



Concurrent Meeting on 14 November 2024
**Darwin International Airport Community Consultation Group
& Planning Coordination Forum**

Web Report

held at Tindal Room, Airport Development Group Office & 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 18 July 2024 had been previously settled by circulation.

2. Darwin Airport / Airport Development Group

Airport Development Group (ADG) overview

Tony Edmondstone covered a range of matters, notably the release of the Aviation White Paper, ongoing high airfares and the challenge of connectivity to regional areas like the NT. The terminal improvements, landscaping and hotel/resort redevelopment are all projects that ADG is undertaking to improve the visitor experience and attract people to Darwin. ADG continues to advocate for greater connectivity and lower airfares for the NT.

Landscape Master Plan

Will Bligh presented the new Landscape Master Plan, that will inform future landscaping applications for projects at Darwin Airport. The Landscape Master Plan provides a species palette that creates a journey from the entrance to the airport on Henry Wrigley Drive through to the terminal. Plant species have been selected to ensure they are suitable to the climate, not wildlife attracting, non-toxic and don't create any biological risk (e.g. mosquito larvae). The Landscape Master Plan will be extended in future to capture the Osgood Drive precinct and the general aviation areas.

Peter O'Hagan commented that Rapid Creek Landcare Group is reluctant to see native vegetation removed. ADG noted that there are areas within the airport precinct that are dedicated conservation zones for native vegetation. Peter also raised concern about the potential for seed and material from non-native plantings entering the Rapid Creek corridor via stormwater run-off.

Terminal landscaping project

Rob Porter spoke about the upcoming terminal landscaping project, comprising the area between the southern roundabout on Henry Wrigley Drive and the terminal building. The project is guided by the Landscape Master Plan. Works are anticipated to commence before the end of the year and will be undertaken in stages over multiple years.

Aviation Development and Operations

Rob Porter gave an update on aviation development, terminal and airfield operations at Darwin Airport:

Aviation development

- Passenger recovery continues to recover to 2019 levels with international passenger numbers lagging. Additional international and domestic services are anticipated in 2025.
- Qantas' new service between Darwin and Singapore will commence 30 March 2025.
- Qantas' seasonal service between Darwin and Canberra will return in mid-2025.
- Qantas to have increased frequency on route between Darwin and Cairns.
- ADG continues to work with the new NT Government to improve air services to the NT.
- ADG is advocating for the NT Government's Territory Aviation Attraction Scheme (TAAS) to be maintained, as it continues to be a critical component of current discussions with airlines seeking to operate new routes to the NT. The government funding is matched dollar-for-dollar by ADG.

Terminal operations

- Work has commenced in the domestic departure lounge on the construction of Roll'd, due to be completed by the end of the year. In the new year construction will commence on the refurbishment/expansion of the news and gift store.
- ADG continues to enhance accessibility at Darwin Airport, including: implementation of the nationally recognised Sunflower Program for hidden disabilities; a 50% increase in accessible car parking bays; implementation of electric wheelchairs for aerobridge access; and future works planned for assistance animal relief areas in the terminal.
- Works are underway to improve the customer experience in the terminal forecourt with new undercover access ways and landscaping. Works also include realigning the taxi drop-off and short stay car park lanes to provide a safer and smoother traffic flow.
- Pop-up stores are being trialled in the terminal to improve engagement with local suppliers and businesses, such as NT Cookie Lab and Next-Tier Gaming.

Airside operations

- The operations team continues to work closely with Defence and its contractors on the runway resurfacing project.
- ADG has been working with airside operators to remove any ground service equipment (GSE) that is unserviceable and deemed not safe to operate on the airport aprons. This has relieved apron congestion and provides a safe and efficient working environment for all operators.

Darwin Airport 2023 Master Plan

Victoria Moore advised that there have been some delays related to the Minister's review of the Draft Master Plan, with ADG hopeful the Master Plan will be finalised soon.

3. NT Government – Lands Planning

Doug Lesh advised that following the NT election, lands planning is now part of the newly formed Department of Lands, Planning and Environment, and the minister is Hon Joshua Burgoyne MLA.

The NT Government is committed to implementing the NASF guidelines by 2027. Guideline H (strategic helicopter landing sites) has now been implemented. There are 2 sites in the NT: Royal Darwin Hospital and Katherine Hospital. The implementation of Guideline B (windshear and turbulence) is now being prepared, with the NT Government having sought formal advice from CASA on the application of the guideline for Runway 36.

The NT Planning Commission is undertaking background investigations on a potential subregional land use plan for South of the Gap in Alice Springs.

4. Department of Defence / RAAF Base Darwin

RAAF Base Darwin operations

SQNLDR James Lee thanked the Darwin Airport community for their support and patience during a very busy 2024. In 2025, the exercise season is likely to run from March to August. To provide greater integration and transparency, Defence intends to provide earlier forecasts to ADG regarding flying activity and planning at RAAF Darwin.

WGCDR Lauren Guest spoke of Defence and ADG's shared concern for aerodrome security and managing intrusions at RAAF Darwin / Darwin Airport. New technology is currently being considered, with Defence to keep ADG updated.

Air Traffic Control

SQNLDR James Lee confirmed Air Traffic Control will return to 24/7 service on November 16 at 22:00 local time. Defence has consulted with the airline and aviation industry in preparing to return to full service in a sustainable state.

RAAF Base Darwin runway project

WGCDR Sunil Narayan advised that excellent progress has been made on the runway resurfacing project. The runway asphalt works are complete (with some 104,000 tonnes of asphalt laid) and the pavement grooving works have commenced. Works in the Joint User Area are on track to be completed by April 2025. The design life for the runway resurfacing project is 20 years.

Estate Planning

Tim Hogan provided an update on staffing within the Estate Planning team. Defence continues to provide comment on development applications and strategic planning issues around RAAF Darwin / Darwin Airport.

5. Airservices Australia

Victoria Moore presented on behalf of Airservices who were unable to attend the meeting. From May to October there were 2 complainants about aircraft operations relating to Darwin Airport. One was from Marrara and related to helicopter movements, and the other was from Karama and related to general aviation aircraft movements. Airservices investigated the complainants' issues with Air Traffic Control.

6. NT Government – Transport Infrastructure Planning

Chandan Kalase shared that the NT Government has been working with ADG on access matters around Darwin Airport and is also assessing a landscaping application from Darwin Airport regarding the NT Government road reserve on Bagot Road.

In Alice Springs, a finalised concept plan for the Roger Vale Drive – Stuart Highway intersection upgrade has been prepared. The proposed concept includes land acquisition, with the NT Government to engage with the Australian Government and ADG regarding this.

Tristan Cribb sought an update on the NT Government's progress on safety investigations for the unsignalised intersections around Darwin Airport. Chandan Kalase advised black spot assessments are being undertaken and solutions considered (such as restricted movements).

7. Community Consultation Group member issues

No matters raised.

8. Planning Coordination Forum

Planning Coordination Forum members agreed there was no need for a separate closed session following the Community Consultation Group meeting.

2025 meeting dates: Thursday 27 March, Thursday 17 July, Thursday 6 November