



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

Web Report

held at Ansett Room, Mercure Resort Darwin Airport & 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 28 July 2022 had been previously settled by circulation.

NT Government (Lands Planning) and City of Darwin were apologies, no updates were provided by these members.

2. Airport in the media

Tony Edmondstone spoke to two recent items in the media relating to Darwin Airport:

- The roles and responsibilities of the airport compared to airlines was discussed regarding facilitation of wheelchair passengers, noting a recent Jetstar customer's poor experience. Each airline has different guidelines for the carriage of people with disabilities who require additional assistance. It is the airlines who are responsible for providing assistance to and from the aircraft, gate and baggage areas.
- The main runway will require resurfacing soon, scheduled to be undertaken in 2023 by Defence. It's anticipated that the resurfacing program will likely have an impact on flights.

3. Darwin Airport

ADG overview

Tony Edmondstone went on to provide a broad update on Darwin Airport matters, including:

- There is currently reduced airline capacity into Darwin, coupled with higher airfares. This is expected to correct over time. In addition, airline crew shortages are currently creating disruption.
- The hotel redevelopment at Darwin Airport is on track, and the landscaping to the centre island of Henry Wrigley Drive is complete.
- Terminal improvements are scheduled for this wet season while passenger numbers are typically lower, with works expected to be completed by the middle of 2023.
- The airport has a significant capital works program scheduled for 2023, although the timing will be fluid due to the current challenges with availability of contractors and construction cost escalations.

Aviation development

Allan Woo shared that domestic passenger growth at Darwin Airport has now recovered to pre-COVID levels. International recovery has been constrained due to capacity and the slow recovery of international visitors. The airport is engaging with international carriers to pursue opportunities between Darwin and other South-East Asia destinations.

A new Conditions of Use has been prepared to improve aviation services at Darwin Airport. This is currently out for consultation with the airlines and is to become effective on 1 January 2023.

Hotel/resort redevelopment

Megan Dugdale gave an update on the progress of the hotel/resort redevelopment. A significant program of room renovations is being undertaken, with 6 pool villas, 28 standard rooms, 12 suites and 10 bungalows now complete. As part of these renovations the number of accessible rooms available has increased, and three of the bungalows are companion animal friendly. The shell of the new swimming pool has recently been constructed.

Airport Development Group will be investigating partnerships for experiences for hotel/resort guests to enhance their stay. Grahame Webb reflected that the airport is a large precinct that will remain in the minds of travellers, and has the ability to become an attraction in its own right.

Property & terminal

Jordan Schrapel spoke of the ground transport improvements planned for the airport, in keeping with the Terminal & Forecourt Master Plan previously presented to CCG/PCF members. The timing is somewhat fluid, depending on the next wet season. Key elements proposed include:

- The existing staff car park is now accommodating hotel car parking
- Fenton Court to be extended to meet Henry Wrigley Drive, and a new access point from Fenton Court into the Long Stay Plus car park
- Upgraded pedestrian access from the Long Stay Saver to Murphy Road, to better serve the general aviation areas
- Shade structures to be installed across the car parks in front of the terminal
- Public drop-off to be relocated into the Short Stay Car Park, and the taxi lane relocated to existing public drop-off lane.
- Terminal forecourt area to be pedestrianised and landscaped
- Construction of a new structure near the premium car rental car park to house the car rental offices
- Existing car park on Lancaster Road (previously JKC car park) to become paid parking.

Dawn Lawrie again queried the requirements for disability access on the airport city shuttle bus. The current shuttle service is a short-term contract run by Blue Taxis to fill a gap in the market as there is no permanent airport city shuttle operator currently. It has reduced the pressure on standard taxis servicing the airport.

Tony Edmondstone went on to explain that pedestrianising the forecourt in front of the terminal would likely occur over the next five years or so.

Operations

AJ Wackrow provided an update on operations at Darwin Airport, including:

- CASA undertook an audit of the airport in October, with initial feedback that DIA is being run safely and to a high compliance standard.
- Repair works to the runway are ongoing (with Defence), scheduled for completion by the end of the year. Planning is well underway with Defence for next year's runway overlay.
- The new aerobridge constructed on Bay 4 is complete and awaiting final certification.
- The storm that passed through the airport on 8 October reached gusts of 137km/h. There were some trees down and aircraft damage, with lessons learnt regarding loose items at the airport and a subsequent review of aircraft and equipment tie downs.
- Several local standbys during Defence exercises, and a Mustang replica accident during take-off last month.
- All incidents were well managed by the airport team.

