



## **DARWIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION GROUP**

### **Report on Meeting No 16 – 31 March 2016**

held at

Pandanus Room, Airport Management Centre, Darwin International Airport

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

Acting Chair Ian Kew welcomed members to the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Community Consultation group. Apologies were noted. The Summary Record and Meeting Report of the meeting on 19 November 2015 had been previously settled by circulation.

Justin Boydell's resignation was noted, and new member Jamie O'Donnell, General Manager Novotel Darwin Airport & Mercure Darwin Airport Resort, was welcomed to the group.

#### **2. Defence New Air Traffic Control Tower**

Darren Blacklock presented the new air traffic control facilities proposed for Darwin Airport/RAAF Base Darwin. The driver for this project is the OneSKY Program, a collaboration between Defence and Airservices Australia to bring together civil and military air traffic control under a single harmonised air traffic management system. The project comprises 3 facilities for Darwin: A sensor equipment building (located on Defence land), a new Air Traffic Control (ATC) tower, and a refurbishment and extension to the existing Airfield Systems Complex (ASC) building. The project is to be delivered over a five year period, expected to commence in early-mid 2017.

Defence proposes to position the new ATC tower directly adjacent to the existing ATC tower. The development is within the DIA lease boundary area, and meets the criteria necessitating a Major Development Plan (MDP) as required under the *Airports Act 1996*. The MDP process will include a public consultation period, anticipated to commence in the next month or so. Defence noted that a community consultation session was held in Darwin in October 2015 for the project, as part of the approval process required by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works. Only two members of the public attended the session.

#### **3. Defence Support Report**

Justine Nordin provided an update on PFOS/PFOA testing at RAAF Base Darwin, noting that water monitoring results are yet to be published on the Defence website. RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal are two of 16 sites identified by Defence to be tested in relation to PFCs.

Defence has provided a number of updated fact sheets on PFOS/PFOA, available on the Defence website (<http://www.defence.gov.au/id/PFOSPFOA/FAQs.asp>) and a contact email address is available for further information or enquiries ([PFCDefenceCoordination@golder.com.au](mailto:PFCDefenceCoordination@golder.com.au)). Justine tabled a query raised by CCG member Lesley Alford (who was unable to attend) and will follow up with Lesley directly for clarification on the query in order to provide further response.

WGCDR Wes Perrett reinforced Defence's position to continue fostering the relationships Defence has built with the Darwin community and other stakeholders, as well as working closely with bipartisan agencies like the NTEPA to provide relevant information within the proper context. Ian Kew noted DIA's proposal for an ongoing water data program with participants such as DIA, Defence and NT Government, to be disseminated by NTEPA to produce contextual reports. CCG Members agreed that a broader context on the issue would be of benefit, to better educate those who may be less informed.

#### **4. Airservices Matters**

Rhiannon Eddy reported:

- One noise complaint was received in Q4 2015.
- Webtrak is expected to be available for Darwin in early 2017, providing flight path information.
- Mr Jason Harfield has been appointed the new CEO for Airservices Australia, with a restructure of the business underway. Rhiannon to provide further information on the new structure at the next scheduled CCG meeting.

#### **5. RAAF Base operational issues and 2016 exercises**

WGCDR Wes Perrett advised that the US Marine Corp is scheduled to arrive back in Darwin early April with 4 x UH-1 Iroquois helicopters rather than the previously noted 4 x CH-53 helicopters. Exercise Pitch Black 2016 is scheduled to take place from 29 July – 19 August, with an Open Day at RAAF Base Darwin on 16 August. The exercise will be a similar size to the Pitch Black 2014, involving 110 aircraft from seven nations, located at both Darwin and Tindal RAAF Bases. The same 'fly neighbourly' policies will be applied during the exercise.

WGCDR Wes Perrett recently presented to City of Darwin council on noise monitoring at RAAF Base Darwin. Defence installed temporary noise monitors in 2011 and 2012, collecting valuable noise data (publically available). There are no plans to install permanent noise monitors in Darwin as the flight paths have remained much the same since 2011/2012 and any new data collected would not be significantly different. In comparison, permanent noise monitors have been installed at RAAF Bases Williamtown, Amberley and Townsville as part of the requirement of new aircraft types flying in these areas, to validate noise predictions outlined in the environmental impact plan. Temporary noise monitors may be installed for the introduction of the Joint Strike Fighter (F-35A). WGCDR Wes Perrett also highlighted the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman's advice that noise monitors are not a pre-requisite for effective noise management.

Recent flood remediation works at RAAF Base Darwin have been successful to date.

#### **6. Darwin Air Service Developments, Retail, and Ground Transport**

Stephen Prasser updated the group on a range of issues relating to commercial and aviation development at Darwin Airport:

- International passenger numbers continue to be soft. DIA is working with Tourism Top End and Tourism NT in an effort to increase numbers. Domestic passenger traffic is faring better.
- Nationally, the slump in the resources sector has seen significant falls in FIFO traffic, which has also impacted Darwin as air travel has been very reliant on this sector. In comparison, the leisure air travel market is improving nationally.
- DIA continues to support and grow existing services, as well as exploring possible air service opportunities.
- DIA is working to provide a broader retail offering to passengers, with the introduction of a new surf wear store, and other possible offerings under discussion.
- Recent improvements to the terminal environment include a soft play area for children, massage chairs, indoor plants and background music.
- A common user International Lounge is to be developed this year.
- New office space within the expanded terminal is under development, with direct access to be provided by a new lift.

