

**SOHI Vacant Industrial
Land Preliminary
Investigations**

EHMA

RVC

09017C/2008



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heritage + community

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I Introduction

1.1 Aims

Converge Heritage + Community has been commissioned by Richmond Valley Council to prepare a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) for the proposed removal of the Richmond Valley Council Works Depot at Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome on the far north coast of New South Wales (Part Lot 141, DPI067639). As the aerodrome is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR), this SOHI has been prepared to accompany a Section 60 application to the NSW Heritage Office and to inform the development of a Statement of Environmental Effects being prepared for the works by GeoLINK and required by the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC).

The purpose of this SOHI is to describe the proposed works, outline any potential heritage and archaeological impacts and identify any mitigation measures which may be implemented to avoid or minimise potential adverse impacts on the heritage and archaeological value of Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome.

1.2 Methodology

The Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Plan of Management (PoM) was endorsed by the NSW Heritage Council in August 2005. The policies recommended in the PoM are now the primary guide for management and future planning and work at Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome. In addition, an Archaeological Management Plan has been prepared for the site to establish areas of archaeological sensitivity and provide recommendations for managing the archaeological resource. Further to these, a Conservation Management Plan for the remaining in situ Bellmen Hangar (Hangar 160) on the Aerodrome has recently been submitted to the Heritage Branch for endorsement. Thus, the policies and recommendations of the PoM, AMP and CMP form the guiding framework of this SOHI.

This report was prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the *Burra Charter of Australia ICOMOS* and the methodology outlined in the NSW Heritage Office documents *Statements of Heritage Impact*.

1.3 Scope and Curtilage

This SOHI assesses the impact of works which will be carried out within the SHR listed portion of Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome. The SOHI considers the impact of the proposed works on heritage items within the project area and on the heritage value of the aerodrome as a whole. The project area curtilage is shown on the following Figure (see Figure 1.1).

The SOHI is based on the project description and outline of works supplied to Converge Heritage + Community through discussions with Richmond Valley Council and GeoLINK, and the Richmond Valley Council document *Local Environment Study - Evans Head Aerodrome – Proposed Aged Care Facility – Amend. No 31 Rezoning of Part Lot 141 DPI067639 from Rural 1(b1) and part Industrial to 2(v) Village Zone for Retirement Village and Nursing Home*.

The SOHI incorporates, as an appendix, a desk-top study of Indigenous Heritage for the project area.



Figure 1.1: The project area in relation to Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure I.2: Curtilage of the project area

I.4 Location

Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome is located in Evans Head on the Far North Coast of New South Wales (see Figure 2.1). Evans Head is within the Parish of Riley in County Richmond.

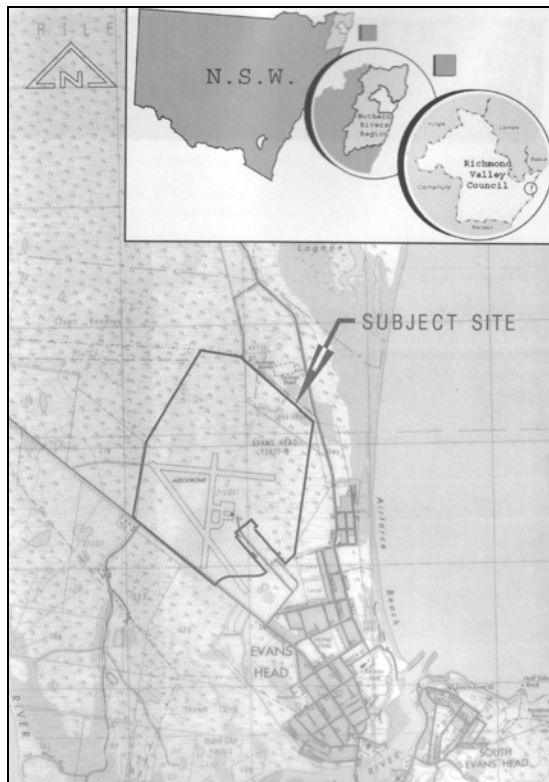


Figure I.3: Plan showing the location of Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome on the Far North Coast of New South Wales. The Black line indicates the boundary of the State Heritage Register Listing curtilage for Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome.

1.5 Author Identification

This report was prepared by Jane Ainsworth with the assistance of Matt Alexander. The SOHI was internally peer-reviewed.

1.6 Statutory Heritage Listings

1.6.1 Historic Heritage

Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome was listed on the NSW State Heritage Register in November 2002. This listing gives the site statutory heritage protection under the *NSW Heritage Act, 1977* (the Heritage Act).

Section 60 of the Heritage Act requires the owner, Richmond Valley Council, to seek approval from the NSW Heritage Act to do any of the following:

- Demolish the building or work;
- Damage or despoil the place, precinct or land, or any part of the place, precinct or land;
- Move, damage or destroy the relic or moveable object;
- Excavate any land for the purpose of exposing or moving the relic;
- Carry out any development in relation to the land on which the building, work or relic is situated, the land that comprises the place, or land within the precinct;
- Alter the building, work, relic or moveable object;
- Display any notice or advertisement on the place, building, work, relic, moveable object or land, or in the precinct;
- Damage or destroy any tree or other vegetation on or remove any tree or other vegetation from the place, precinct or land.

As the proposed Works Depot Removal works will alter the site, a Section 60 (S60) Application is required under the Heritage Act. This Statement of Heritage Impact forms the supporting documentation for Richmond Valley Council's S60 application.

1.6.2 Indigenous Heritage

The *National Parks & Wildlife Act, 1974* (NPW Act) provides statutory protection to all Aboriginal objects or sites within New South Wales. Under the NPW Act, Aboriginal objects (also referred to as 'Aboriginal sites', 'relics' or 'cultural material') are physical evidence of the use of an area by Aboriginal people and are protected under the NPW Act. They can include:

- Physical objects, such as stone tools, Aboriginal-built fences and stockyards, scarred trees and the remains of fringe camps;
- Material deposited on the land, such as middens; and
- The ancestral remains of Aboriginal people.

