



HISTORY OF ARDMORE AIRPORT

Ardmore Airport was established in 1943 at the request of the US Airforce as an operational base during WWII. Although construction was not completed until 1945, the Airport served as an important base for training New Zealand pilots for action in the Pacific, and as a training centre for returning servicemen, as part of the demobilization effort after the war.

Following the RNZAF departure from Ardmore, the country's 5th Teachers' Training Unit was established on the old base in 1947. The Auckland University School of Engineering also set up on the base in the same year, using hangars and buildings on what is now known as the South East apron. Although originally planned as a short term measure, both facilities remained until around 1974.

A brief but special time of glory came in 1950 when the facilities at Ardmore were used to accommodate competitors in the Empire Games. The swimming pool and running track were constructed to provide practice facilities for the competitors, and they remained in use for the benefit of the local community.

In 1952 the Ministry of Transport took control of the operational parts of Ardmore for general aviation purposes, although these activities were minor in comparison to the predominant use of the site by the Ministry of Education.

Between 1954 and 1963, Ardmore hosted, on an annual basis, the NZ International Grand Prix. This event was moved to the purpose built raceway at Pukekohe in 1965.

Up until 1963, Mangere Aerodrome was the home for general aviation in the Auckland area and scheduled passenger flights were based at Whenuapai. In 1963 the Auckland Aero Club was forced to move from Mangere to Ardmore to make way for the development of Auckland International Airport, which opened for operations in 1965. It was during this period that the use of Ardmore Airport as a general aviation facility blossomed.

This historical separation of scheduled flights and general aviation between the two airports continues to be an important feature of their relationship today. The efficiency of Auckland International Airport relies on the ability of Ardmore Airport to provide suitable alternative facilities for general aviation.

A significant change for Ardmore Airport came in June 1995 when the Ministry of Transport sold the assets to Ardmore Airport Limited.

Ardmore Airport Limited is committed to positive change and to ensuring that Ardmore Airport retains its place as a significant contributor to the local community and general aviation in New Zealand. It is also committed to forming an ongoing working relationship with the local community and airport users alike.

Importance of Ardmore Airport as a national and regional strategic asset

There are many features that make Ardmore Airport a unique facility and aviation resource.

The Airport is a significant contributor to both the local and national economies and major growth areas continue to be the helicopter maintenance, aircraft restoration, and aircraft assembly industries.

Location

Its proximity to Papakura and Manukau and Auckland's CBD means that approximately 20% of the country's population is within 30 minutes of the Airport. The potential client base, both recreational and commercial, is the largest in NZ. Despite this proximity to such a large population base, the Airport remains in a predominantly rural environment.

Economic

There are over 90 tenants at Ardmore Airport, consisting of a mix of flying schools, flying clubs, air charter services, aircraft sales and aviation related service industries. This includes electronic, engineering and restoration services, and hangarage facilities. Many of these tenants have operated out of Ardmore Airport for anywhere between 20 and 30 years, and have helped Ardmore become the premier Airport in the country in terms of both General Aviation facilities and aircraft movements. This business network offers vital growth to Ardmore Airport's success both now and in the future.

Just a few economic facts

- There are approximately 500 people employed by the various organisations operating out of Ardmore Airport and that figure continues to rise.
- There are upwards of 1500 vehicles per day entering the Airport, which gives some indication of the current level of activity occurring.
- Domestic turnover from airport activities is estimated to be in excess of 60 million dollars, of which approximately 40 million dollars are export earnings.

Training

As a training centre for the aviation industry, Ardmore is second to none. Approximately 50% of all New Zealand pilots undergo their training at Ardmore and currently four major fixed wing flying schools, including Ardmore Flying School are onsite, and two large helicopter schools. There are often in excess of 150 student pilots from all over New Zealand including a number of international students, most spending around 18 months living in and around the local districts in order to complete the course. This, in turn, benefits both the local community and economy.

Recreation

As a recreational resource, Ardmore is utilised by considerable numbers of Aucklanders. The proximity and facilities offered at Ardmore ensure that aviation enthusiasts and newcomers to the industry have the ability to regularly engage in aviation related activities. In addition, there is a significant amount of public interest in Ardmore's Open Days; these popular events attract thousands of spectators to the Airport each year.

Warbirds

Ardmore is an important recreational resource for Warbird enthusiasts; in particular it is the permanent home base to around 40 of the Warbirds aircraft. They attract a large following from the public and regular tours arrive at Ardmore to view their historic and classic aircraft, housed in the NZ Warbirds Visitor Centre.

Ardmore is the NZ Warbirds major base for activities and from January through to April each year they take off from Ardmore to other locations in New Zealand to demonstrate their aircraft and flying skills at Airshows, with Warbirds over Wanaka being their most renowned event.

Ardmore is the only facility available to them within the greater Auckland area and capable of handling their activities in a safe and controlled environment.

The public can also enjoy scenic flights over Auckland in the Dakota/DC3, which departs from Ardmore every Sunday.