



**Archerfield Airport Corporation**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Sinkhole leads to urgent repairs to Archerfield Airport runway**

Urgent repairs were carried out on a grass runway at Archerfield Airport this week following the sudden formation of a 2m by 3m by 5m deep sinkhole.

Inspection of the sinkhole revealed an underground structure comprising ironbark shoring and several iron rods. These are believed to be the remnants of a windmill built in the mid 1850s to provide a water supply for 'The Willows', the original homestead that stood on the airport site.

Mr Darcy Maddock, a local historian and a descendent of the pioneers who settled the area, said the windmill would have been foundation infrastructure for the grazing property, purchased by the Grenier family on May 3, 1855.

"A windmill would have been one of the first things the settlers built," he said. "As well as servicing the homestead, it would have provided a water supply for the cattle agisted here on their way to the markets. The airport site is also believed to have been where the first purpose-built racecourse in the Moreton Bay area began operating in 1843, so it's quite likely that this windmill provided water for the regular 'camps' that set up here for three-day race meetings after the homestead was built."

The General Manager of Archerfield Airport, Mrs Heather Mattes, said photographic records were taken of the underground structure, and items were retrieved before some 12 cubic metres of aggregate rock covered by geofabric and a metre of soil were used to seal the hole and ensure the repairs met environmental requirements.

"We believe that the recent wet weather may have contributed to the formation of the sinkhole, and remediation work on the runway was carried out as quickly as possible for safety and operational reasons," she said. "This is a very rare occurrence; and while we acted quickly, our staff are very conscious of the rich history of the airport site."

Mrs Mattes said the retrieved items would be donated to the Friends of God's Acre (FOGA), an active community group which cares for the heritage-listed cemetery at the airport. The cemetery was established by the Grenier family and is one of Brisbane's oldest. The first burial was in 1859 following the death of the Grenier's son, Volney.

Mr Maddock said FOGA appreciated the co-operation of Archerfield Airport Corporation and planned to display the items at the Friends of God's Acre Annual Remembrance Day on Sunday June 28.

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