4,200ha. The ever-changing dunes climb up to 40m and are flanked by a 32km long beach. The Worimi Conservation Lands also include more than 1,800ha of lush forest and wetlands. You can get your heart racing with a quad-bike tour, try sandboarding or buy a beach vehicle permit and test your four-wheel-driving skills on the sand. worimiconservationlands.com



Birubi Beach. PHOTO: Destination NSW

TOMAREE NATIONAL PARK

Covering a 20km strip of rocky coastline between Shoal Bay and Anna Bay, 2,400ha Tomaree National Park has a number of well-maintained walking tracks offering stunning views of the bush and the Pacific Ocean. nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

CYCLEWAYS

Port Stephens is great for cyclists, from serious mountain bikers through to families who enjoy a safe and scenic bike ride. There is approximately 50km of shared cycleways throughout the area and you can choose from 2km, 8km and 12km routes for riding and walking.

Designated cycleways provide safe cycling around the peninsula, from Salamander Bay to Fingal Bay, with some spectacular water views as you pass from Bagnalls Beach to Dutchies Beach to Nelson Bay. There's some shaded riding through bush and reserves from Shoal Bay to Fingal Bay and plenty of parks, playgrounds and cafes along the way. portstephens.nsw.gov.au/community



↓ Stand up paddleboarding in Shoal Bay.

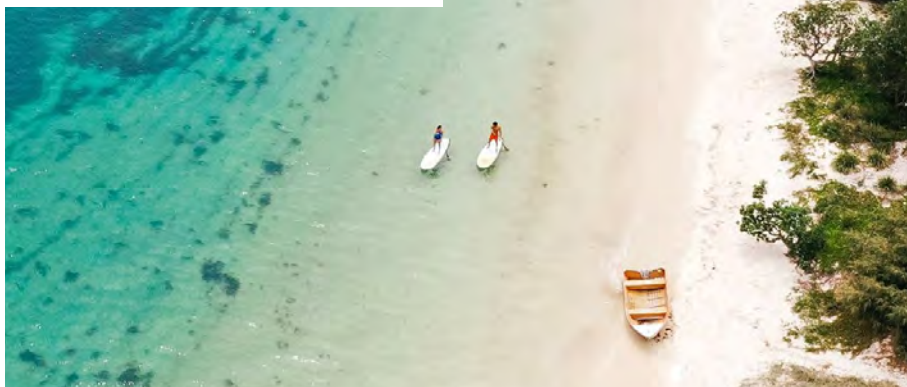


PHOTO: Destination NSW



Bannisters, Port Stephens. PHOTO: Destination NSW

WALKS

Tomaree Coastal Walk: 27km. Starting at Tomaree Head, with unparalleled views of Port Stephens, the multi-day walk hugs the coastline of the national park, across rock ledges, along secluded beaches and through angophora forests via boardwalks and easy-to-navigate walking tracks. It can be done in short sections.

Tomaree Head Summit: 2.2km return.

An invigorating walk to the summit offers panoramic views over Port Stephens, up and down the coast and to Broughton, Cabbage Tree and Boondelbah Islands. The summit was the site of the longest-serving radar in WWII.

Mariners Walk Heritage Trail: 3.3km one way. Commemorating the history of Port Stephens' mariners with interpretative displays and signs along the foreshore of Soldiers Point and Salamander Bay, the trail involves some beach walking and bush pathways.

Tanilba Bay Walk: 3.5km one way. A beautiful foreshore walking track from Caswell Reserve to the Tanilba Sailing Club.

Native Flora Gardens, Nelson Bay: 1km. The gardens feature native plants, bird life and a number of Aboriginal canoe trees. Formerly the site of HMAS Assault from 1942 to 1945.

Fort Tomaree, Shoal Bay: 2.5km return.

A paved track around the lower slopes of Tomaree Head to WWII gun emplacements, built in 1941.

Wreck Beach, Shoal Bay: 2km return. An easy walk through lush coastal angophora forest leads onto a small sandy cove.

One Mile Beach, One Mile: 3km return.

Backed by sand dunes and bushland, the beach is a good spot for swimming and surfing.

Big Rocky, Fingal Bay: 2.8km return. A sandy track leads to a rocky headland, ideal at low tide. portstephens.org.au/trails

SPORTS

There is an extensive array of sporting activities within the area. To find a local team or club, see sport.nsw.gov.au/find-a-sport.

GOLF COURSES

Golfers are spoilt for choice in Port Stephens and surrounding regions. Pacific Dunes at Medowie (pacificdunes.com.au) offers an 18-hole championship course set in 135 hectares of bushland, which features in *Australian Golf Digests'* top 100 Australian courses, as does Newcastle Golf Club at Fern Bay (newcastlegolfclub.com.au) and the Vintage, Hunter Valley (chateauelan.com.au/golf-course-hunter-valley). Nelson Bay Golf Club (nelsonbaygolf.com), on the edge of Tomaree National Park, is a 27-hole championship course, featuring an abundance of wildlife. Horizons Golf Resort (horizons.com.au) in Salamander Bay offers a popular 18-hole course. Tanilba Bay Golf Club (tilligerryrslsports.com.au/play) has an easy-walking 18 hole par 72 course.