The NPW Act protects all Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal places in NSW. It is an offence to disturb, move, excavate, knowingly destroy/damage/deface, or knowingly cause the destruction/damage/defacement of an aboriginal object or place without the permission of DECC Cultural and Heritage Division.

A search of the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database was undertaken and a printout report was received on 27 August 2008, stating that there is no recorded Indigenous sites in or near the lot plan boundary of the aerodrome.



2 Site Background

2.1 Introduction

Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome has been the subject of several recent heritage and archaeological investigations which provided detailed descriptions of the site and its environs, and examined the site's history in detail. In particular, the following reports provide a detailed description and history of the site:

- Goanna Headland Plan of Management. Unpublished report prepared for the Department of Lands, 1988;
- Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Plan of Management. Unpublished report prepared for Richmond Valley Council by GHD, June 2005;
- Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Archaeological Management Plan. Unpublished report prepared for Richmond Valley Council by Ainsworth Heritage, December 2006;
- Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome – Bellman Hangar Conservation Management Plan. Unpublished report prepared for Richmond Valley Council by Ainsworth Heritage, April 2007; and
- Local Environment Study - Evans Head Aerodrome – Proposed Aged Care Facility – Amend. No 31 Rezoning of Part Lot 141 DPI067639 from Rural 1(b1) and part Industrial to 2(v) Village Zone for Retirement Village and Nursing Home. Unpublished report prepared by Richmond Valley Council, 2008.

This chapter provides a brief description of the site's environment, the project area within the aerodrome and an historical overview. For more detailed information, the above listed reports should be referred to. In addition, Appendix A contains a brief Indigenous history of the area, Appendix B contains an overview of the site's World War II heritage and Appendix C provides a description of the aerodrome as a whole. These appendices should also be referred to for historical background.

2.2 Site History

A very brief overview of the history of the project area (the works depot area) is presented here. A further brief history of the aerodrome as a whole is presented as Appendix A; previous heritage studies should be consulted for a more in-depth history of the site.

The area which currently comprises the Works Depot was the site of the southern section of the aerodrome's arc of Bellman Hangar's during World War II. During the war, this portion of the aerodrome contained the 23 buildings including the following:

- Eleven Bellman Hangars for aircraft maintenance;
- Two main equipment stores;
- Two workshops;
- Squadron headquarters and Flight office;
- War intelligence room;
- Practice bomb store;
- Flight offices;
- Oil store;
- Bombing time box;
- Shed; and
- Maintenance wing – engine and prop shop.

In the 1947, the aerodrome was declared surplus to requirements and the Department of Defence began the process of disposing of the aerodrome, which was completed by 1952. Throughout the late 1940s most of the aerodrome buildings were dismantled and destroyed or transferred to other locations and by 1953, only two of the 17 Bellman Hangars remained (Bellman Hangar 148 within the Works Depot area and the still in-situ Bellman Hangar 160). In the 1980s, the northern end of the main north-south runway was extended, using fill taken from the project area as a base for the runway extension. The RVC works depot was established

within the project area in the 1980s using all new buildings – no original buildings were left in this part of the aerodrome.



Figure 2.1: The 1940s layout of the aerodrome overlaid onto a modern aerial image. The heritage listed portion of the aerodrome is enclosed by the red line (Plan courtesy of Richmond Valley Council).

The project area is described as the Southern Hanger/Works Depot Zone in the 2005 Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Plan of Management (PoM). The PoM notes that this area and the adjoining Southern Runway Zone can be developed for light industrial or residential purposes. Specifically, the PoM notes that the Works Depot Zone “consists of the sites of eleven former hangars, which have been extensively disturbed by post-WWII activities, to the point where very little evidence of their existence is discernable on the ground. The conservation opportunities in this zone are

mainly interpretative, as appropriate redevelopment could reflect and help interpret the WWII scale and configuration of the aerodrome development. Retention of the works depot hangar is not essential for conservation of the heritage values of the aerodrome” (GHD 2005:35).

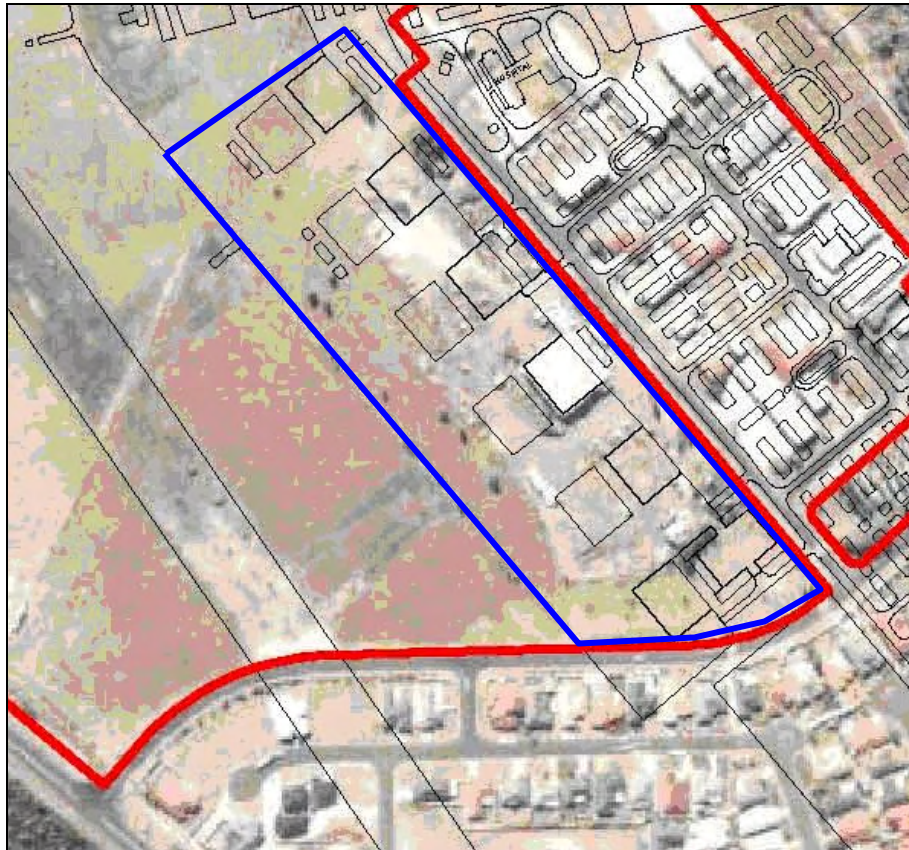


Figure 2.2: The 1940s layout of the aerodrome overlaid onto a modern aerial image – detail of the Works Depot Zone (Plan courtesy of Richmond Valley Council).

