History of Parafield and Adelaide Airports

Report to Austral Archaeology Pty Ltd

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Parafield and Adelaide Airports: Overview History

Aviation began in South Australia in June 1871, when visiting showman Thomas Gale made a flight in a coal-gas filled balloon in front of a crowd of spectators gathered at the cattle auction market on North Terrace, to land safely in the suburbs fifteen minutes later. (*Register* 15 June 1871) No-one seems to have put early ballooning to any practical use in South Australia, but it remained an occasional form of public entertainment for the next few decades: in 1890 Mademoiselle Viola, with "long flowing auburn hair and a charmingly merry expression" delighted the crowds in Gawler by swinging from a trapeze suspended from a hot air balloon over the showground, "dressed in a tight-fitting red silk costume". The event ended in an unscheduled collision with a pine tree, but the artiste was uninjured. (*Bunyip* 8 August 1890)

It was nearly forty years after the first balloon ascent before the first powered aircraft flew in South Australia, but even then, the motive for most of the early fliers was still to make money by entertaining the public with the novelty of what their machines could do. What we regard as the core business of modern aviation - carrying mail, cargo and passengers long distances by air - took a surprisingly long time to develop. As it did so, ground facilities to service aviation gradually developed along with it, first known as landing grounds, then aerodromes, and now airports.

The first powered heavier-than-air flight in Australia was made by an imported Bleriot Type XI monoplane at Bolivar, north of Adelaide, in March 1910. There is a mild historical dispute over exactly what day it was, and who was at the controls, but the details are unimportant. The aircraft was damaged in the flight and destroyed by fire soon afterward. (Lataan 1983) There is no record of another flight in South Australia until after the First World War. Those early aerial demonstrations were expensive and risky, and the flying entrepreneurs preferred to perform for the bigger and more profitable crowds of Melbourne and Sydney.

These early experiments in aviation were the era of enthusiastic amateurs working in backyard workshops. The First World War changed that dramatically, and a recognisable aviation industry began to appear soon after the war ended. The Great War had brought about tremendous advances in the technology of flying, introducing larger twin-engined aircraft capable of faster speeds and higher altitudes, and able to carry larger loads for greater distances. There were comparable advances in ancillary areas such as radio communication, navigation, meteorology and airfield design.

Commercial Aviation

Many military aircraft became available for civilian use after the war. Most were trainers, fighters or small observation craft that had little commercial application, and these gave rise to the "barnstorming" era, as returned pilots in cheaply-bought surplus aircraft gave thrilling demonstrations to a paying public. By 1919, barnstorming and joyride flights were taking off from suburban fields like Unley Oval and Albert Park. Very few of these pilots had long careers; most died in flying accidents in the 1920s.

One early flying entrepreneur was Harry Butler, who had a clearer vision of the commercial possibilities of aviation. On 6 August 1919, he carried the mail by air from

Adelaide to his home town of Minlaton on Yorke Peninsula. It was the first commercial flight in Australia, and also the first flight over sea in the Southern Hemisphere. In the same year he formed the Harry J Butler & Kauper Aviation Company, operating from a field at Dry Creek, but his business was limited by the size of his aircraft, which could only carry mailbags or a single passenger.

Much more useful aircraft were the bombers that were designed to fly long distances carrying heavy loads, such as the Handley Page 0/400 and Vickers FB27 Vimy, both in service by the end of the war. Recognising their potential, the Australian government offered a prize of £10,000 to the first aircraft to fly from Britain to Australia in under 30 days. The great race that followed in November-December 1919 was won by Ross and Keith Smith of Adelaide, who flew a Vickers Vimy with a crew of four from London to Darwin in 28 days, demonstrating that international air travel was feasible. In a triumphal round-Australia tour that followed, the Vimy visited Adelaide, landing at Northfield on 23 March 1920.

There were two focal areas for early aviation in Adelaide. The Northfield and Dry Creek area in the north was where Butler and Kauper built the first hangar in 1920. A rival landing ground was in the north-west near Port Road, variously known as Albert Park or Cheltenham or Hendon (these names all referred to the one field - in those days suburbs and localities did not have clearly-defined boundaries, and people used names very loosely). The initial specification for a landing ground was simply that it needed to have a large level open space free of obstructions; any sheep paddock without too many trees would do. However, as proprietors built workshops, fuel pumps and hangars to service their aircraft, the infrastructure requirements made these into fixed localities.

