



Concurrent Meeting on 3 March 2022
**Darwin International Airport Community Consultation Group
& Planning Coordination Forum**

Web Report
held over Microsoft Teams

1. Welcome and apologies

Chair Chris Bigg welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted. The Summary Record and Meeting Report of the CCG meeting on 4 November 2021 had been previously settled by circulation.

Darwin International Airport acknowledged the Larrakia people, the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which the meeting was held.

2. Darwin Airport

Property & Terminal

Ross Baynes provided an update on property and terminal developments at Darwin International Airport (DIA), including:

- DIA has completed a landside precinct plan to inform the future development of the airport site over the next 10+ years. The planning concept is flexible in both timing and sequencing, and is subject to securing commercial agreements. Ross Baynes offered to provide a more detailed update to members if interested.
- DIA is designing a Western Aviation Precinct to cater for future growth, to be located to the west of the general aviation area.
 - Within the precinct will be a Darwin Aerospace Manufacturing sub-precinct, designed to have both landside & airside access. A new road and services are currently being scoped, and discussions are being had with RAAF to extend taxiway C4 into the precinct.
 - The new Amphibian Aerospace Industries (AAI) development will form part of the Darwin Aerospace Manufacturing sub-precinct.
- A retail plan has been developed for the terminal, forming part of a broader terminal refresh currently being planned.
- ADG Investment is close to finalising the grant agreement with the Australian Government on the proposed 80ML fuel storage facility at East Arm.

CEO

Rob Porter, EGM Operations, spoke on behalf of CEO Tony Edmondstone. ADG's four core pillars guide the business: Aviation, Terminal & Tourism, Infrastructure, Property. At the core of everything we do is a focus on community and safety.

Since acquiring the Mercure Resort and Novotel Hotel in early 2021, ADG has taken on more than 100 staff and continues to transform the existing development into a world class tropical resort.

Operations

Rob Porter went on to provide an update on DIA operations, including:

- The Bay 2 apron and aerobridge upgrade is now complete.
- The ongoing Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) program continues to reduce instances of wildlife hazard at DIA.
- Wilson Security patrols continue to keep the airport precinct safe.
- COVID-related border entry requirements have eased significantly. DIA anticipates that repatriation flights will continue throughout 2022, and the airport is ready to assist.

Aviation Development

Allan Woo spoke of recent aviation developments:

- COVID has continued to impact the recovery to the aviation sector, with the last quarter seeing the Delta variant slowing recovery, followed by the Omicron variant dampening demand with passengers hesitant to travel.
- In recent weeks, DIA has seen increased optimism with connections beginning to recover, and seat capacity increasing (where it was previously trending downwards). It's anticipated that seat capacity will be strong for this dry season, with the number of seats available potentially higher than pre-COVID.
- Qantas has announced it will base 4-9 e190 aircraft in Darwin, with new connections from Darwin to Cairns, Townsville, Dili and restarting Canberra.
- Jetstar Asia is currently flying twice a week from Darwin to Singapore.
- Singapore Airlines is expected to commence flights between Darwin and Singapore soon.
- The direct Qantas flight to London is expected to end in June.

Environment

As requested at the last CCG meeting, Nick Fewster gave an update on the Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) program at DIA:

- Wildlife pose a significant hazard to aircraft. Between 2006-2015, Darwin Airport had the highest wildlife strike rate in Australia.
- The objective of the IVM program is to reduce the attractiveness of the airside area to wildlife. This is done by applying a herbicide and insecticide to a 100ha grassed area around the main runway to reduce weeds and insects, and thus the wildlife that feed on the insects.
- Monitoring and data management is a key part of the program to measure its effectiveness. The 2020/21 results are encouraging: 57% reduction in bird strike rate; 55% reduction in bird numbers; 97% reduction in grasshopper activity
- Another three years of data is required to strengthen these trends.
- DIA in collaboration with Defence, IVM Group, Ventia and Sterling Group, were recently recognised by the Australian Aviation Wildlife Hazard Group, winning an industry award for the IVM program.

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

Megan Thomas advised of the following Department matters and initiatives:

- The Australian Government continues to work closely with the aviation sector, recognising the continued impacts of COVID such as flight cancellations, reduced consumer confidence and dampened demand.