The RVC Works Depot is moving to a new site in Evans Head and the former Works Depot site will have all buildings removed and will prepared for site remediation, to remove any contaminants left from the World War II and Works Depot activities. Currently, the site is being investigated for its suitability as a Veterans Nursing Home.

2.3 Description

2.3.1 Environmental Description

The aerodrome covers approximately 190 hectares and is bounded by Woodburn Road to the west, Currajong Street to the south, Broadwater Road to the east and the Evans Head Sewerage Treatment Plant and Broadwater National Park to the north.

Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome is sited within the Bundjalung Aeolian-swamp landscape. The soils are predominately sandy with a high water table. The sandy deposits have naturally reworked into low dunes and swales. The natural sand ridge within the vicinity of Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome has been disturbed by sand mining, the construction of the aerodrome and urban development. This activity has resulted in the filling of swales, creating a deep sandy stratum which is underlined with indurated fine sand cemented by leached organic matter and iron oxides, usually at approximately one metre in depth.

Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome comprises a largely level area of land, with low grasslands surrounding the airfield and dense vegetation covering the remainder of the site. The vegetation comprises heath land with areas of Swamp Eucalypt forest.

2.2.2 Project Area

The project area covers approximately 2.9 hectares in the south-east corner of the site. It is bounded by aerodrome land to the north and west, Airport Memorial Drive to the east and Currajong Street to the south. The project area is referred to in the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Plan of Management as the Southern Hangar/Works Depot Zone (GHD: 2005). The project area, comprising relatively level land, is fenced off from the Industrial estate to the east and the Aerodrome proper to the north and west. It is currently used as the Richmond Valley Council Works Depot and as such includes workshops, materials storage areas, staff amenities, carparking areas and the RVC plant nursery.

The site contains eleven buildings, nine outdoor equipment and material storage areas, fuel bowzers and other works equipment within the depot. The area around the eastern side of the main depot building and the car park are surfaced with bitumen. The topography within the

vicinity of the proposed works is flat and low lying. All boundaries of the subject site are defined by fencing. Figure 2.1 on the following page shows the project area and its elements.

The built elements include:

- Portable toilet building;
- Portable office building;
- Seven storage containers of various sizes;
- Works Depot (highly modified Bellman Hangar); and
- Canteen.

The Works Depot Bellman Hangar was not one of the seventeen Bellman Hangars originally erected on the site during World War II. Rather, this Bellman was transported to the site from Coffs Harbour in the 1980s and erected for use as a Council building. The Works Depot Hangar has been heavily modified, including the insertion of a small loft space; removal of southern hangar doors and insertion of a brick wall; all portal frames were cut off to remove corroded bases and the doors have had some minor alterations. Subsequently, the works depot hangar has low integrity as it was not original to the site and has been heavily modified. Nonetheless, the original portal frames that the works depot hangar are in good condition and are immensely suitable for re-use as restoration for the surviving in-situ Bellman Hangar.

The canteen building is one of the aerodrome's original wartime buildings. It was moved from the aerodrome to the local Evans Head School in the 1950s, when Defence disposed of the aerodrome. It was returned to the aerodrome in the last 10 years and placed in a temporary location propped on timber blocks, however it has never been re-used, permanently re-positioned, conserved or even undergone preventative maintenance. This is due to its temporarily location within an operating works depot and lack of a sound support structure (i.e. permanent re-stumping).



Figure 2.3: Entrance to Works Depot from Airport Memorial Drive (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.4: Works Depot with hangar to left and car parking area in foreground (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.5: Works Depot looking toward aerodrome from nursery (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.6: Works Depot northern material storage area (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.7: Works Depot northern material storage area (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.8: Open sheds for equipment stores (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.9: Canteen building (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.10: Collapsed and damaged non-original verandah on the canteen (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.11: Canteen building with damaged weatherboards (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.12: Canteen building showing damaged paint and temporary props (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.13: Works depot hangar showing the bricked-in end (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.14: Works depot hangar (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.15: Works depot hangar (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.16: Works depot hangar with intact doors showing characteristic external cross-bracing (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.17: Works depot hangar doors and door tracks (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.18: Works depot hangar internal portal frames (Converge Heritage + Community).

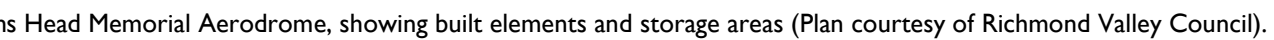


Figure 2.19: Portal frame detail at ceiling (Converge Heritage + Community).



Figure 2.20: Portal frame base (Converge Heritage + Community).





3 Overview of Works

3.1 Purpose of the Proposed Works

The Richmond Valley Council Works Depot is being moved to a new site in Evans Head and as part of this process, all built elements at the site will be removed down to ground level in preparation for remediation works.

Contamination investigations and environmental management plans, previously prepared for RVC for the aerodrome, indicate the presence of contaminants at the aerodrome. Most of the contamination detected in these studies was of total petroleum hydrocarbon (TPH), Btec compounds (benzene, ethyl-benzene, toluene and zylenes) polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (including benzo(a)pyrene) and heavy metals detected in soil samples collected from the Works Depot area mostly in shallow soil samples (Coffey 2007: 13-14). Although in concentrations that pose phototoxicity risks, the shallow deposits are readily identifiable through a stringent sampling regime and contaminated 'hot-spots' are able to be removed for remediation offsite. Richmond Valley Council and the Department of Defence will together be undertaking remediation of the contaminated land in this part of the aerodrome. Accordingly, Richmond Valley Council will remove all built features on the works depot land to ground level in preparation for Defence to carry out site remediation.¹

There are three distinct phases of work required for this project:

- Phase I: Removal of modern Council buildings, equipment and stores;
- Phase II Disassembly, recording, cataloguing and moving Works Depot Bellman Hangar;
- Phase III Removing and repairing the Canteen building.