A number of developments within Ground Transport are scheduled to occur in 2016, including:

- Realignment of the main front-of-house access road.

- Construction of a new staff car park, and the relocation of the car rental car park to the eastern end of the terminal, significantly reduce traffic movements at the front of the terminal.
- Installation of new car parking equipment, including the introduction of online bookings.
- Rebranding of all car parking options at the airport.

## **7. Airport Service Quality survey results 2015**

Garry Porter provided an explanation of Airport Service Quality (ASQ) and reported on Darwin International Airport's results for 2015. ASQ is a global benchmarking programme measuring passengers' satisfaction whilst they are travelling through an airport. Quarterly independent surveys are carried out at 265 airports worldwide, including 11 Australian airports (of which DIA is one). The results provide DIA and our stakeholders the ability to deliver a better service, as well as providing validation of what the airport is doing well and what needs to be improved.

DIA's ASQ scores are now the highest they've ever been, as a result of the recently expanded terminal and new facilities. Overall satisfaction has significantly improved in the past 12 months, with DIA now only 0.1 of a mark off the benchmark of a 'world class' airport for customer satisfaction. CCG members congratulated DIA on its service quality improvements.

## **8. DIA Property Developments**

Ross Baynes gave an update on property developments at DIA, including:

- Construction of the new Bond Helicopters hangar is almost complete.
- A new jet fuel storage facility is to be constructed, providing increased fuel storage to cater for future growth, utilising high standards of safety and environmental controls.
- South Osgood Logistics and Showroom Development has received Building Approval and site clearing has commenced in preparation for construction.
- The Entertainment Precinct will soon grow to include a new Flipout and Play Centre, broadening the precinct as an area for all ages.
- A second childcare centre is anticipated for construction adjacent to the South Osgood Logistics development.
- Negotiations are ongoing for a number of Fast Food sites in the vicinity of the Caltex petrol station.

Dawn Lawrie enquired whether there had been any consideration to designate these new building developments as cyclone shelters, noting the lack of such facilities in the northern suburbs. Ian Kew advised that DIA had not been approached by the NT Government about the possibility of this, and confirmed that although the buildings would be constructed to Code, they would not be designated cyclone shelters.

## **9. Dept Infrastructure & Regional Development Update**

Helen Gannon outlined a number of recent ministerial and senior departmental changes, with the Department now having three ministers:

- Senator the Hon Fiona Nash – Minister for Regional Development
- The Hon Darren Chester MP – Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
- The Hon Paul Fletcher MP – Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government

The Aviation Access Forum (AAF) last met on 17 November 2015. Key issues which have recently been discussed by the AAF include the completion of the review of the Disability Access Facilitation Plan (DAFP) initiative and the carriage of assistance animals in the aircraft cabin.

The purpose of the DAFP review was to improve the effectiveness and accessibility of DAFPs, and the Department has recently published guidance material on its website to assist in the preparation and review of DAFPs.

The final report on the review of Community Aviation Consultation Groups has now been circulated to the Chairs of these groups and to Airport CEOs for comment. The Department is considering the report and its recommendations and will take into account stakeholder feedback before providing a response to the recommendations.

### **10. DIA Master Plan Development Update**

Victoria Moore advised the group that the DIA Master Plan is expected to be put out for public consultation in the second half of 2016.

### **11. DIA Planning Issues**

Ian Kew reiterated that DIA and the NT Government are working together to produce sensible and practical mitigation measures to improve the impact of flooding on Rapid Creek. The NT Government has committed to constructing a large detention basin on the 'triangle block'. In addition to this, DIA will be undertaking three flood mitigation projects on airport and implementing storm water guidelines to reduce the airport's contribution to Rapid Creek flooding.

Ian Kew emphasised the need for a Rapid Creek forum where stakeholders come together with residents groups to discuss issues relating to Rapid Creek in an informative and contextual way that manages expectations and improves understanding.

DIA is close to completing its first solar project, which will be the largest private solar farm in Australia not connected to the grid. A second project at Darwin Airport is being considered, approximately half the size of the first.

### **12. Community Consultation Group Member Issues**

Dawn Lawrie queried whether there had been any further development in removing the height limitation of high-rise buildings in Darwin CBD. Bob Calaby advised that the NT Government had removed the previous limit restricting buildings to a height of 90m above ground, but pointed out that Defence and aviation authorities still have the opportunity to comment on development proposals.

Graeme Webb again voiced concern about the effect of limited airline capacity on Darwin tourism, suggesting that there should be more capacity to align with the tourist peak of July/August. Ian Kew commented that airlines are unlikely to increase capacity when passenger load factors are down, as it's not profitable. However he recognised it is a topic to continue discussing with the business community, noting that Northern Australia is getting a lot of visibility currently (e.g. White Paper on Developing Northern Australia).

### **13. General Business**

Members indicated no general business items for discussion.

### **14. Tour of recent airport developments**

A number of CCG members took the opportunity to tour the recent developments occurring at the airport. A short bus tour took visitors past the site for the new jet fuel farm, the proposed air traffic control tower, the Bond Helicopters hangar, and the new 4MW solar facility that is nearing completion.

Note: Remaining 2016 meetings – Thursday 14 July and Thursday 10 November