Darwin Airport 2023 Master Plan

Victoria Moore gave members a briefing of the Darwin Airport 2023 Master Plan, targeted to be released as an 'exposure draft' to selected airport stakeholders including CCG and PCF members at the end of November:

- The 2023 Master Plan retains the fundamental concepts of the 2017 Master Plan.
- As we emerge from COVID-19 we've taken a more conservative approach to passenger forecasting.
- There have been some minor adjustments made to the Land Use Plan.
- More discussion included on airport safeguarding, sustainability and climate change, and promoting the airport's good news stories.
- The Airport Environment Strategy remains as an appendix. Action Plan timeframes have been revised to short, medium and long term, and KPIs have been added to measure achievement.

The 2023 Master Plan is anticipated to be released for public comment (as the 'preliminary draft' version) in late April 2023.

Grahame Webb spoke of the tyranny of distance and the critical importance of Darwin Airport. Tony Edmondstone noted that the liveability of Darwin relies on more frequency of flights and at lower price points.

4. Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Alex Redgrove spoke of Department matters:

- Work on the Aviation White Paper is currently in a project planning stage. The four main focus areas of the paper will be: economic reforms needed; net zero carbon

emissions; general aviation; and community consultation and management of aircraft noise.

- The government is working on establishing a 'Jet Zero' Council. Its membership and timing of the initial meeting is still being considered. Work is ongoing and more information is expected to be shared in the near future.
- A new Climate Change Unit is being established in the department. The new Unit's work will involve a significant amount of engagement with the sector.
- Consultation on Stage 2 of the sunseting regulations has now closed. It focused on the department's responsibilities for on-airport activities such as smoking, gambling and commercial trading controls. Stage 3 will look at modernising and reforming the department's regulatory processes in relation to the protection of airspace, environmental management, and building controls.
- NASAG last met in October 2022. The group discussed UK public safety areas and CASA presented on Advanced Air Mobility. The next NASAG meeting is scheduled for April 2023.

Action: Dawn Lawrie had previously sought an update on the Aviation Access Forum and companion animals. Alex to provide an update via email.

Post meeting note:

Alex Redgrove provided the following Aviation Access Forum update via email:

The Aviation Access Forum met on 10 October 2022. The Forum discussed assistance animals in aviation and was provided a short update by the Department of Social Services (DSS) on their ongoing work in this space. DSS is working to seek agreement between states and territories on nationally consistent standards. Public consultations have been held, and the feedback is being considered.

Additionally, the Forum discussed:

- *The recent media coverage of aviation access issues for travellers with disability, and what steps airlines and airports may take to address the issues raised in these reports.*
- *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport modernisation project.*
- *International Civil Aviation Organisation standards and recommended practices for disability access in aviation.*
- *The potential formation of a working group to seek achievable solutions to issues faced by travellers with disability.*

5. Department of Defence / RAAF Base Darwin

Operations & Projects

WGCDR Jim Collisson advised that military exercises at RAAF Base Darwin had now wrapped up for the year, with key highlights being the Australian Warfare Instructor Course held in late May / early June, followed by Exercise Pitch Black, Exercise Kakadu and Exercise Singaroo 22. The outlook for 2023 includes Exercise Talisman Sabre for approximately July, with the planning program currently being prepared and working in with the upcoming runway resurfacing works.

There has been a large program of infrastructure projects at RAAF Base Darwin this year, such as the fuel farm and investigation of extended tarmac space for the Marine Rotational Force – Darwin.

Air Traffic Control

Compulsory Traffic Advisory Frequency procedures (CTAF) continue to be in place during night time hours, until March next year.

Defence Support

Nola Chellingworth explained that the RAAF Base Darwin mid-term refresh has now appointed a head contractor. This significant program of work has recently commenced and will continue through until 2027-28. Works include replacing aged underground infrastructure (e.g. pipework, cabling), a drainage study, and construction of a new entry to the base.

Estate Planning

Tim Hogan advised that Defence continues to respond to development applications surrounding the aerodrome, although there hasn't been much activity of late. Work on the public safety area project for RAAF Darwin has now commenced. Defence's consultant recently met with DIA. The Estate Planning branch continues to represent Defence at the National Airport Safeguarding Advisory Committee.

6. Airservices Australia

John Graham gave an Airservices update. A total of 3 individual noise complaints were received by Airservices' Noise Complaints and Information Service (NCIS) between July-October 2022. The complaints related to general aviation traffic, military traffic and helicopter circuit training.

7. NT Government – Transport Infrastructure Planning

Chandan Kalase advised there were no major updates to provide for this meeting. He noted that NT Government is working with Defence and Airport Development Group on potential developments on the NT Government roads surrounding the aerodrome.

8. Community Consultation Group member issues

No member issues were raised.

2023 meeting dates: Thursday 23 February, Thursday 6 July, Thursday 2 November.