MORE INFORMATION:

Port Stephens Visitor Information Centre, 60 Victoria Parade, Nelson Bay.
portstephens.org.au



PHOTO: Destination NSW

↑ Tomaree Head Summit Walk.



PHOTO: Destination NSW

↑ Shoal Bay.



PHOTO: Alesha Bradford

↑ Soldiers Point Jetty.

↓ Stockton Beach.



PHOTO: Destination NSW





Located in the heart of Port Stephens and only 10 minutes from Newcastle airport, Pacific Dunes is a blend of luxury & tranquillity surrounded by stunning natural bushland.

Our premier destination is celebrated for its 18 hole championship golf course which is rated in the top #100 in Australia, and Pacific Dunes Greenhouse, our family friendly venue offering casual dining, fabulous events, conferences & weddings.



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EASY ACCESS | SUNDAY LIVE MUSIC | KIDS PLAY AREA & LEGO | GIFT VOUCHERS
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NEWCASTLE

PERCHED BETWEEN A busy working harbour and beautiful beaches, Newcastle is a vibrant, cosmopolitan city with a rich maritime history, and plenty of arts culture, cool bars and acclaimed restaurants.

BEACHES

Enjoy fantastic waves and white sandy beaches on the spectacular Newcastle coastline. There are surf beaches, protected ocean pools, such as the Art Deco Newcastle Ocean Baths, and parks with picnic tables and barbecues adjacent to a number of beaches, including Dixon Park Beach and Nobbys Beach. Nobbys, Bar and Merewether beaches are patrolled year round.

A great coastal walk, the Bathers Way links beaches from Nobbys to Merewether and connects to the popular Newcastle Memorial Walk. Merewether Beach is one of Australia's National Surfing Reserves and home to the international Newcastle Pro, part of the annual Surfest (surfest.com).

OCEAN BATHS

Newcastle is famed for its ocean baths. Newcastle Ocean Baths (30 Shortland Esplanade) was opened in 1922 and is undergoing a major renovation. Merewether Ocean Baths (3a Ocean St) opened in 1935 and includes a sandy family-friendly shallow pool, and a 100m-wide main swimming pool. The Bogey Hole ocean pool is one of Newcastle's most iconic landmarks. Hand-cut into the rock by convicts in 1819, it was designed for Major James Morisset, the longest-serving Commandant of Newcastle, and was originally called the Commandant's Baths.

DINING

The emerging food scene is evident in the great restaurants, bars and cafes around the city. Sip cocktails at a harbourside restaurant or bar at Honeysuckle or head to Beaumont Street in Hamilton to dine at outdoor Mediterranean-style cafes. Darby Street in Cooks Hill is a bohemian strip with a collection of eclectic boutiques, bookshops and cafes just perfect for a late breakfast.

BREWERIES

To sample some local brews, often along with good food and music, Newcastle has plenty to offer, including: Modus Brewing, Merewether St, Merewether; FogHorn Brewery, King St, Newcastle; Good Folk Brewing, Beaumont St, Hamilton; Thirsty Messiah, Lambton Rd, Broadmeadow; Shout Brewing Co, Clyde St, Islington; Earp Distilling Co., Darling St, Newcastle and The Rogue Scholar, Union St, Newcastle.

↑ [Nobbys Beach.](#)

ENTERTAINMENT

Newcastle Entertainment Centre (nec.net.au) hosts international artists, events and concerts. McDonald Jones Stadium (mcdonaldjonesstadium.com), the home of the Newcastle Knights (rugby league) and Jets (soccer), is an international-class venue that stages a variety of entertainment and sporting events. Newcastle Racecourse (newcastle Racecourse.com.au) holds regular race days. Civic Theatre Newcastle (civictheatrenewcastle.com.au) hosts a range of musicals, dance, theatre, concerts and other events in the heritage-listed Civic Theatre and Playhouse.

TREETOPS ADVENTURE PARK

Challenges include 18 flying foxes and suspension bridges up to 15m above the forest floor. Open daily. Blue Gum Hills Regional Park, Minmi Road, Minmi. treetops.com.au

FORT SCRATCHLEY

At the elaborate fort built in the 1880s, visitors can explore a number of historic buildings and installations. Guided tours of the site and its amazing tunnels are available. Nobbys Road, Newcastle. fortscratchley.org.au

NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY

Opened in 1977, Newcastle Art Gallery is Australia's first purpose-built modern regional gallery. The gallery has undergone a \$40-million expansion project to deliver an additional 1,600 square meters of exhibition space – more than doubling the space. It has been partially reopened with a grand reopening planned for February 2026. 1 Laman Street, Newcastle. nag.org.au