¹ Remediation works will be undertaken via a separate development application and will be subject to a separate Statement of Heritage Impact. They are not included in the scope of this SOHI.

3.2 Description of the Proposed Works

3.2.1 Phase I – Removal of Council Buildings, Equipment and Stores

RVC proposes to remove all modern buildings, stores and equipment, whilst leaving the perimeter fence intact and the Works Depot underground fuel tanks in place, in preparation for Defence to undertake subsequent remediation works (remediation works will be subject to a separate DA). There will be no subsurface works and this phase is mainly concerned with either relocation or disposal of movable buildings, stores and equipment. No hard surfaces, services, underground features (fuel tanks, buildings slabs or building footings) etc will be removed.

The following built elements will be removed from the site:

- Portable toilet building;
- Portable office building; and
- Seven storage containers of various sizes.

In addition, the following elements will be removed:

- Any internal fencing (i.e. enclosing the plant nursery);
- All open area equipment stores;
- All site signage; and
- All features associated with the plant nursery.

The aim is for the Works Depot to be completely vacated with all buildings and features removed, so that the site is clear for Defence to undertake remediation works. External fences enclosing the Works Depot will be retained.

3.2.2 Phase II – Disassembly, Recording and Cataloguing of Works Depot Bellman Hangar

3.2.2.1 Justification

The main works depot workshop is currently housed in a heavily modified Bellman Hangar which was moved to the aerodrome from Coffs Harbour in the 1980s (i.e. it is not original to the site). This works depot Bellman Hangar will be disassembled as part of the works depot relocation and will not be re-used for the new works depot. This presents an excellent opportunity to re-use parts of the works depot hangar to repair and restore Hangar 160.

The re-use of the works depot hangar for parts is the preferred option rather than relocating the works depot hangar to one of the former Bellman Hangar footprints for several reasons. The works depot hangar has undergone heavy modification which lowers its integrity. Although it retains all eleven portal frames, when it was moved to Evans Head the lower portion of the frames was removed (presumably due to poor condition) with the result that the entire hangar is lower in height by approximately one metre. The works depot hangar's entire southern wall (originally comprising the short-end door openings) was removed and replaced with a brick wall. The works depot hangar is also not original to the aerodrome, having been moved there in the 1980s. Nonetheless, the portal frames themselves and the northern hangar doors are generally in good condition and are structurally sound.

Both the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Plan of Management (GHD 2005: 45) and the Bellman Hangar Conservation Management Plan recommend that if the works depot hangar is to be removed, ideally its parts should be reused for the repair of the in situ Hangar 160, which is in poor physical condition. The CMP states that:

It is preferable that if fabric is being replaced, the replacements are taken from existing Bellman Hangars scheduled for removal elsewhere (in particular, the Heritage section of the Defence Department should be canvassed for a Bellman Hangar scheduled for removal and the use of the RVC Works Depot Bellman Hangar should be considered). If there are no other Bellman Hangars available, like for like replacement should occur (Ainsworth Heritage 2007:106).

Hangar 160 is currently undergoing emergency stabilisation works however, long-term repair is required to return full structural capacity to the hangar and if it is to be reused for aviation activities or community activities, it will require further restoration. The re-use of the works

depot hangar parts for this purpose would ensure that any repairs and restoration would be using 'like-for-like replacement' and would thus not detract from Hangar 160's significance.

3.2.2.2 Description of Works

As the Council Works Depot hangar is heavily modified, surplus to requirements and not an original member of the seventeen hangars that once were located at Evans Head, it is proposed that the hangar be disassembled, catalogued and parts of it be cleaned, treated and stored for reuse on Hangar 160.

The parts to be retained will be determined in consultation with a Heritage Engineer and carefully stored, most likely within the in situ hangar after its stabilisation works are complete (December 2008). Parts surplus to requirements immediately will be either kept for future repairs or advertised for use in other Bellman Hangar restoration projects within Australia.

A heritage engineer will be consulted on which portal frames are in the best condition for re-use and repair, and to ensure that the correct process for dismantling the hangar is used; it is likely that up to six portal frames may be retained for reuse on Hangar 160, with the other frames being advertised for sale, for use on other Bellman Hangars. The portal frames pieces will be fully labelled and catalogued (each portal frame will be assigned a number and each piece within the frame, a sub-number) as each portal frame is dismantled, to ensure that all parts associated with each frame are retained together. They will then undergo cleaning and treating, as per the cleaning and painting process outlined in the Bellman Hangar CMP (see Appendix D). All parts will be engraved to indicate that they are not original to Hangar 160 and then stored within Hangar 160 for later repair work. Community volunteers will be able to assist with the cataloguing, labelling, cleaning (under supervision) and storing of the parts.

3.2.3 Phase III – Removing and repairing Canteen building

The canteen is currently sited within the Richmond Valley Council Works Depot section of the aerodrome where it has been placed on temporary timber props and is in poor physical condition. The Richmond Valley Council Works Depot moves to a new location next year and subsequently, the canteen building will need to be relocated to a new site.

The Plan of Management for the aerodrome states that:

The repositioning of returned structures is sensitive. They should not be located as free-standing structures in the zone formerly occupied by hangars,

but could be relocated in the area to the east formerly occupied by timber huts (GHD 2005:41).

At this stage, an exact location for the building has not been chosen due to the sensitivity of the issue. A decision on a new location will be part of the proposed works and will be decided in collaboration with Richmond Valley Council, the local community and the Heritage Branch. However, as a currently un-used structure, repair and reuse of the building is preferable to its abandonment. It is envisioned that the building could be used by the local community as a focus for historic interpretation of the aerodrome.

Although relocating the canteen to a permanent position and carrying out repair work will enhance its heritage values, the guidelines *“Moving Buildings: A study of issues surrounding moving buildings of heritage value for use in outdoor museums in Queensland”*, prepared by Jane Lennon for the QLD National Trust, will be used to guide this work and ensure that the new location and use are appropriate to the significance of the canteen and importantly, to the significance of the aerodrome.

