



HISTORY OF ARDMORE AIRPORT

- Ardmore Airport was established in 1943 at the request of the US Airforce for use as an operational base during WW II. 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 demobilisation effort after the war.
- Following the RNZAF's departure from Ardmore, the country's fifth teachers' training unit was established on the old base in 1947. The Auckland University School of Engineering also set up on the base that same year, using hangars and buildings on what is now known as the Southeast 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 subsequently remained in use for the benefit of the local community.
- In 1952 the Ministry of Transport took control of the operational parts of Ardmore Airport 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. 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 subsequently 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.
- In 1974, general aviation activity at Ardmore reached a peak of 250,000 movements, A "movement" is either a takeoff or a landing, and 250,000 could be summarised as 125,000 flights.
- During the early 1980s general aviation movements decreased to approximately 165,000 per annum. Since then, the activities have increased steadily and are now running at between 200,000 and 210,000 movements per annum.

- A significant change for Ardmore Airport came in June 1995 when the Ministry of Transport sold the assets to AAL.
- AAL is committed to positive change to ensure 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 community.

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.

- **Location.** Its proximity to Papakura, Manukau and Auckland cities 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 New Zealand. Despite this proximity to such a large population base, the Airport remains in a predominantly rural environment.
- **Economic:** There are over 80 tenants at Ardmore Airport, consisting of a mix of flying schools, flying clubs, air charter services, aircraft sales, aviation related service industries (including electronic, engineering and restoration services) and hangarage facilities. Many of these tenants have operated out of Ardmore Airport for 20-30 years, and have helped Ardmore become the busiest Airport in the country in terms of movements. The business network they offer is vital to Ardmore Airport's future success.

An independent report prepared by Beca Carter Hollings and Ferner Limited for the Auckland Regional Council in 1994 stated that there were approximately 500 people employed by the various organisations operating from Ardmore Airport, and that number is still applicable today. A recent traffic survey indicated that there are approximately 1000 vehicles/day entering the Airport, which gives some indication of the current level of activity occurring at the Airport.

The same report also records that domestic turnover from Airport activities in 1994 was estimated to be in excess of \$40 million. Major growth areas since 1994 are in the helicopter maintenance, aircraft restoration, and aircraft assembly industries. The Airport is a significant contributor to both the local and national economies.

- **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. Currently, 5 flying schools are training 479 fixed wing pilots and 3 helicopter schools are training an average of 65 helicopter pilots per annum. Of the above, in excess of 100 are overseas pilots, most spending around 18 months living in the District in order to complete the course.

- **Recreation:** As a recreational resource, Ardmore is utilised by a large number of Auckland people. The proximity and facilities offered at Ardmore ensure that aviation enthusiasts and newcomers to the industry have the ability to regularly undertake aviation activities. Ardmore is an important recreational resource for warbird enthusiasts in particular. In addition, there is a significant amount of public interest in Ardmore's Open Days, with these particularly popular events attracting thousands of spectators to the Airport each year.
- **Warbirds:** The New Zealand Warbirds has the major base for their activities at Ardmore. From January through to April each year, they fly from Ardmore to 9 - 10 other locations in New Zealand to demonstrate their aircraft and flying skills at Airshows. Ardmore is the only facility available to them within the greater Auckland area, capable of handling their activities in a safe and controlled environment. They attract a large following from the public and regular tours arrive at Ardmore to view their historic and classic aircraft, and enjoy scenic flights over Auckland in the Dakota

Ardmore is the permanent home base for around 40 of the Warbirds aircraft and this contributes a significant input into the Airport economy.