



DARWIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION GROUP

Web Report No 30 – 5 November 2020

held at

Board Room, Wirraway Business Centre, Darwin International Airport

1. Welcome and apologies

Chair Chris Bigg welcomed members to the 30th meeting of the Community Consultation Group. The Summary Record and Meeting Report of the meeting on 30 July 2020 had been previously settled by circulation.

2. Airservices update

Fiona Lawton outlined the recently published Airservices Flight Path Design Principles, directly shaped by feedback received during national consultation held earlier this year. Although Airservices has had flight path principles for several decades, this recent review has made them more contemporary and transparent. Along with the recently released Community Engagement Framework, these two elements are the foundation for how Airservices manages flight path changes.

Airservices has observed a shift in noise complainants across the country during 2020. Although aviation operations have slowed significantly across Australia due to COVID-19, broadly there have been more complainants relating to flight training and low flying aircraft.

3. Darwin Airport COVID-19 update

Tony Edmondstone provided an update on Darwin Airport and COVID-19, including:

- There has been a recent organisational restructure of NT Airports
- There has been a progressive return of domestic passengers across NT Airports' three airports (Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek), reaching almost 80,000 passengers in September. This equates to 35% of usual traffic.
- The COVID-19 international repatriation flights arriving in Darwin are being managed through the RAAF side of the airport to maintain separation.
- NT Airports is working with University of Adelaide researchers to deploy sniffer dogs that can detect COVID-19 infection.
- Darwin Airport is intending to construct an additional 20MW of solar panels in the next 12 months. This will result in the airport being carbon neutral.
- The proposed Dan Murphy's development has been further delayed. Darwin Airport would prefer the project not be built on the Bagot Rd site, and instead be positioned further away from Bagot Community.

4. Darwin Airport property update

Patrick Bellot outlined the airport's COVID-19 support measures for airport tenants, including rent relief. The 'West Village' project has seen a spike in enquiries over the past few months. The freight and cold storage facility is now operational, having been completed 3 weeks ahead of schedule. The facility includes:

- Vapour heat plant capable of treating 18 tonnes of produce per day
- 1200 pallet chiller capacity along with a further 1000 pallet spaces of freezer room
- A full cold chain and export accredited facility
- Direct airside access

5. Defence update

RAAF Base operational update

SQNLDR Mel Free shared the following:

- Bob Calaby's airport emergency meeting is greatly appreciated and RAAF Base Darwin is currently updating the cyclone plan.
- Significant construction continues on the Base including the Air 7000 project for P8 aircraft.
- An update of the Estate Base Plan (RAAF Base Master Plan) is currently underway.
- Singapore Air Force fast jets are in Darwin on exercise until early December. Night flights are scheduled this week and next.
- The COVID-19 international repatriation flights are being processed through RAAF Base Darwin.
- Exercise Arnhem Thunder is scheduled for March/April 2021 and will comprise fast jets.
- Aircraft arrestor system works are underway with reduced thresholds. These works will continue until June 2021.
- 31 March 2021 will mark 100 years of the Royal Australian Air Force. *Air Force 2021* will be a program of events to commemorate the centenary. Further details to be shared at the next meeting.

Air Traffic Control

No update due to apologies

Defence Support Report

No update due to apologies

6. Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

Eleanor Dun was welcomed to the CCG. Helen Gannon has recently retired, and Eleanor is in the position until the end of the year. CCG members recorded their thanks to Helen, recognising her involvement in the airport's CCG since its inception almost a decade ago. The CCG wish Helen well in her retirement.

Eleanor advised that the Department continues to be heavily involved in aviation assistance measures and financial relief as a result of COVID-19. The Australian Government continues to support financial relief to the aviation industry through:

- extending a range of measures under the \$715 million Australian Airline Financial Relief Package.
- extending Domestic Aviation network Support (DANS) through to the end of January 2021.
- extending the \$100 million Regional Airlines Funding Assistance program until 31 December 2020 (or until allocated funds are exhausted).
- allowing leased federal airports to seek partial relief from land tax charges to 31 December 2020.

The *Future of Australia's Aviation Sector* issues paper was released for public comment in October 2020. The public consultation period will close on 13 November 2020.

The Aviation Access Forum was last held on 13 August 2020. Members discussed accessibility issues around COVID-19 restrictions, and how passenger facilitation will continue to be affected. The next meeting is scheduled for 19 November 2020.

7. Darwin Airport commercial and ground transport update

Shane de Wit outlined that Darwin Airport continues to support the reopening of retail, with the aim of getting people back to work, engaged with their employer and providing customer service. Rent relief continues to be provided for retailers. Since mid-2020 many retailers have begun to reopen, and have been trading well. Darwin Airport will soon be launching a new online retail outlet to support our retailers.

In ground transport matters, car rental agreements are currently in negotiation. A new capability to the online car park booking engine will soon be launched, offering 1-hour and 2-hour parking options at reduced prices.

8. Darwin Airport operations update

Peter Pallot briefed members on the recent influx of Yellow Winged Locusts at Darwin Airport that pose a wildlife hazard to aircraft as they attract birds to the airfield. The locusts are expected to move on in a few weeks' time.

The Integrated Vegetation Management trial is now complete, with very positive results and will now be implemented across the joint-user area of the airport:

- Reduced bird activity by 75%
- Mowing frequency reduced by 50%
- Vegetation biomass reduced by 50%

9. Lendlease air traffic control tower construction

Kevin Davies gave a comprehensive presentation on the construction of the new air traffic control tower at Darwin Airport. Kevin spoke of the safety initiatives that influenced the construction of the tower and the challenges of a complex site. A short video of the tower construction can be found here: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ausairforce_ausairforce-activity-6680704907110178816-Az1Q

10. Darwin Airport aviation development

Allan Woo spoke about the aviation recovery outlook due to COVID-19. Since the last meeting, there has been an increase in confidence and airlines' planning schedules are now beginning to extend further ahead where previously they were planning only weeks out.

There are however a number of factors that may impact recovery, such as:

- Further COVID-19 hotspot statuses
- Jobkeeper wind back in March 2021
- The termination of federal government aviation support programs
- Weak traveller confidence

Darwin Airport is optimistic of a strong passenger recovery in the dry season 2021, with domestic travel substituting international outbound travel. Allan emphasised that Darwin Airport's aviation development focus in recovery (as spoken about at the last meeting) has

not changed. There are opportunities for being innovative and promoting Darwin in other locations. Darwin Airport has been engaging with other airports and tourism bodies to promote the NT, and will continue to collaborate with government and stakeholders to advocate for greater airline capacity and routes.

11. Community Consultation Group member issues

No matters raised.

12. General business

No matters raised.