- In December 2021, the Aviation Recovery Framework was released, with the aim to support recovery and set a long-term vision for the aviation sector. It is expected there will be opportunities for consultation during the implementation of the framework and its priorities. Further information can be found at: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/aviation/future-australias-aviation-sector>
- The Australian Government's \$130M PFAS investigation program pilot has now commenced.
- The National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group (NASAG) last met in November 2021 to discuss the implementation of the framework review undertaken in 2021.
- Regulations relating to the Airports Act are due to sunset in 2024, providing an opportunity to modernise and update the regulatory process federal airports operate in. There will be 3-4 stages of consultation, with Stage 1a currently open for consultation until 7 March 2022.

4. Department of Defence / RAAF Base Darwin

Operations

SQNLDR Michael Moroney spoke of this year's military exercises:

- Exercise Diamond Storm 2022 is scheduled for the month of June, consisting of fast jets and widebody aircraft. The exercise is an air warfare instructor course key activity.
- Exercise Pitch Black 2022 is scheduled for 19 August – 8 September. There are currently 12 nations expected to take part, with up to 100 aircraft. The Pitch Black Open Day will be held on 27 August 2022.
- Exercise Kakadu 2022 will be held in late 2022. It is a naval exercise supported by the RAAF.
- The 2022 contingent of Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D) will be in Darwin from approximately March/April through to September.

Air Traffic Control

SQNLDR Martin Ferguson reflected on the great collaboration between RAAF and DIA on recent cyclone preparations for the aerodrome. ATC are excited by the potential increases to civil aircraft traffic through Darwin. There was discussion amongst members about the general aviation (GA) sector, noting that although GA traffic has continued to remain fairly strong during COVID, there have been less flights recently due to COVID in remote communities.

Projects

FLTLT Mitch Heming gave an update on infrastructure projects underway at RAAF Base Darwin, noting that wet weather had delayed some works over the Christmas period.

Defence Support

Karen Cardona, Assistant Base Manager, introduced Matthew Faulkner to provide a PFAS update (see below).

RAAF Base Darwin PFAS Management Update

Matthew Faulkner provided a general overview on the implementation of the RAAF Base Darwin PFAS Management Area Plan. The 2020 Annual Interpretative Report was published in November 2021 and is publicly available on the Defence website:

<https://defence.gov.au/Environment/PFAS/docs/Darwin/Reports/202111RAAFBaseDarwin2020AnnualInterpretiveReport.pdf>

The 2020 report shows the nature of PFAS is consistent with historical data. The 2021 Annual Interpretative Report is expected to be published in late 2022.

Estate Planning

Tim Hogan advised that Defence continues to respond to recent development applications. Defence has also received two applications under the Defence Aviation Area Regulations for telecommunications towers.

WGCDR Jim Collisson was welcomed to the CCG & PCF sessions, having recently posted into Darwin.

Land Management

Matthew Faulkner shared an update on land management at RAAF Base Darwin:

- Defence has been working hard on improving bushfire mitigation works over the past 3 years. The 2022 wet season burns have started, with more burns to be conducted in the early dry season.
- A complete on-ground survey completed in 2020/2021 is being used to inform the 2021/2022 weed management program. The survey indicated weed population density and distribution varied significantly across the site. The 2022 program is focusing on treating, mapping and analysing the results to ensure impact is captured and improvements can be implemented.

Chris Bigg commended Matthew Faulkner on Defence's priority at RAAF Base Darwin on bushfire management and weed management.

5. Airservices Australia

Prema Lopez from Airservices was an apology to the meeting. Airservices' presentation was circulated to CCG and PCF members via email after the meeting.

6. NT Government – Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics

Lands Planning

Doug Lesh provided the following lands planning update:

- The Holtze to Elizabeth River Subregional Land Use Plan is very significant for the future of Darwin. Doug emphasised that the Plan is not related to municipal boundaries. Stage 2 consultation is now complete, with stage 3 consultation to commence in a few weeks' time.
- Following the anticipated completion of the Holtze to Elizabeth River Subregional Land Use Plan, a Greater Holtze Area Plan will be released for Stage 1 consultation, which will include more detail on urban fabric, population densities, etc.
- Doug confirmed the NT Government is supportive of the implementation of the NASAG review.

Transport Infrastructure Planning

Chandan Kalase explained that his transport team is working closely with Doug Lesh's lands planning team on the Holtze to Elizabeth River Subregional Land Use Plan.

Stage 2 consultation has now finished on the Vanderlin Drive and Lee Point Road intersection upgrade. The project will now proceed to detailed design.

7. Community Consultation Group member issues

No member issues were raised.

Remaining 2022 meeting dates: Thursday 28 July, Thursday 3 November.