



citylibraries

## HERITAGE SERVICES INFORMATION SHEET NUMBER 2

### AITKENVALE AIRFIELD

When standing outside Weir State School today, it is hard to imagine the busy airfield that operated there in 1942.



The airfield was one of a number established in the Townsville Thuringowa area during World War II and operated to train fighter pilots prior to their joining hostilities in New Guinea.

The runway extended in a north-east direction from the Weir School across Bamford Lane through what are now the suburbs of Kirwan and Cranbrook.

The Gleasons, who had lived in the area since the 1870s, were one of a number of families whose lives were disrupted by the construction of the airfield, as they were

forced to move out of their house at short notice. School life was also affected as the RAAF acquired the school site and students were relocated to temporary classrooms further away.

In its short but busy operational life air force authorities had to contend with

many problems, including local cattle, which either forced the RAAF to move fence lines from the riverbank to the edge of the runway so that the cattle could move freely along the stock route to the meatworks; or disturbed air traffic when





## citylibraries

they strayed on to the runway due to damaged fences.

By March 1945, the airfield was virtually deserted but the runway remained for many years becoming a popular area for young people to learn to drive, however with the beginning of suburban development in Thuringowa in 1958, the

airfield disappeared becoming only a memory of Thuringowa's rich past.

### **Acknowledgments:**

- Peter Bell, *A Short History of Thuringowa*, Thuringowa City Council, Thuringowa Central, 2000.
- R. & J. Marks, *Queensland Airfields WW2 – 50 years on*, Mansfield, 1994.
- Thuringowa Library Heritage Services Photographic Collection.
- J.C Underwood, *The History of Weir State School*, Produced for the Centenary Celebrations, 1981