In 1920 the Commonwealth took a hand in regulating aviation, passing the *Air Navigation Ac*t. As almost all the aircraft and their pilots were ex-military, it seemed logical for aviation to be administered by the Defence Department, where the Civil Aviation Branch was formed. (Gall 1986, p. 13) In 1922 the Commonwealth acquired land at Albert Park, establishing the first formally recognised landing ground in Adelaide, known as Adelaide Aerodrome. It occupied a large area along Tapleys Hill Road in what is now the suburb of Hendon, extending east almost to the Albert Park station on the Grange railway. Harry Butler died after a flying accident in 1923, but his company was taken over by Horrie Miller and continued operations from the Dry Creek field as the Miller Aviation Company. In 1924 the Larkin Aircraft Supply Company began carrying regular mails from Dry Creek to Sydney. By the mid-1920s, Adelaide effectively had a free enterprise landing ground competing with a government one.

The Smith brothers' achievement in their Vickers Vimy did not involve true oceanic travel, but merely short legs island-hopping between fuel stops. It was the development of the three-engined Dutch Fokker FVII in 1927 - the most famous aircraft of the type being Charles Kingsford-Smith's Southern Cross - that changed civil aviation. De Havilland in Britain, Ford in the USA and Junkers in Germany soon built similar aircraft. They were all designed to carry a significant amount of cargo or passengers over very long distances, and made the first true oceanic flights possible. By 1929 all the world's oceans had been crossed by aircraft, and commercial flights between Australia's major cities became practical.

Parafield Aerodrome

The Fokker era and the new possibilities of aviation made it necessary for Adelaide to have a single well-developed airfield. Originally there were plans to buy additional land at Hendon to extend the Adelaide Aerodrome, but the acquisition price was apparently too expensive. In April 1927 the Civil Aviation Branch (CAB) decided instead to buy 320 acres (132ha) of open farmland at Parafield to be used as a permanent landing ground, and some flying operations had commenced there by October that year. But the transfer of operations was a leisurely process, and some commercial aircraft continued to use the existing facilities at Dry Creek and Albert Park for several more years. The Royal Aero Club had built a clubhouse at Parafield before the end of 1927, and the Miller Aviation Company (which became MacRobertson Miller Airways soon afterwards) and Australian Aerial Services Ltd were operating from Parafield by early 1928. Western Australian Airlines opened an Adelaide-Perth service out of Parafield in 1929. The same year, CAB built a red brick caretaker's residence beside the entrance gate, which is the oldest building still standing at Parafield.

Parafield was officially declared open in August 1929:

> A new aerodrome, to be called the Adelaide Aerodrome, is to be opened on Monday, and [hangar space] has been secured by the Australian Aerial Services Ltd. To date it has involved an expenditure of £11,000. It has an area of 147 acres with a clear approach in all directions and an excellent surface. The hangar has a clear space of nearly 10,000 square feet and is fitted with electric light and power plugs. Adjoining the hangar are waiting rooms and a pilots' dressing room (*Advertiser* 3 August 1929)

Lease records show the gradual growth of a row of leased hangars in a neat line along the north-eastern end of the landing ground: MacRobertson Miller and the Commercial Aviation Company in 1930, Eyre Peninsula Airways in 1931. In the dark years of the Depression some of the aviation companies were short-lived, and hangars changed hands regularly. So far the Civil Aviation Branch had spent very little money on improvements at Parafield; it simply provided a grassy field and leased sites to commercial operators who built their own hangars. Australian National Airways (ANA) joined the aviation industry in 1936 with flights between Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne and Sydney, and added its own hangar to the row in 1936: a steel-framed igloo which still stands as Hangar 59, occupied by Bruce Hartwig's Flying School. Guinea Airways leased a hangar in 1935, and then built its own igloo hangar beside ANA's in 1939 (Hangar 58), the aerodrome was becoming crowded, and there was a need for a control tower to direct ground and air operations. The first temporary timber control tower was built in 1937. Hangar 51, also leased by ANA, was in place by 1939, and Hangar 50, leased by Henry Snider, was built at about the same time. (NAA A877 CL20885) Some service buildings such as Shell and Vacuum garages appeared about 1938.

With another war looming by 1938, the Defence Department had enough on its hands without administering dozens of civilian aerodromes across Australia, and the new Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) was formed to oversee the operation of commercial airlines. One of its first acts at Parafield was to build a new administration building and control tower, completed in 1940 after the Second World War had begun. It was the

most impressive building at Adelaide Aerodrome at three storeys high, built in the Modern style with Art Deco ornament.

