



# Defence's Commitment to First Nations Peoples Dual Naming Pilot Project

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) estimates that 90% of First Nations languages are endangered. By officially recording First Nations place names at Defence bases and establishments, Defence recognises another important layer of history of the place, and helps to preserve First Nations languages and culture. It is a tangible demonstration that we appreciate and acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters where we live, work and train.

## RAAF Base Wagga | Yalbiligi Ngurang (Wiradjuri language)

### History of RAAF Base Wagga

RAAF Base Wagga, located in Wagga Wagga New South Wales, has been part of the Wagga regional community since World War II. It is known as 'The Home of the Aviator' as all aviators begin their careers at Wagga. The continued acquisition of new platforms means that Air Force personnel will always require top-class training to maintain the leading edge in professional mastery.

The Australian Defence Force is a diverse, highly trained and accomplished organisation made up of a cross-section of people from all walks of life.



### Yalbiligi Ngurang

'Yalbiligi Ngurang' is pronounced 'Yal-bili-gi Ner-rung', and is a Wiradjuri term that means 'learning place'. The term conveys a broader concept of habitual learning that encompasses all aspects of education. This includes not just instructors, recruits, and trainees, but also the materials, classrooms, and outdoor learning spaces and everything in between.

### Defence's commitment to First Nations peoples

The Australian Defence Force has a long and proud military history dating back to the early 1900s. First Nations peoples have long played, and continue to play, a significant role in the defence of Australia and its interests. Defence is committed to contributing to a reconciled Australia, through understanding our past and working towards a shared and prosperous future in partnership with First Nations peoples.

As part of the Defence commitment to First Nations peoples, Defence will deliver dual names as part of a pilot program at Blamey Barracks – Kapooka, RAAF Base Wagga and Puckapunyal Military Area.





Upon completion of the pilot project, Defence will review the level of interest at other bases and determine what further support is required.

Recognition of the traditional languages pays respect to our First Nations peoples, acknowledges our military history and helps preserve First Nations culture. Traditional Owners have shared the traditional language place name for the Defence base or establishment, including its meaning and significance for their community, and have provided permission to use this name alongside the current Defence name.

The dual name will be complementary to the base name and will be displayed on a new sign. No base entrances or names will be altered or changed for this project.

## The artwork – created by Luke Penrith, a Wiradjuri man



*In the boundless expanse of the sky, the Maliyan, or Eagle, soars with majestic grace, embodying the spirit of the Wiradjuri Protector. This noble eagle watches over the family, community, and land, just as the Royal Australian Air Force safeguard the skies above. For the Wiradjuri Nation, sharing knowledge, customs, and culture is not merely a tradition but a vital thread that weaves the fabric of their existence.*

*On the ground below, the Guga, or Goanna, moves with an elegance that belies its speed, darting like a bolt of lightning when the moment calls. This creature's poised yet swift demeanour mirrors the resilience and dynamism of the Wiradjuri people.*

*At the heart of the Wiradjuri Nation's aspirations lies the land, its people, and the profound principle of yindyamarra – respecting all things. This deep-seated respect forms the cornerstone of their identity, guiding their interactions with nature and each other. Through the wisdom of the Maliyan and the agility of the Guga, the Wiradjuri Nation continues to thrive, honouring their heritage and nurturing the land that sustains them.*

The artist, Luke Penrith's ancestral bloodlines are connected through the Wiradjuri of South Western NSW, the Wotjobaluk of Western Victoria, the Yuin of the far South Coast of NSW, and the Gumbaynggirr Nation of the North Coast of NSW. Luke's life's work has been focused on building a foundation and work ethic in Aboriginal communities to grow and secure long-term careers in their chosen industries.