The new location, if the PoM recommendations are followed, should be sited in an area formerly occupied by the timber huts. This appropriate general area is indicated on the following plan (Figure 3.1). Following the agreement of a new location for the canteen, a separate development application may need to be lodged with RVC for the re-siting of the building.



Figure 3.1: Historic World War II site plan overlaid on a modern aerial of the aerodrome, focused on the area occupied wartime buildings. The area enclosed by the blue line indicates an appropriate area for the relocation of the canteen – it was formerly occupied by the small timber huts and it is within the heritage listed portion of the aerodrome (enclosed by the red line).

Once a new position has been decided, the following repair works will be undertaken with the assistance of community volunteers:

- Remove non-original and heavily damaged verandah;
- Move building to new location (location to be decided by RVC, Heritage Branch and local stakeholders);
- Re-stump building (original plans will be referred to for layout, shape and height of stumps, antcaps to be included);
- Repair any damaged weatherboards (Where possible, deteriorated sections of weatherboards will be cut out and patches inserted rather than replacing entire board. Patches will be the same species as the existing timber and well-seasoned to avoid shrinkage. The grain in the patch will run in the same direction as the original)
- Undertake paint scrapes for original colour scheme; and
- Prepare building for painting and re-paint canteen.



4 Impact of Works

The works described in the preceding chapter have been assessed in relation to the statement of significance and management policies contained in the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Plan of Management (PoM) and The Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome: Bellman Hangar Conservation Management Plan in order to establish their level of impact.

4.1 Indigenous Heritage Impact

There are no recorded sites of Indigenous heritage values recorded within the aerodrome. An additional brief review of a recent Land Environment Strategy complied by RVC for another area of the aerodrome was also undertaken. This LES discussed the potential of the aerodrome to contain sites of value to the traditional (Bundjalung) owners, based on the outcomes of register searches, a desktop study and consultation with the Traditional Owners. The LES and the traditional owners concluded that whilst there are many sites of high value to the local Indigenous people, the aerodrome is not considered to be of Indigenous cultural heritage value. As such, the proposed works are considered acceptable in terms of impact on Indigenous cultural heritage, provided the recommendations given in Chapter 6 of this report are followed.

However, indigenous sites and artefacts are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act and any works which may reveal or disturb archaeological resources require a permit from or notification to the Department of Environment and Climate Change. If any potential Indigenous heritage sites or artefacts are discovered during the course of works, the work must stop immediately and DECC Cultural and Heritage Division should be notified.

4.2 Assessment of Works against Statement of Significance

The Statement of Significance contained in the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome PoM, endorsed by the NSW Heritage Office, has been adopted by Richmond Valley Council as the principal basis for future planning and works at Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome. The sections of the Statement of Significance relevant to this SOHI, from the PoM, Hangar CMP and the AMP, are assessed in light of the proposed works in the following table.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (RELEVANT SECTION)	ASPECT OF WORK WHICH MAY CAUSE IMPACT	MITIGATIVE MEASURES	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION
<i>The continued association of the place with aviation activities is an integral part of its significance, and is a use that greatly enhances the recognition and understanding of its historical associations.</i>	The works will not adversely impact on aviation use of the aerodrome and over time may allow for more aviation industry at the aerodrome.	None required.	None
<i>The aerodrome is a substantial landmark in Evans Head, from the ground and from the air.</i>	The clearing of the depot will, until any further use of this area begins, create a cleared area in an historically built up section of the aerodrome.	<p>The removal of built elements will allow for the remediation of this land, which will in turn allow greater public access to the site.</p> <p>This area of land is under consideration as the site of a new nursing home. PoM policies and guidelines for any future development in this area should be followed.</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Ensuring that the use of the new land is developed in a sympathetic manner and structures are sympathetic to the existing structures on site.</p>
	The loss of the Works Depot Bellman Hangar will be a visible loss to the aerodrome from the air.	The use of the Works Depot Hangar to ensure the survival of the in situ Hangar will ensure the primary in situ historic structure on the aerodrome survives.	Low
<i>The aerodrome has aesthetic significance because of its landmark qualities. Its sheer size as an open grassland area crossed by runways gives it a powerful sense of place when viewed from elevated viewpoints or the air.</i>	The removal of the works depot will not impact on the sense of open space at the site nor will it impact on the runways.	None required	None
<i>The subject site is socially significant to a number of local and national group</i>	Disassembly of works depot hangar plus relocation and repair of canteen	Local community volunteers will be able to be involved with carrying out these works. In addition, the works will ensure the survival of key structures at the aerodrome which is the wish of the local community.	None
<i>Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome contains a number of features and potential archaeological resources that have some ability to</i>	Removal of modern fill may still disturb archaeological resources located at the surface of the World War II ground	The standard Evans Head Stop Work Policy as outlined in the AMP should be used by staff at the site to ensure that any archaeological resources that are disturbed are	Any sub-surface works in the future may require archaeological monitoring,

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (RELEVANT SECTION)	ASPECT OF WORK WHICH MAY CAUSE IMPACT	MITIGATIVE MEASURES	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION
<i>contribute to our knowledge of the establishment and operation of World War II training bases, in particular Bombing and Gunnery Schools.</i>	level.	properly recorded. The restoration of the existing buildings and MG pit will also ensure their long term survival as part of the aerodrome.	dependent on the works.

4.3 Assessment of Works against Conservation Policies

The policies recommended in the heritage reports prepared for the site have been adopted by Richmond Valley Council as the primary guide for management as well as future planning and work. Accordingly, the proposed Works Depot removal and building repair works are assessed in light of the relevant PoM and Bellman Hangar CMP policies.

4.3.1 PoM Policies

The PoM contains several general guiding policies – all of these policies have been used to guide the formation of the proposed works, including:

Policy 1 **Significance the Basis for Planning Work**

Policy 2 **Adoption of the Burra Charter**

Policy 3 **Adoption of Policies**

Policy 4 **Expert Heritage Conservation Advice**

In addition, the following policies have also been taken into consideration.