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 saw Parafield occupied by the RAAF as a training base. No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) was formed at Parafield on 2 January 1940, one of twelve formed throughout Australia. It flew Gypsy Moth and Tiger Moth trainers to instruct novice pilots, and in the next five years turned out nearly 2,000 graduates, many of them Empire Air Training Scheme cadets who went on to advanced training in Canada before joining the RAAF or RAF in Europe. A survey plan of Parafield in June 1940 shows that there were already 24 newly-built barracks huts and a Bellman hangar in position, and the new control tower was still under construction. (NAA A877/2 CL22357) Many new buildings would be added over the next two years. (NAA D156/122 1941/276) There is only one fatal training accident recorded at Parafield, when an instructor and cadet were killed in a crash in March 1940, only weeks after the school opened. in May 1944, No. 1 EFTS was transferred to Tamworth. (RAAF Historical Section 1995, pp. 15-16)

By formal agreement, the RAAF took over the new control tower and most of DCA's buildings at Parafield for the duration of the war. However, there was no alternative civil airfield in Adelaide, so limited commercial services by ANA, Guinea Airways and others continued. The Aero Club was suspended, and the EFTS commandeered its aircraft and occupied its premises. (NAA A705 171/21/25) There was considerable traffic passing through Parafield during the war years, as military aircraft were ferried from the eastern states to Western Australia and the Northern Territory. During the early period of the war, the Aero Club's brick clubhouse, built near the eastern perimeter of the airfield in 1938, was converted to a fire station. In 1941, RAAF hangar space was increased by the construction of a second Bellman transportable hangar. These were steel-framed prefabricated hangars developed for the RAF in 1936, and built in large numbers throughout the world during the Second World War.

An entirely new activity commenced in 1942 when the Division of Aircraft Production built large Airframe Repair Workshops at Parafield. The facility consisted of two large hangars and a number of workshops and other subsidiary buildings. The surrounding northern suburbs of Adelaide were undergoing an enormous wartime industrial expansion, with the Salisbury Explosives Factory established in 1940, employing 6,000 workers. At the same time the open space that had been the first Adelaide Aerodrome of 1922 at Albert Park became the site of the Hendon Ammunition Factory.

Despite having housed a RAAF training unit for five years, Parafield did not formally become an RAAF Station until 15 February 1945, and for a time was the base for No. 34 Transport Squadron. A large igloo hangar was completed for the RAAF the following April. (NAA A9186/230) These developments were to do with Parafield's new role in support of the Anglo-Australian Joint Project (later the Long-Range Weapons Establishment) established at Woomera the following year. However, this role was brief, and ended when RAAF Base Parafield closed once Woomera was operational in 1946. RAAF Base Edinburgh was created near the Salisbury Explosives Factory in 1955.

The Second World War had brought enormous infrastructure growth to Parafield. At the beginning of the war, the civil aerodrome had five commercial hangars, a caretaker's residence, temporary control tower and the Aero Club building standing. (NAA A877

CL20885) An inventory of RAAF Parafield in 1945 after the end of the war lists 145 buildings on the site, a large proportion of them accommodation blocks, with essential facilities such as a power house and water tower. (NAA A705 171/21/36) The service personnel living in those buildings constituted a bustling community with its own Post Office and local shops on the base.

As the war wound down most of this activity ended, and surplus buildings were being sold off from 1946 onward. However, the Parafield workshops remained at work servicing the 32 C-47 Dakota aircraft of the RAAF transport fleet. In 1951 the airframe workshops were expanded. In 1953 an additional wartime prefabricated Bellman hangar was brought from Mallala RAAF base to house the larger repair and overhaul workshop. (NAA AP5567/1 1953/22) Another airframe repair machine shop which had been built at Northfield in 1942 was also relocated to Parafield. The new facility was capable of working on Sabre and Mirage fighters, and also serviced the pilotless Jindivik target aircraft used at Woomera. (NAA AA5799/69 2333/8; Agency Notes CA 3657)

For its first twenty years, Parafield was a grassed field with no paved runways. This had the advantage that aircraft could simply take off and land right into the wind, whatever direction that might be. It also had several disadvantages. One was that the landing ground could not be used by large aircraft in wet weather when it became boggy; another was that for much of the year there was not much grass on the "grassed" field, and the dust raised by aircraft was considerable. During the war years the intensive activity of the Elementary Flying Training School had raised constant dust clouds which not only hindered operations, but also created an intolerable nuisance for surrounding residents. (NAA A2700/1 1044) Two cinder runways were formed in 1949, although they were not sealed until 1969.

Adelaide Airport

If the First World War had given birth to commercial aviation, the Second World War brought it to maturity. Millions of people had their first taste of flying during the war, and the wind-down of hostilities put thousands of aircraft on the market. Just as had happened thirty years earlier, a new generation of passenger aircraft based on Second World War bombers appeared in the late 1940s. They were bigger and faster than any pre-war aircraft, and pressurised to fly at higher altitude. With them came the new technologies of radar and jet engines, as well as far more sophisticated radio and more precise navigation. All over the world, airports began expanding to take the new aircraft and the technology that came with them.

Even during the war, Parafield had become too small. Performing the multiple roles of training pilots, ferrying military aircraft and repairing airframes in addition to its original commercial aviation functions had already pushed it to its limits. Aircraft had grown rapidly in size during the war years, and it was obvious that in future there would be more traffic and bigger aircraft. Parafield was settled into the training role, and as traffic increased it would become undesirable to have commercial flights and pilot training sharing the same airfield.

