



RAAF BASE AMBERLEY, QUEENSLAND

Base Address	Ipswich, QLD
Base Age	1940
Region	South Queensland
Date of Last Data Review	December 2012



Description

RAAF Base Amberley has been operated by Defence as an airfield for more than 60 years. The base is currently the largest operational Airforce base in Australia with a size of over 1,600 hectares, and employs more than 3,000 personnel. The Base is located 7 kilometres from Ipswich and 50 kilometres southwest of Brisbane.



Base Activities

The main activities carried out at the base are associated with the operation and maintenance of aircraft. The base has several aircraft maintenance areas, which incorporate battery workshops, wash-down areas, engine testing facilities, etc. There is a large quantity of aviation fuel stored in above ground and underground tanks and fire training areas also exist around the base.

The base also contains a sewerage treatment plant, an electroplating facility with a water treatment plant, a service station, firing ranges and chemical storage areas.

Historical activities have also included the use of landfills around the base to dispose of waste materials associated with historical base operations.

Contamination Information

Known Contamination

Known contamination around the base includes: -

- Fuel in soil.
Some leakage of fuel is known to have occurred from above ground and underground storage tanks in former fuel farm areas at the base. The leakages have resulted in areas of fuel contaminated soil.
- Heavy metals in surface waterways.
Discharge of poor quality water from the sewerage treatment plant has led to some elevated concentrations of heavy metals in receiving surface water bodies.
- Wastes disposed into landfill areas.



A range of wastes have been disposed into landfill areas, including asbestos, oils, solvents, poisons, aircraft parts, car bodies and parts, drums, used containers, floor sweepings, metal shavings, paint, sealants, ash from incinerators, demolition waste, electroplating waste, domestic and putrescible waste, asphalt, redundant equipment, valve pits and building materials from the former aircraft decontamination facility. These disposal practices have led to contamination within soils in these areas.

- Heavy metals from firing ranges.

Buried waste from firing range activities has resulted in a localised area of soil containing elevated concentrations of heavy metals.

- Radioactive materials

Buried radioactive waste is known to exist around some areas of the base. These areas have been assessed and the contamination is at safe levels, provided appropriate management measures are followed.

Risk Assessment Rating

Potential risks from known contamination have been identified. Further assessment of the nature and extent of these risks has been prioritised by Defence. The risks are actively managed by Defence until further assessment and remediation works are completed.

Current Status

The base has had numerous phases of investigation completed, including Stage 1 desktop assessments, Stage 2 intrusive investigations, Stage 3 remediation design/ feasibility/ planning reports and Stage 4 remediation programs.

Regular monitoring of surface water and groundwater is being conducted at the base to ensure works completed at the site to date have been successful in minimising environmental impact to the surrounding environment.

The need for additional investigations to assess the quality of soil and/or groundwater around other areas of the base and remediation works in areas with known contamination has been identified but has not yet been completed.

Other Information

25 reports relating to the environmental condition at the site have been completed between 2004 and 2011. For further details relating to these documents, contact Department of Defence at ncrp@defence.gov.au.