



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

**Web Report**

held at Tindal Board Room, 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 2 November 2023 had been previously settled by circulation.

**2. Darwin Airport / Airport Development Group**

**ADG overview**

Tony Edmondstone shared an update on airport matters, including:

- It is anticipated that airfares will continue to remain high. The continuation of the runway resurfacing project this year may result in reduced loads for some aircraft.
- The improvements underway in the terminal, forecourt area, short stay car park and hotel/resort refurbishment are likely to be completed towards the middle of the year.
- Airport Development Group (ADG) intends to issue a new Conditions of Use document for aviation operators in the next few months. The charges within the document are under review, and are likely to be reflective of the significant program of work particularly with the runway resurfacing project. ADG is preparing to undertake extensive consultation with general aviation operators and airlines once the charges has been quantified.

**Aviation development**

Rob Porter outlined recent aviation developments, including:

- Darwin passenger figures (financial year to date) are down 4% in comparison to the previous year, constrained by airline seat capacity. This is due to the runway resurfacing project – for example, in October-November 2023, Jetstar suspended flights to Bali, and the frequency of flights between Darwin and Alice Springs were also reduced.
- It is anticipated there could be some airline service cancellations due to the continuation of the runway resurfacing project this year.
- Darwin Airport's focus is in restoring capacity and improving connections. The airport is actively working with airlines to re-establish routes into the network for next season. Qantas has announced it will commence flights between Darwin and Singapore in December 2024.

## **Operations**

Rob Porter highlighted that Darwin Airport continues to progress accessibility initiatives such as updating the airport's Disability Access Facilitation Plan and engaging with the NT Disability Advisory Committee. Darwin Airport has recently joined the global Sunflower network, recognising hidden disabilities. Sunflower Hidden Disabilities training is scheduled for March, with recognition within the terminal to commence in April.

In response to the action from the last meeting, information was shared on how airlines servicing Darwin manage assistance dogs. It was also noted that Virgin Australia has recently announced it intends to allow small pets (cats and dogs) on certain routes in future.

An email from Dawn Lawrie was tabled providing feedback on the security screening process for visually impaired people with assistance dogs, including challenges of the written consent form. Darwin Airport was grateful to receive this feedback and is actively working to make it an easier, less stressful, and more streamlined process by:

- It is the intention that all service dogs will ultimately be managed in the same way through the security screening process.
- The written consent form is to be superseded by verbal (witnessed) consent instead.
- As security screening can be a longer process for some customers – such as visually impaired customers – steps are being taken to ensure belongings remain secure while the customer is being screened.

Terminal and ground transport developments since the last meeting include:

- As part of the food and beverage refurbishment works, Red Rooster is scheduled to open in the terminal on 15 March. Soul and Grain is expected to open in April and further outlets towards the middle of the year.
- The concrete floor polishing works on the ground floor of the terminal are approximately 70% complete. The airport is looking at innovation in cleaning practices, with robotic floor cleaners being investigated for use between peak periods.
- Singapore Airlines check-in facilities migrated to the new auto bag drop facilities yesterday. The previously lengthy queues have disappeared.
- The Long Stay Saver car park has been increased by 400 parking spaces.
- The new entry to the Long Stay Plus car park has now opened (access via Fenton Court) reducing the number of vehicle movements along the public drop-off lane.
- Redevelopment of the Short Stay car park, including new shade structures, is due to be completed towards the middle of the year.

## **Rapid Creek Reserve path upgrades**

Matthew Evans gave an update on the improvements underway to the Gurumbai trail. There have been a few delays due to the above average rainfall experienced at the start of this year, however the project is on track to be finished by the end of March (weather permitting). Matthew emphasised there is currently no community access to the project area while it is a construction site.

## **Darwin Airport 2023 Master Plan**

Victoria Moore spoke to the engagement tools and activities undertaken during the public comment period of the 2023 Master Plan (22 September – 18 December 2023) including: the airport's website, master plan video, print and digital advertising, news articles, information displays and social media.

14 valid submissions were received during the public comment period. The feedback received was wide ranging, with key topics being: recent customer experiences at the airport; aviation development; terminal, airfield and ground transport development plans; and aspects of the Environment Strategy. Darwin Airport carefully reviewed and showed due regard for all feedback received, with updates made where appropriate to the Master Plan document.