One specific technical issue which would soon demand more space was the intention of most Australian commercial airlines to introduce the Douglas DC-4 Skymaster aircraft for passenger services. Weighing 70,000 pounds (32 tonnes), it was nearly three times as

heavy as the DC-3 then in general service. Parafield's runways were not adequate to take these aircraft in wet conditions, and would have to be re-built, or new ones constructed elsewhere. The wartime influx of munitions workers into the northern suburbs had occupied all the available space around the perimeter of Parafield, so there was no room to expand. The only alternative was to build a completely new airfield.

Investigations for a new airport began as early as 1941, even before the wartime activity at Parafield had reached its peak. One early proposal for the new airfield site was the Victoria Park racecourse, a prospect which given the present controversy over car racing, seems ludicrous today. A newspaper report in 1944 said that DCA was assessing two sites between Henley Beach and Glenelg, and another one further south at Marion. (*News* 22 July 1944) A detailed report on the options was released by DCA in 1945. It proposed three possible new sites, at Woodville, Islington, and West Torrens. On the grounds of (a) space available for runways, (b) spatial separation from activities at Parafield, and (c) noise nuisance to surrounding houses, it concluded that West Torrens was the preferred site. (NAA A2700/1 1044)

A proposal to establish a "Transcontinental Type Airport" for Adelaide at West Torrens received Federal Cabinet approval in January 1946. By "transcontinental" the DCA meant that it would be capable of handling the larger aircraft operating the Sydney to Perth passenger service. (NAA A2700/1 1044)

Compulsory land resumptions and acquisitions began in 1946 and continued for several years. Cabinet had budgeted £133,000 for compensation to landowners. (NAA D4404/1 2/501) The area of land involved was 729ha, nearly six times the area of Parafield. Although it was close to the Adelaide city centre, most of the land was unoccupied and undeveloped, because it was low-lying and intermittently swampy, watered by sluggish creeks which were blocked by coastal dunes.

A map of the airport land in July 1944 shows it included parts of the Glenelg and Kooyonga golf courses, and most of the rest consisted of sand dunes, land described as "swampy with boxthorn", some grazing paddocks and a rubbish tip. Morphett and Richmond roads ran right through the site. The land was not completely unoccupied. There were Ansell's and Rosefield's dairies near Morphett Road, some vegetable gardens along Lew Road at Netley, glasshouses on Press Road at Brooklyn Park, and a few surveyed streets at West Richmond, south of Burbridge Road. Two commercial radio stations had transmitting masts in the area. In all there were nine public roads which had to be closed, about 35 freehold allotments which had to be compulsorily acquired, and about nine occupied houses, mostly small and of flimsy materials. Most of them were near the northern and eastern fringes of the land, but one house was still standing in the middle of the airport buildings in 1954, while hangars were being built around it. Another stood right at the intersection of Richmond and Morphett roads, on an allotment which is now close to where the main runways intersect in the middle of Adelaide Airport. (NAA A877/2 CL23248)

Earthworks began in 1947, but there was major civil engineering work to undertake, and it would be seven years before the first aircraft touched down. Brownhill and Keswick creeks crossed the land and ended in lagoons behind the foreshore dunes. They had to be diverted south to the Pattawalonga and north to the Torrens channel respectively. Drainage, filling and grading the site required hundreds of thousands of tons of crushed

rock to be transported before construction of roads, runways, paving and fencing could even commence. Over the next few years the site was stripped of vegetation and buildings, and became an expanse of bare earth about the area of the City of Adelaide, busy with trucks hauling crushed quarry rock, graders establishing levels and rollers compacting runways. (NAA D156/22 1955/201) By comparison, the only works that had ever been done at Parafield were to dig stormwater drains around the perimeter, lay some cinders on the grass, and seal some of the boggier areas of runway.

It was 1953 before any buildings were under construction at Adelaide Airport, with concrete floors laid for two aircraft hangars. The first built was a large purpose-built igloo hangar for Trans-Australian Airlines (TAA) completed by 1954. (NAA D156/122 1954/173) An identical hangar for ANA followed it. (NAA D156/122 1955/253) The terminal building and a temporary prefabricated control tower were commenced soon afterward, while roadways and parking areas were well advanced. (NAA D156/22 1955/201) A water storage tower, aircraft fuel tanks, a power house, fire station, maintenance workshops and miles of fencing were further behind in construction.

The design and construction of Adelaide Airport extended over eleven years, which coincided with the period of fastest growth in commercial aviation that Australia had seen, with the new generation of large post-war aircraft coming into service, and the public travelling in unprecedented numbers. The airport had been designed in 1944 to operate in an aviation world that was rapidly changing while it was being built. As Peter Donovan has pointed out, "This made it difficult for the planners and builders to determine for whom and for what types of aircraft they were planning and building." (Donovan 2005, p. 8) The design of the airport was still evolving while the drainage earthworks were underway; from a classic triangular layout in the 1940s, by 1953 it had become a V-plan, with two main runways oriented at 44° and 118°.