Policy 7 **Relationship with Stakeholders**

The Council should seek to liaise with all relevant stakeholders, including community and special interest groups, on development and management decisions affecting the heritage significance of the place.

The proposed works will be subject to a Development Application and therefore interested stakeholders will have the opportunity to review the documents and make submissions.

Policy 8 *Involvement of Stakeholders in the Management of the Place*

In addition, the works allow for the involvement of volunteers in the disassembly of the works depot hangar and the repair of the canteen, as well as in assisting with the decision on the new site for the relocated hangar.

Policy 10 *Conservation of the Bellman Hangar Fabric*

The Bellman Hangar should be preserved. This would entail preservation and restoration of some building material and the removal and reconstruction of elements corroded to the point where their structural integrity is compromised.

The current project aims to implement Option 3 of this policy which states:

Rectify the whole of the existing structure, maintaining the same overall dimensions and salvaging components from the nearby Council Works Depot Building (the hangar).

Policy 16 *Community Activities*

The ability of community groups with close associations with the aerodrome (such as veterans groups and the local community) to hold commemorative events and meetings at the aerodrome shall be maintained in future management decisions.

The proposed works will enhance the opportunities of the local community to be able to access and use the remaining World War II infrastructure for community activities and events and will involve members of the local community in the process of restoring the buildings.

Policy 19 *Development within the Southern Hangar and Taxiway Area*

Retention of the Works Depot hangar is not essential for conservation of the heritage values of the aerodrome.

The works depot hangar will not be retained in situ however it will be disassembled and reused for the repair of Hangar 160.

The Southern Hangar Area/Works Depot Zone may be redeveloped ...Future buildings in this area should be required to reflect the general orientation, spatial arrangement and compatible external building materials and where possible the scale of the former hangers.

Future projects being considered include the use of works area as part of a nursing home. Any development in this area would be subject to these development guidelines.

4.3.2 Archaeological Management Plan Policies

These policies are not relevant as the proposed works do not include any sub-surface works. Nonetheless, if archaeological resources and/or relics are discovered during works, the following procedure should be followed:

STOP WORK	Immediately
CONTACT	A qualified archaeologist as soon as possible
NOTIFY	The archaeologist should notify the Heritage Branch of the NSW Department of Planning
ASSESS	The archaeologist should assess the significance of the resource and recommend a course of action Investigate, record and remove Protect and avoid Excavate, record and preserve
APPLY	To the Heritage Branch of the NSW Department of Planning for a Section 60 Excavation Permit or consent to continue works
RECOMMENCE	Work once the Heritage Branch of the NSW Department of Planning has approved course of action

4.3.3 Bellman Hangar Conservation Management Plan Policies

The CMP states that:

It is preferable that if fabric is being replaced, the replacements are taken from existing Bellman Hangars scheduled for removal elsewhere (in particular, the Heritage section of the Defence Department should be canvassed for a Bellman Hangar scheduled for removal and the use of the RVC Works Depot Bellman Hangar should be considered). If there are no other Bellman Hangars available, like for like replacement should occur.

The proposed disassembly, cleaning and storing of the works depot hangar parts has been designed so that this policy can be implemented.

4.4 Enhancement of Heritage Value

The Richmond Valley Council works depot will be relocated to a new site and the removal of its built elements, if carried out in an appropriate way, will assist with the enhancement of the aerodrome's heritage values. In particular, the relocation will result in the repair and reuse of the former canteen building which is currently unused and unmentioned. In addition, its possible use by the community as a focus of the aerodrome's interpretation will assist with social significance of the aerodrome and ensure greater public involvement at the site. Further, the disassembly, treatment and storing of the works depot hangar portal frames and door frames for future use in the repair and restoration of Hangar 160 will ensure that this hangar is repaired with genuine parts and will undergo very little loss of integrity. The continued use of Bellman Hangar parts in the future will ensure the Hangar is kept in good repair for future generations.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

Overall, this impact assessment concludes that the Council Works Depot Removal from Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome will have no archaeological impact and minimal adverse heritage impact on the significance of the site. Further, it has the capacity to enhance the significance of the Bellman Hangar (hangar 160), the canteen building and to assist with community involvement at Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome.

RVC has instigated measures, such as involvement of heritage consultants to oversee the works, consultation with historic structures engineers for advice and involvement of the local community, to mitigate potential adverse heritage and archaeological impacts. The design of the works is sympathetic to the heritage significance of the site and has responded appropriately to the site's level of significance. Importantly, the statements of significance and the management policies contained in the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Plan of Management, Archaeological Management Plan and Bellman Hangar Conservation Management Plan have been used as the basis of the works method, and the design has responded accordingly.

Consequently, it is the view of Converge Heritage and Community that the proposed works will have minimal adverse heritage and archaeological impact and furthermore will enhance the existing heritage values of the site as well as providing the local community with greater access to the site.

Converge Heritage + Community therefore recommends that the works should be approved by the Heritage Branch of the NSW Department of Planning, with the conditions outlined below.

5.2 Recommended Conditions of Approval

Should the proposed works be approved, the following conditions of approval are recommended:

- All works should be carried out as specified in this SOHI (chapter 4);
- The Stop Work procedures be communicated to all staff again, prior to works being completed;
- An archaeologist should be on call during all works in case the contractor reveals features which should be assessed and recorded by an archaeologist;

- If any potential Indigenous heritage archaeological resources are revealed, the stop work procedure should be followed and the Cultural and Heritage Division of DECC, together with the traditional owners, should be notified immediately;
- Parts of the disassembled works depot Hangar that are deemed surplus to future requirements for maintaining the in situ hangar be advertised for sale for use in refurbishing other significant Bellman Hangars;
- Training and /or induction of all staff and contractors involved in any on site work should be undertaken prior to works, to raise awareness of the significance of the aerodrome in relation to the proposed works;
- Local community volunteers be involved in the repair works to the canteen and the disassembly works to the works depot hangar, wherever possible;
- The new location for the canteen building should be decided by Richmond Valley Council, council's heritage consultant, the local community and Heritage Branch of the NSW Department of Planning;
- The progress of the disassembly and repair works be communicated to the public;
- A record of all works and repairs should be undertaken. This record should include a written summary and photographs of the condition before works commence, of the process taken during works and of the final condition.