NEWCASTLE MUSEUM

Located in the historic Honeysuckle Railway workshops, the museum has three major permanent free exhibitions exploring the area's

natural environment, early Indigenous life, history and major industries. Corner Workshop Way and Merewether Street, Newcastle. newcastlemuseum.com.au

BLACKBUTT RESERVE

With 10km of walking trails, wildlife exhibits, barbecues and playgrounds, the 182ha reserve is a great place for a family picnic. The restored rainforest provides habitat for some rare and vulnerable species. Carnley Avenue, Kotara. newcastle.nsw.gov.au/blackbutt-reserve

GLENROCK STATE CONSERVATION AREA

A short drive from the city, the conservation area is a popular mountain biking and hiking spot with trails, secluded beaches, waterfalls and the last surviving pocket of coastal rainforest in the region. Glenrock Lagoon, fed by Flaggy and Little Flaggy creeks, is a notable feature. nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/glenrock-state-conservation-area

MORE INFORMATION:

Newcastle Visitor Information Centre, 430 Hunter St (former Civic Railway Station), Newcastle. visitnewcastle.com.au



↑ Newcastle Ocean Baths.



↑ The Rooftop at QT, Newcastle.



↑ Glenrock State Conservation area.

PHOTO: Destination NSW

PHOTO: Destination NSW

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↓ Scarborough Wine Co., Pokolbin.



PHOTO: Destination NSW

THE HUNTER VALLEY

AUSTRALIA'S MOST-VISITED wine region is home to more than 150 top-class wineries, vineyards and cellar doors as well as superb restaurants, and it's only an hour's drive from Williamstown. Join a wine tasting tour or visit cellar doors directly. Concerts and events are often staged among the vineyards.

Visitors can hire bicycles and pedal to cellar doors around Pokolbin, Lovedale and Mount View. You can also sample local produce, enjoy a long lunch at one of the area's many restaurants, sip craft beer, relax with a spa day, tee off at championship golf courses, such as the Greg Norman-designed The Vintage, or get a bird's-eye view from a hot-air balloon.

The annual Hunter Valley Wine & Beer Festival offers tastings, gourmet food and entertainment (huntervalleywinefestival.com).

POKOLBIN

Central Pokolbin is the hub of tourist activity with wineries, cheese, olives, chocolates, restaurants and accommodation. The picturesque country roads are home to some of Australia's best-known wine labels. Take the Around Heritage food and wine trail for spectacular views (aroundhermitage.com.au), locally made produce and picnic hampers. parishofpokolbin.com.au

LOVEDALE

Centrally located Lovedale is known for its boutique wineries and is home to several award-winning restaurants. There is also a

range of activities on offer, from wine, olive and chocolate tastings to hot-air ballooning and horse riding. lovedalehuntervalley.com.au

CESSNOCK

The gateway town to the Hunter Valley Wine Country, Cessnock is a country town offering services, shopping and dining. Explore the local Regional Art Gallery, attend a show at the Performing Arts Centre and walk one of Australia's longest main streets.

BRANXTON AND GRETA

At the northern end of Wine Country Drive, the townships of Branxton and Greta have retained their historical charm, with fine colonial architecture and friendly locals.

BROKE FORDWICH

Broke offers a relaxed vineyard experience set against the dramatic backdrop of the Yellow Rock escarpment. As well as wines, you'll find local produce such as jams, chutneys, cheese, olive oil, cured meats and confectionery. Broke also has a monthly village market, offering produce, crafts and local wines. brokefordwich.com.au

MOUNT VIEW

Bordering Pokolbin to the south, Mount View is one of the best-kept secrets of the Hunter Valley. It has famously distinct wines, iconic dining experiences and panoramic views. Follow Mount View Road which winds around the breathtaking Brokenback Range and its wineries.

WOLLOMBI

Meander through the Wollombi Valley and explore colonial and convict heritage, indigenous sites, national parks, boutique wineries and unique shopping in the historic village. visitwollombi.com.au

SINGLETON

A historic country town northwest of Cessnock, Singleton is home to the Australian Army Infantry Museum and has an interesting heritage walk. There are plenty activities for nature lovers in nearby Yengo National Park and Lake St Clair. singleton.nsw.gov.au/Experience/Visit

MAITLAND

Built on the banks of the Hunter River, Maitland is one of the oldest regional centres in Australia. The riverside Levee links the city to the river with a mix of boutiques, cafes, restaurants and small bars. Visit the Maitland Regional Art Gallery (mrag.org.au) or head to the Hunter River for a paddle or a fish. As the days shorten in June, the Luminous festival warms up with a celebration of fire and light. maitlandevents.com.au; mymaitland.com.au

MORPETH

The former Hunter River port town on the outskirts of Maitland has retained its historic shop fronts, wharves and hitching posts along the main street, which is now home to cafes and produce stores.

PATERSON

The village includes mid-19th century historic sites and an old country pub, along with the historic Tocal Homestead and Patterson Rail Motor Museum. There are also good picnic spots by the Paterson River.



MORE INFORMATION:

Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre,
455 Wine Country Drive, Pokolbin.
winecountry.com.au