On 16 December 1954 a Dakota of the DCA fleet became the first aircraft to land at the new Adelaide airport. Three weeks later the first unscheduled commercial landings were made at Adelaide when three flights were diverted from Parafield because of smoke from bushfires in the Adelaide Hills.

The new airport officially opened on 16 February 1955, and commercial operations commenced, although the terminal building was still under construction and passenger facilities were makeshift. The opening meant that what had usually been known as West Beach airport since 1946 now became Adelaide Airport. Parafield, which had long held that name, was now demoted to Parafield Airport. In the city, Shell House on North Terrace had for years featured a rotating searchlight atop the radio mast on its roof. On 16 February 1955 the Shell House beacon was switched off because of the risk of pilots confusing it with the airport navigational beacon. (Daw 1982, p. 26)

The shift from Parafield to the new Adelaide Airport came just in time, because Parafield was already straining to serve the long-distance DC-4s and Convair 240s whose landing flightpaths brought them in very low over the surrounding roads and rooftops. Parafield could not have coped with what was coming. In the months after Adelaide Airport opened in 1955, Douglas DC-6s were coming into airline service in Australia, and Vickers Viscounts, the first of the generation of turbo-prop airliners of the 1950s, to be followed by Fokker Friendships in 1958, and Lockheed Electras in 1959. Then in the 1960s came the larger (and louder) jet turbine aircraft: Boeing 707s in 1962, Boeing 727s in 1964,

Douglas DC-9s in 1967, and Boeing 747s in 1971. They would progressively place increasing demands on Adelaide Airport's new infrastructure.

Parafield after 1955

After 27 years of being at the centre of commercial aviation in South Australia, Parafield suddenly became a quiet backwater. Its principal function since has been pilot training, and some general aviation. The temporary buildings of RAAF Base Parafield were mostly removed in the first few years after the war ended, and the infrastructure shrank back to the size of the 1939 civil airfield, but the facilities associated with the wartime workshops remained. The sophisticated technical capabilities of Parafield have made it a major aircraft maintenance and repair centre for Australian general aviation to the present. Most military aviation activity shifted to Edinburgh in 1955, although the Airframe Repair Workshops remained in service until 1972.

The land occupied by Parafield Airport has been extended on a number of occasions since 1928. The original airfield of 1928 was basically four sections in the north-east corner of the present airfield, extending from Main North Road west to Cross Keys Road. It grew in a long series of acquisitions of land parcels, commencing in 1942 during the war. By 1965 the land had more than doubled in area, comprising ten sections, extending west to the railway line. That allowed Cross Keys Road to be closed and the airfield extended westward to the railway. Within the airfield building complex, part of Cross Keys Road survives today as Dakota Drive. At about the same time Kings Road, which had always run in a diagonal kink past the airfield, was straightened and a new entrance roadway established. In recent decades several more sections have been added in the south-east, extending the airport land further south along Main North Road. However, all of these extensions since 1942 have simply added open space to the airfield's margins; all of the historically significant buildings and structures stand on the original land parcel.

There were also minor changes to the row of hangars. Henry Snider's hangar, one of the 1930s buildings, was removed to the less busy Gawler airfield, and replaced by a fuel depot. At the northern end of the row the old Aero Club building - the oldest building on the site - was demolished and replaced by a hangar in 1970.

The growth in general aviation has meant that, despite having its commercial and military role taken away from it, Parafield has maintained its importance in the fifty years since, and indeed seen significant infrastructure growth. The largest growth has been in the area of pilot training. In 1982 the workshop hangars built by the Department of Aircraft Production in 1942 were taken over by the Australian Aviation College (AAC). In 1987 the AAC gained the contract for training Qantas pilots and has since become one of Australia's leading aviation schools, offering diplomas and degrees in affiliation with the Parafield Aviation Campus of the Regency Institute of TAFE, and trains a large proportion of commercial pilots in the Australian region. It operates a range of aircraft for training pilots to varying levels of skill. In 1998 the AAC was taken over and operated by British Aerospace Flight Training.

The Growth of Adelaide Airport

Completion of the passenger terminal, which also housed the airport administrative offices and permanent control tower, took until August 1957. By that time, another major hangar had been built for ANA, and the airport could be regarded as fully operational. TAA and ANA had come to dominate Australian domestic commercial aviation by the 1950s, a situation that would be reinforced by Federal government policies - with the airlines evolving into Qantas and Ansett respectively - and survive until 2001.