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- 2008 *Local Environment Study - Evans Head Aerodrome – Proposed Aged Care Facility – Amend. No 31 Rezoning of Part Lot 141 DPI067639 from Rural 1(b1) and part Industrial to 2(v) Village Zone for Retirement Village and Nursing Home*. Unpublished report prepared by Richmond Valley Council.

Websites

<http://www.woodburnevansheadrsl.com.au/history.htm>

Appendix A Indigenous History


The following Indigenous history is largely derived, with permission, from Richmond Valley Council Local Environment Study – Evans Head Aerodrome (2008). This study involved consultation with the Traditional Owners of the Evans Head area.

The Evans Head region is recognised as being an area of significant cultural and historical heritage for Aboriginal people (RVC 2000a:11). The entire region surrounding Evans Head was an important gathering place for the people of the Bundjalung nation (comprising approximately 13 tribes). This nation comprised numerous tribal groups who were part of a larger linguistic group who shared a common culture and occupied an area stretching from Nerang Valley in Queensland, south to the Clarence River and west to the Great Dividing Range (DLWC 2003:18).

The Bundjalung tribal group occupied the Evans Head area, where they used to hunt, fish and gather shellfish from the river estuary, and also utilised the diversity of plant food available. Traditional knowledge indicates that the Evans Head area is also significant due to previous use as a ceremonial ground and for collection of orche from Red Hill (From Goanna Headland Plan of Management quoted on <http://www.woodburnevansheadrsl.com.au/history.htm>). Numerous shell middens and flaked stone artefacts have been recorded in the Evans Head area, however, no recordings have occurred within the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome (RVC 2000a: 11).

There are numerous Aboriginal mythological stories relating to the Evans Head area. These stories provide an explanation of how people came to occupy the region and the rules by which they lived. There is also a local version of the Three Brothers story, which exists in various forms throughout many parts of the north and mid-north coasts and is another myth explaining creation and settlement. In it, Berrung, a hero in Aboriginal culture, came ashore with his two brothers as the first Aboriginal people in Australia. Berrung created the dialects, showed the others how to make fire and taught them laws regarding *kippara* (the initiation ceremonies) and marriage and food. However, a quarrel occurred, the brothers fought and separated, and so the Aborigines were split into tribes (Keats 1988). Whilst there are numerous other stories relating to Aboriginal sites and

experiences within the Evans Head region, there are no records that indicate the site has any particular significance to the Aboriginal people.



European contact and settlement in the Evans Head area led to the displacement of the Aboriginal people of the Evans Head area from lands upon which they had lived and subsequently, their population declined. The Evans River and its environs were known as the area where the most numerous and brutal massacres of Aboriginal people occurred, for example there is an 1840s massacre site located within the locality of Goanna Headland, where twenty-four archaeological sites have been recorded.

A search of the Native title Register has indicated that two (2) Native Title Claims have been lodged in the area however this claim does not impact on the aerodrome, which is in ownership of Richmond Valley Council.

Selection and Establishment of No 1 BAGS

No 1 BAGS was the first Bombing and Gunnery School to be established in Australia under the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS). The purpose of the school was to train Air Observers, Bomb Aimers and Air Gunners in the theory and practice of bombing and air-to-air gunnery.² For this purpose a very specific terrain was needed: vast areas of open, flat space well isolated from any residential or commercial areas for protection from ricocheting bullets and shrapnel, with sufficient hillocks required for the observation and plotting of the falling bombs. Enough land was needed to establish an airfield, aerodrome and camp area, officer's accommodation and isolated bombing and gunnery ranges. Sir Valston Hancock, Director of Works and Buildings for the RAAF in 1939 and the initial inspector of Evans Head as a potential location for No 1 BAGS, described the land at Evans Head as '*one of the most natural bombing and air firing ranges in the world.*'³

Construction of the base was rapid; indeed the first stage was completed before the official letter confirming resumption of the land for defence purposes was made on 22 January 1941 and the base was ready to accept its first trainees seven months after its construction was authorised. Substantial works were carried out to the aerodrome for the construction of No 1 BAGS including the extension of the aerodrome in 1939 with the acquisition of an additional 600 acres. Extensive engineering works were required to establish roads, bridges, culverts, drainage and water supply and large gravel areas for aircraft use. Power was supplied from Ballina and water from a number of bores which were drilled to a depth of 20 – 50 feet.⁴

When the RAAF was disposing of the site from 1945, they noted that Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome contained an area of approximately 27,000 acres of land, broken down as follows:⁵

- Aerodrome and Camp: 344 acres of Commonwealth owned land;
- Explosives Area: 243 acres of Commonwealth owned land;

² Houghton-James, J. et.al. (eds), 2004. *Wings at War – RAAF at Evans Head 1939-1945*. Evans Head Living Museum and Community Technology Centre Inc., Evans Head NSW., p.14.

³ Hancock, V. *Op.cit.*, p.64.

⁴ Houghton-James, *op.cit.*, p.6-7.

⁵ NAA; A705, 171/106/114 Part 1. 1945 – 1949. *DWB – Property – Evans Head NSW – Bombing Ranges and Aerodrome Extensions – Disposal of Surplus Assets*.

- North and South Bombing Ranges: c.26,413 acres of which 105 acres was Commonwealth owned land and the remainder was State Crown Land secured under provisions of National Security.

Documents detailing the disposal of buildings after the war note that the entire program of initial works and all subsequent works carried out at Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome totaled a cost of £558,385.⁶

Construction Methods

Due to the prohibitive cost during war years of using durable materials such as brick, the majority of war buildings were constructed using prefabricated timber and steel huts and hangars. These prefabricated buildings became a staple of war buildings as they were cheap, easily and quickly assembled and easily adapted into various configurations of size and shape.