In late February, Darwin International Airport submitted the 'Draft' version of the 2023 Master Plan to the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government for consideration. The Minister has 50-business days to make their determination.

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

Paul Argent shared a range of departmental matters, including:

- The Australian Government is progressing reforms to the Sydney Airport demand management framework.
- Feedback on the Aviation Green Paper closed on 30 November 2023. There were some 200 submissions from the aviation industry. The Aviation White Paper is expected to be released in mid-2024.
- The Australian Jet Zero Council held its second meeting in December 2023. The council's focus is sustainable aviation fuels and reducing emissions by the aviation industry.
- The National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group (NASAG) last met in November 2023.
- The sunset review of a number of aviation legislative instruments continues with these reviews typically occurring every 10 years.

*Post meeting note: The Aviation Access Forum last met formally in late 2022, but has provided input on disability transport issues, and how they are best communicated to Government, as part of the current Aviation White Paper process.*

## **5. Department of Defence / RAAF Base Darwin**

### **RAAF Base Darwin operations**

SQNLDR Andrew Miller advised that the Marine Rotational Force – Darwin had begun its infill of 2,500 marines for this year. Exercise Diamond Storm will be held in June, followed by Exercise Pitch Black in July. The Pitch Black Open Day is scheduled for Saturday 20 July.

### **RAAF Base Darwin Air Traffic Control**

SQNLDR James Lee shared that air traffic control is progressing well with the recovery to 24/7 services, anticipated to be reinstated in late 2024. Air traffic control has ongoing engagement with the runway resurfacing project, and is also working with the planners of

this year's military exercises to manage and balance efficiency with any delays to civilian aircraft to be minimised.

### **RAAF Base Darwin projects**

WGCDR Sunil Narayan briefed members on the progress of the runway resurfacing project:

- Pavement works are on schedule to recommence on 2 April 2024, generally proceeding from west to east.
- Overnight runway closures are anticipated to be held from 5 April to 18 October, between 2am-11.30am.
- The resurfacing is expected to be completed in October, with linework and grooving to occur after this (to be managed around aircraft operations).

## **6. Airservices Australia**

John Graham outlined that there was one aircraft noise complainant at Darwin Airport / RAAF Base Darwin for the period November 2023 to February 2024. The complainant was from Marrara and was concerned with the standard operations of a helicopter. It is currently being investigated by Airservices' Noise Complaint and Information Service (NCIS) team.

John confirmed that the action from the previous meeting (to share noise complainant data with NT Government) had been completed.

## **7. NT Government – Transport**

Chandan Kalase advised there were no major updates regarding transport infrastructure planning around Darwin Airport.

As a new arrival to Darwin, Tristan Cribb queried the safety of some of the intersections surrounding the airport, with other members echoing these observations. Intersections discussed included: Bagot Road / Osgood Drive / Totem Road; Bagot Road / McMillans Road; McMillans Road / Neale Street; McMillans Road / Charles Eaton Drive. Chandan advised that NT Government regularly monitor the intersections and is interested to learn feedback or user issues. DIA requested DIPL provide a report back to the group on safety at each of the airport's main intersections.

David Kurnoth also noted that the recent traffic diversion through the airport as a result of flooding on McMillans Road (due to weather events) had been very congested.

## **7. NT Government – Lands Planning**

Doug Lesh advised that:

- An overlay is now in place around Royal Darwin Hospital in relation to NASAG Guideline H (protecting strategically important helicopter landing sites).
- The NT Government is working on how the new joint military–civil 2043 ANEF contours will be implemented into the Planning Scheme.
- The NT Government prepared a submission to the Aviation Green Paper, which included comment on the appropriateness of the ANEF as a noise metric.

- A discussion paper (stage 1 consultation) on a draft South of the Gap Subregional Land Use Plan for Alice Springs is anticipated to be released by the NT Planning Commission for public input towards the middle of the year.

## **8. Community Consultation Group member issues**

Andrew Hardy gave feedback on the proposed Murphy Road footpath upgrade concept that had recently been shared with general aviation tenants.

Bob Calaby noted that Darwin Airport has commented on 4 development applications since the last meeting, all regarding proposed developments in the Berrimah Business Park.

Remaining 2024 meeting dates: Thursday 18 July, Thursday 14 November.