A link with Australia's early aviation history appeared at Adelaide Airport in 1958. The Vickers Vimy that made the epic flight from London to Darwin in 1919 had then made a triumphal tour of Australia in 1920, been put in storage for years, and displayed for a time at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. However it was not actually a wartime relic, and the AWM was happy to support a move by Adelaide aviation enthusiasts to store the historic aircraft in a purpose-built memorial near the newly-opened Adelaide Airport terminal. The Vimy was dismantled and trucked to Adelaide by the RAAF, but was damaged by fire en route and had to undergo lengthy reconstruction before the Ross and Keith Smith War Memorial was opened in April 1958. A grassed area adjacent to the Memorial has become the site for a number of memorial plaques, mainly erected by the RAAF Association to commemorate the wartime service of RAAF and RAF units, from 1958 to the present.

The terminal building that opened in 1957 did not offer a large space for passenger movement, airline offices and commercial franchises, and as traffic steadily increased, it was soon crowded and inefficient much of the time. In 1969 the main runway was extended in length by 300m, and the terminal underwent a major extension to the west (airside) with the addition of a large passenger concourse over what had been tarmac. This had the downside of extending the building over the underground re-fuelling facilities. The cost of duplicating these further to the west was apparently unacceptable, and for the rest of its life, aircraft parked at the terminal had to be re-fuelled from tanker trucks. (Donovan 2005, p. 37)

In 1973 the airport land was extended to the south. In 1949, while the earthworks for Adelaide Airport were underway, the Commonwealth government had built a Migrant Hostel on the land immediately south of the Brownhill Creek diversion drain which ran along the airport's southern perimeter. The hostel, east of Tapleys Hill Road, was a complex of 16 Nissen and other prefabricated huts, kitchens and other buildings which housed migrants and displaced persons recently arrived in Australia. (NAA D608 IM230) By 1973 the post-war immigration programs had wound down. The hostel was closed and the land annexed to Adelaide Airport. (NAA D444! 5/8/21) Because of its location across the drain from the main airport land, the site has never been redeveloped.

The next major upgrading of airport facilities came in 1982. The most dramatic was the opening late in the year of a separate International Terminal beside the approach road into the airport, but there was also a new freestanding control tower out between the runways, an even larger expansion of the domestic terminal, with better baggage handling and security, another extension to the main runway, and general strengthening of taxiing and hardstanding surfaces. These changes reflected the arrival of another new generation of larger aircraft: Boeing 747s for international flights, and the wide-bodied commuter planes, the Airbus and Boeing 767, on domestic routes. However, the new

facilities smacked of penny-pinching. The new International terminal of 1982 was an austere single-storey building. There had been a proposal to install aerobridges for Boeing 747s in the new building, but it came to nothing - it would be another 23 years before Adelaide passengers boarded through aerobridges.

The following twenty years saw a succession of physical developments at Adelaide Airport. Large new hangars were built in 1980, 1986 and 1988. In 1988 Australian Airlines (formerly TAA, later Qantas) made Adelaide the centre of its national in-flight catering operations, and built large kitchens at Adelaide Airport. In 1998 the main runway was again extended, this time beyond the airport's original perimeter, requiring Tapleys Hill Road to be diverted in a long bend westward around the extension. There were many less conspicuous additions to workshops and maintenance areas, and the general aviation facilities saw steady growth.

The biggest physical change to Adelaide Airport since it opened came in the new century, with the replacement of the 1957 terminal. As early as 1982 it was intended that the domestic terminal would eventually be relocated alongside the newly-built international terminal. (Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works 1982, p. 16) But for decades the lions' share of Federal funding for airports was absorbed by the much bigger terminals at Sydney and Melbourne, while Adelaide remained "Australia's Cinderella airport". (Donovan 2005, p. 41)

Construction of the new dual terminal eventually began in November 2003. Incorporating the 1982 international terminal into its structure, it was to be many times larger than the two old terminals, combining domestic and international operations into one building, and incorporating far more sophisticated traffic movement, security and baggage handling features, and the long-awaited aerobridges. The new terminal officially opened in October 2005, although problems with the refuelling system delayed its use for domestic flights until February 2006.

Comparative Historical Summaries of Other Australian Airports

Sydney

Sydney has the oldest continuously-operating airport in Australia, Mascot having been used for aviation without a break since 1919. Unlike all other major Australian cities, Sydney has never relocated its airport. It began as a grassed field, with its first gravel runway built in 1930. It was renamed Kingsford Smith Aerodrome in 1936, and a terminal building with control tower was built in 1940. It has undergone massive expansion since, first greatly expanded between 1947 and 1954, then extended by the construction of new runways extending out into Botany Bay in 1968 and 1973, with an international terminal built in 1970. It has had its terminals completely rebuilt incorporating a light rail passenger transit system in recent years. Since the 1970s there have been repeated proposals to relocate Sydney airport southwest of the metropolitan area, but all have proved too politically controversial.