Operation of the Aerodrome - No 1 BAGS

On 13 August 1940, an advance party arrived to prepare the aerodrome for trainees, the first 10 of whom arrived 26 August 1940. The first aircraft (Fairey Battles) arrived several weeks later on 7 September 1940. At its height, No 1 BAGS utilised 70 Fairey Battle aircraft with Wirraway and Anson aircraft arriving daily from Amberley RAAF base in Queensland for bombing practice.⁷

The primary purpose of the Bombing and Gunnery School was to train Air Observers, Bomb Aimers and Air Gunners in the theory and practice of bombing and air-to-air gunnery. The time constraints of war resulted in each course lasting an intensive 4 weeks only, in which time the trainees needed to be completely schooled in bombing and air gunnery practices.

In addition to the actual training of bombing and gunnery crew, a multitude of other duties were undertaken in order for No 1 BAGS to function; such as plane maintenance, armament maintenance, plane fitting, fuelling, bomb maintenance, stores control, administration, payroll, housekeeping, cooking, grounds maintenance, parachute packers, fitters, armourers, clerks, cinefilm operators, smiths, transport drivers and many other occupations. By 1942, No 1 BAGS had become a completely self-contained village.

⁶ NAA; A705, 171/106/114 Part 1. 1945 – 1949. *DWB – Property – Evans Head NSW – Bombing Ranges and Aerodrome Extensions – Disposal of Surplus Assets.*

⁷ Haughton – James, *op. cit.*, p.3-4.

Operation of the Aerodrome - No 1 Air Observers School

By March 1943, the British Air Ministry realised they had an oversupply of aircrew and consequently, in December 1943, No 1 BAGS was disbanded.⁸ On 9 December 1943, No 1 Air Observers School (AOS) was relocated from Cootamundra to Evans Head with 1,496 personnel and trainees. The AOS was established to train Navigators, Bomb Aimers, Gunners and Air Observers. The AOS trained over 630 personnel during its operation, using Ryan, Tiger Moth, Wackett and Anson aircraft. The school was disbanded on VP (Victory in the Pacific) day, 15 August 1945.

The Decommissioning of the Aerodrome

In 1945, after the AOS was disbanded, the Care and Maintenance Unit was established at the aerodrome and operated until August 1947, when the responsibility of the aerodrome was passed to the Department of Civil Aviation, ending approximately 10 years of RAAF use and occupation.

By 1947, there were very few aircraft left at the aerodrome and throughout the late 1940s most of the aerodrome buildings were dismantled and destroyed or transferred to other locations. By 1953, only two of the 17 Bellman Hangars remained (Hangar 148 and the subject Hangar, 160). It has been formerly assumed that one of these Hangars was transferred to Coffs Harbour and was later transferred back to Evans Head for use as the Council Works Depot on the southern portion of the site. However, archival files indicate that the Evans Head Hangars were disposed of to the following locations:⁹

- Department of Civil Aviation - 1 hangar (the subject hangar which remained at Evans Head);
- Richmond RAAF – 4;
- Regents Park – 10; and
- Williamstown RAAF – 2.

⁸ Dennis, P. et al., *op.cit.*, p.227.

⁹ NAA; A705, 102/1/293 Part 1. *Hangars - General - Director of Works and Buildings]- RAAF Hangars - Portable Bellman Allotment – Policy.*

As such, it appears that the modified Bellman hangar presently used as the RVC depot was not one of the original Evans Head Hangars.

From 1947, the aerodrome was used by Butler Air Transport for commercial aviation activities and in 1952, the Department of Defence handed over the aerodrome to the Department of Transport.

Commercial activities ceased in the mid 1950s, when the aerodrome was closed to commercial flights and its commercial aviation activities were transferred to Casino. In 1958, the Department of Transport handed the control of the aerodrome to Woodburn Shire Council under the Airport Local Ownership Plan.

Since the mid 1950s, Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome has been used for several purposes including an ELG, aircraft storage facility, ordnance depot and as a staging base for supplies during floods. On 9 February 1954, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh flew into Evans Head during their visit to the North Coast.


Much of the aerodrome land to the south has been redeveloped for residential areas and that in the south-east for an industrial estate. In 1985, the main runway (runway 18/36) was lengthened to the north-east while the aerodrome was being temporarily used by Fokker Friendship Services whilst the facilities at Casino were being upgraded.

Recent History of Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome

The aerodrome remained under the control of Woodburn Shire Council until 1992 when ownership was passed to Richmond River Shire Council¹⁰. Council, in line with a Deed of Agreement for the site, subsequently downgraded the flying status of the aerodrome although it is still used by several types of aircraft for recreational aviation and as an ELG. In particular, Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome has been used for the Great Eastern Fly-In; an annual event for recreational aviators from around Australia. The aerodrome is also the focus for war commemorative events held in Evans Head.

In the late 1990s, a section of land comprising the extreme south portion of the aerodrome was subdivided and developed for residential housing.

¹⁰ Now called Richmond Valley Council



In August 2000, the aerodrome was listed in the NSW State Heritage Register. The proponents were the very active Evans Head community who have deep attachments to the site. More than 3000 people signed a petition to save the wartime aerodrome by having it listed on the State Heritage Register. This strong community attachment continues today.

Appendix C Detailed Site Description

The following is an extract from the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Plan of Management, prepared by GHD for Richmond Valley Council in 2005.

Repainting Portal Frame

The steel portal frame should be repainted to significantly slow further corrosion of this significant component, according to the following directions:¹¹

- Paint samples should be taken and analysed prior to works to determine the colours and compositions of the original paint layers and any subsequent over painting;
- Similar paint colour and composition should be prepared for use on the Bellman Hangar;
- Paint samples should be taken and analysed to establish if paint is lead based – if so, any subsequent cleaning would need to be in accordance with RVC’s environmental policies and protocols;
- Prior to repainting all steel should be cleaned back to bare metal. Wet sand blasting is the preferable option (dependent on RVC’s Environmental Policy regarding lead paint);
- An inorganic zinc primer should be used as the base coat (recommended by the Heritage Collections Council for iron elements displayed outdoors, particularly in an aggressive, marine environment); and
- Following application of paint, a high-build epoxy top coat and a final clear polyurethane coating with a UV absorbing agent (recommended by the Heritage Collections Council for iron elements displayed outdoors, particularly in an aggressive, marine environment).

¹¹ Parris, Roger. *Conservation Notes on the Bellman Hangar at Evans Head*.