



DARWIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION GROUP

Report on Meeting No 2 – 4 August 2011

The Darwin International Airport (DIA) Community Consultation Group held its second meeting on 4 August 2011 and outcomes of the meeting are outlined below.

Community Member Daryl Manzie was Acting Independent Chair as Independent Chair Sarah Butterworth is overseas.

1. Report on Consultation Group Chairs Meeting in Canberra

Acting Independent Chair Daryl Manzie attended a meeting of Independent Chairs of Airport Community Consultation Groups in Canberra on behalf of Sarah Butterworth. This meeting was arranged by the Department of Infrastructure and Transport and the topics covered included:

- legislative and policy changes to privatised airports regulation emanating from the Aviation White Paper, particularly the Government's desire for greater community engagement on the part of airports ;
- the role of the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman Ron Brent;
- the perspective of Peter Arnison, Independent Chair of the Brisbane Airport Community Consultation Group, on the role and operation of an airport community consultation group; and
- safeguarding airports from inappropriate development which will impact on aircraft operations.

2. Bird and Animal Hazard Management

DIA Environment Manager delivered a comprehensive presentation on Bird and Animal Hazard Management at both Darwin and Alice Springs Airports. Topics presented included regulatory requirements, local risk factors, control activity and habitat management.

An interesting aspect of this area is that it is recognized internationally that the incidence of bird strike at or near an airport is more a function of the airport natural environment than the quality of the airport bird strike management effort.

3. Briefing on Air Service Developments and Ground Transport Issues

DIA Director Airline and Airport Services presented on airline service changes, airline industry developments, new car parking capacity and ground transport initiatives. Among other developments highlighted were Air North service increases which help development of the Darwin hub and the two speed Australian economy.

Interstate travelers account for 60% of Darwin traffic and the strong Australian dollar is impacting international inbound traffic into Australia.

4. Terminal Expansion Project

DIA is currently going through the Minor Variation to a Major Development Plan process under the *Airports Act 1996* (the Major Development Plan process is the Development Consent process under the *Airports Act*). This is necessitated by variations to the original Terminal Expansion design concept approved by the federal Minister.

There was one query from the community during the public consultation period on the Minor Variation document and no formal comments from the community were received. There were a number of comments from government agencies and authorities. The Minor Variation is with the federal Minister for decision.

An overview of the terminal Expansion design concept was presented.

5. Overview of Passenger Traffic and Financial Results for 2010/11 Financial Year

A comprehensive report was presented on preliminary end of financial year 2010/11 results for passenger traffic and financial performance plus 2011/12 projections. Passenger numbers and financial performance for the 2010/11 Financial Year were largely in line with budget projections.

6. Airport Service Quality Survey

DIA has recently subscribed to the Airports Council International Airport Service Quality (ASQ) passenger survey system. There was an outline of the terminal services quality of service information that ASQ produces. One significant benefit of belonging to the ASQ system is that benchmarking with the other 190 ASQ airports worldwide is possible.

ASQ results will be published on the DIA website once they are received and processed. A feature of the airport business is that good customer service across the range of airport customers must be provided and any fall down in customer service is highly visible.

7. Review of Exercise Season to Date

RAAF outlined that the 2011 exercise season had been steady with an earlier start than usual with Republic of Singapore F15's. Other exercises included Aces North and Talisman Sabre.

A feature of the Talisman Sabre exercise was good coordination with Royal Darwin Show and the Darwin Turf Club so important activities/events were not disturbed. There was a small number of noise complaints from the exercises. For the calendar year to date there was also a small number of noise complaints lodged.

It was observed by the Group that:

- the Darwin population knows that there is both civil and military aircraft traffic and that a certain amount of military noise is expected; and
- aircraft noise complaints in the NT News are usually followed by letters of support for military aircraft operations.

8. Civil Aircraft Noise Complaints

Several civil noise complaints were reported for April, May and June 2011.

9. Update on Property and Commercial Projects

An update on DIA property issues and potential developments was provided. These included:

- some interest from potential major retailers in Axis;
- the Australian Federal Police offices (5 Star Green Star rated) are currently nearing completion and the AFP K9 (dog) facility construction contract to be awarded shortly;
- Airport Lodge Stage 3 development (confirmed as outside the Rapid Creek conservation area); and
- changes to the internal road network will happen as development occurs.

10. Department of Infrastructure & Transport Report

The Department spoke to the recently issued Draft Master Plan Guidelines which are out for public comment until 15 October 2011. These Guidelines provide detail on the overall airport master plan policy contained in the Aviation White Paper. It was noted that Gold Coast Airport would be the first airport subject to the new master planning requirements in the amended *Airports Act*.

The link to the Draft Master Plan Guidelines document is below. Any comments should be submitted to the Department (airports.branch@infrastructure.gov.au) by 15 October.

http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/airport/planning/index.aspx#master_plans

11. Presentation on DIA and Dept of Defence Role in Preserving Protected Air Space and Preventing Inappropriate Development Near DIA

DIA delivered a comprehensive presentation on Protected Airspace and the sometimes imperfect system in place to prevent inappropriate development near airports. He also outlined national action to improve planning controls near airports.

Concern was expressed by a Consultation Group member that, even though no residential use was permitted, there will be further commercial and light industrial development on Part Lot 5182 (the land near McDonalds at the eastern end of the main runway) which would be noise affected.

12. Community Consultation Group Member Issues

Consultation Group members noted or raised the following issues:

- one member had been involved in disability access issues at the Airport;
- if people are unhappy with an airline or airline staff that they criticise the Airport. DIA responded that the Low Cost Carrier operating model is to have minimum staff and they do not have staff on hand to resolve passenger issues. As a result the Airport was increasingly having to deal with passenger related issues that were previously handled by airlines;
- people complaining to on Member about the dislocation associated with the temporary location of the Long Term Car Park but that this was no longer an issue; and
- a member had been receiving reports of delays at the security point. DIA responded that security processing time at peak periods is a compromise between processing time and cost and that airlines are very conscious of security costs.

13. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the DIA Community Consultation Group is Thursday 1 December 2011.