Bankstown, the other major airfield in Sydney, was established in 1929 and has been used for general aviation and pilot training ever since, except for a period when it was taken over by the RAAF during the Second World War. (Gall 1986)

Melbourne

Essendon airport was established in 1921 and remained Melbourne"s airport for nearly fifty years. It was expanded after the Second World War and its runways sealed to take DC-4s. (DCA 1950) When inner-city Essendon became too congested by the 1960s, a greenfields site was developed much further from the city at Tullamarine, and the new Melbourne Airport opened in 1970.

Brisbane

Brisbane's first airfield operated at Eagle Farm from the time of the first flight of 1912, but the field was unsatisfactory and boggy. In 1931 as commercial aviation expanded it was replaced by Archerfield, 20km south of the city. A terminal building and control tower were completed at Archerfield in 1941. During the Second World War, the US Air Force took over Eagle Farm for ferrying operations. They made the field serviceable by drainage works, sealed the runways and built hangars, in the process making it a more satisfactory landing ground than Archerfield. The new DC-4s used Eagle Farm for preference from 1946 onward and commercial operations returned there in 1947. Archerfield has been used for general aviation and pilot training since. The old Eagle Farm airport closed in 1988, and was replaced by the new Brisbane Airport alongside. (Moxon 2003, p.3) The new airport has had its terminal completely rebuilt incorporating a light rail transit system in recent years.

Perth

Perth has a complicated aviation history. Maylands aerodrome began operating in 1924. By the 1930s it was planned to move operations to Guildford. The site was bought in 1938, but the Second World War intervened, and the field was developed for RAAF and US Navy use. Commercial services began there in 1944. Guildford was renamed Perth Airport in 1952. Maylands remained in use for general aviation until 1963 when it closed and was replaced by Jandakot. An International terminal was built at Perth Airport in 1986. (FAC 1994) Plans to relocate Jandakot are proving controversial.

Adelaide and Parafield Airports: Chronology of Events

1910	First unofficial flight in SA at Bolivar (13 March)
	First official flight at Bolivar (17 March)
1919	Barnstorming flights from Albert Park
	Butler mail flight from Dry Creek to Minlaton (6 August)
	Harry J Butler & Kauper Aviation Company operating from Dry Creek
1920	Hangar built at Dry Creek
	Civil Aviation Branch formed within Defence Department
1922	Commonwealth acquired Albert Park
1923	Harry Butler killed, Horrie Miller took over his operation
1924	Larkin Aircraft Supply Company carrying mail to Sydney
1927	Commonwealth acquired land at Parafield (22 September)
	Parafield Landing Ground opened (1 October)
	Aero Club of South Australia formed (9 November)
	Fokker FVII in service
1928	Miller moved from Albert Park to Parafield and built hangar
	MacRobertson Miller Aviation Company formed
	Eyre Peninsula Airways formed
1929	Parafield Airport opened as Adelaide Aerodrome (5 August)
	Caretaker's residence built at Parafield
	Western Australian Airlines opened Adelaide-Perth service
1936	Australian National Airways formed
1937	First control tower built at Parafield
	Douglas DC-3 in service
1938	Department of Civil Aviation formed
	ANA hangar built at Parafield
1939	Guinea Airways hangar built at Parafield
1940	New control tower built at Parafield
	ANA hangar built at Parafield
	No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School established at Parafield (2 January)
	Barracks huts and Bellman hangar built at Parafield
	Parafield Aero Club suspended for duration of war

	Floodlights installed at airfield
1941	Second Bellman hangar built at Parafield
	Investigations commenced into need for second Adelaide airport
1942	Aircraft Maintenance Workshops established at Parafield
1944	DCA report on sites for new Adelaide Airport
	No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School disbanded at Parafield (12 December)
1945	Detailed report on West Beach site
	RAAF Base Parafield created (20 February)
	Igloo hangar built for RAAF at Parafield
1946	Cabinet approval for new airport at West Beach
	Commonwealth began acquiring land
	RAAF Base Parafield disbanded (11 June)
1947	Earthworks commenced at West Beach site
	Douglas DC-4 in service
1949	Cinder runways formed at Parafield
1950	West Beach site officially named Adelaide Airport (7 August)
	Second runway under construction
1951	Parafield Airframe Workshops expanded
1954	First landing on Adelaide Airport main runway (16 December)
	Igloo hangars built for ANA and TAA at Adelaide Airport
1955	Parafield closed to commercial flights (15 February)
	First commercial landing at Adelaide Airport (16 February)
	Vickers Viscount and Douglas CD-6 in service
	RAAF Base Edinburgh formed
1957	Adelaide Airport Passenger terminal opened (30 August)
1958	Sir Ross and Keith Smith Memorial built
	Fokker Friendship in service
1959	Lockheed Electra in service
	Airlines of South Australia formed
1962	Boeing 707 in service
1963	New Adelaide Airport radar installed
1964	Boeing 727 in service
1967	Douglas DC-9 in service
1968	Parafield runways sealed

1969 Adelaide Airport terminal extended, main runway lengthened 300m

1972 Airframe Repair Workshops at Parafield closed

1979 Boeing 747 in service

1981 New flight service building at Adelaide Airport

Parafield control tower rebuilt

1982 Adelaide Airport terminal extended, main runway lemgthened

New freestanding control tower at Adelaide Airport

International terminal opened at Adelaide Airport (2 November)

Australian Aviation College established at Parafield

Airbus A300 in service

1983 Boeing 767 in service

1986 State Air hangar built at Adelaide Airport

1988 Federal Airports Corporation took over both airports (4 January)

Australian Airlines Flight Catering Centre built at Adelaide Airport

1998 Australian Airports Limited took over both airports

Adelaide Airport main runway extended

British Aerospace Flight Training took over Aviation College

1999 New Integrated Terminal planned for Adelaide Airport

2002 National Jet Systems hangar built at Adelaide Airport

2005 New passenger terminal opened at Adelaide Airport (October)

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A877	CL 20885	Parafield - Lease of Hangar	1928-1947
A877/2	CL20040	Parafield - Lease of ANA Hangar	1941-1947
A877/2	CL22357	Parafield Aerodrome - Detailed Survey Plans	1940-1944
	(Plan CA61 showing the RAAF Base in June 1940 is in this file)		
A877/2	CL 23248	Adelaide Airport - Plans	1944-1947
	(Versions of DCA plans V-45 and W-593 are in this file)		
AP567/1	1949/120	Bellman Hangar from Mallala to West Beach	1949
	(Instructions for erecting a Bellman hangar are in this file)		
AP567/1	1953/22	Adelaide Airport - Erection of Bellman Hangar	1953
AP567/1	1954/SS9	Adelaide Airport - Erection of Water Tower	1955
AP567/1	1957/290	Adelaide Airport - Erection of Power House	1957
AP567/1	ME 128	Airconditioning at No. 1 EFTS Parafield	1943
D1423	125 SC2	Civil Drawing SC2 - Parafield	1946?
D156/22	1953/1325	Adelaide Airport : Construction Progress	1951-1955
D156/122	1941/276	Parafield Aerodrome - Erection of Buildings	1941-1942
D156/122	1944/547	Parafield No. 1 EFTS - New Igloo Hangar	1944-1945
D156/122	1954/951	Adelaide Airport: Maintenance Workshop	1954-1955
D156/122	1955/253	Diversion of Keswick & Brownhill Creeks	1947-1952
D156/122	1958/70	Adelaide Airport: Interim Terminal	1950-1959
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D1483	ZA 505	Parafield Control Facilities	1943-1946
D3481		Glenelg Migrant Hostel (photograph)	1952
D4404/1	2/501	Adelaide Airport - Compulsory Acquisition	1947-1951

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A2700/1	1044	Establishment of a new Airport at Adelaide	1946
	(DCA plans Y-10146 and W-593 are attached to this minute)		
A5799/15	209/1951	Erection of Additional Hangar at Parafield	1951
A5931	CL603	Development of Adelaide Airport	1973
A5954/69	2333/8	Erection of Additional Hangar at Parafield	1951
A705	171/21/25	RAAF Station Parafield - Buildings	1945-1948
A705	171/21/36	RAAF Station Parafield - Sewerage Plant	1941-1946
A705	231/9/173	Establishment No. 1 EFTS Parafield	1942
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D168/99	E6	Plan of New Buildings, Parafield	
D618	E6/32	Parafield - Erection of Hangar & Workshops	1942-1947
D618/99	CA34	Plan of Works in Progress, Adelaide	
D618/99	CA229	Plan of Hangar, Adelaide	

D618/99	CA288	Plan of Igloo Hangar, Adelaide	
D618/99	CA341	Plan of TAA Hangar, Adelaide	
D618/99	CA363	Plan of Terminal, Adelaide	
D618/99	CA370	Plan of Building Area, Adelaide	
D618	IM14	Glenelg North Migrant Hostel - Layout	1954-1961
D618	IM230	Glenelg North SA - Erection of Migrant Hostel	1952
D618/99	L22	Plan of Control Building, Parafield	
D618/99	L49	Plan of Aircraft Turntable, Parafield	
D645/1	250/2/2	Plan of Parafield Aerodrome	1948-1949
D645/1	250/2/21	Incinerator - Parafield	
D645/1	250/2/25	Plan of Control Building, Parafield	
D645/1	250/2/27	Plans for ANA Hangar, Parafield	
D645/1	250/2/39	Plans of Hangar Lease, Parafield	
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