

Major Development Plan Approval Conditions Fact Sheet

On 10 September 2024, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government approved the draft Major Development Plan (MDP) for Melbourne Airport's Third Runway. This is pursuant to section 94 of the Airports Act 1996 (Cth).

The Minister's approval has come with a range of conditions in accordance with subsection 94(7) of the Airports Act. These conditions are outlined as follows.

Eastern Extension Project

To build the third runway, the current east-west runway (Runway 09/27) needs to be shortened at its western end from its current length of 2,286 metres to 1,940 metres. This is to account for land topography and operations. However, the runway will later be restored to its original length with an extension built at its eastern end.

Melbourne Airport will not be permitted to commence work on the third runway until it has provided the Minister with a legally enforceable commitment to restore the length of the east-west runway (Runway 09/27). This is to maximise opportunities for noise sharing.

Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Plan

Melbourne Airport will prepare a Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Plan that will outline how we will share and lessen noise. This will be prioritised outside of peak periods and when weather conditions allow.

The Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Plan will also explain the operating modes that will be used to manage the impact of aircraft noise on communities surrounding the airport. It will include providing those communities with periods of relief from noise by operating cross-runway operations using Runway 09/27.

Melbourne Airport will also detail how its runways will operate with the two runways at Essendon Fields Airport, including any changes to airspace and how aircraft access will be prioritised.

Melbourne Airport will undertake consultation with local communities, local councils, airlines, other aerodromes within the Melbourne Basin and the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning to develop the Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Plan. The plan will be reviewed and endorsed by Airservices Australia prior to approval by the Minister.

Noise Amelioration Plan and Program

Within 24 months of the approval of the MDP for the third runway, Melbourne Airport will finalise a Noise Amelioration Plan. This plan will describe the program to be implemented to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on residential dwellings and childcare, healthcare, education and aged care services situated within the 20-year Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF) 25 contour (or higher) for Melbourne Airport.

The ANEF system is used to measure aircraft noise exposure levels around airports and aerodromes. The higher the contour number is above ANEF 25, the greater the aircraft noise.

This plan will be developed in consultation with local councils, local communities, Melbourne Airport's Community Aviation Consultation Group and the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning.

The Third Runway MDP conditions include the minimum requirements for the Noise Amelioration Program, including that the program runs for a minimum period of 10 years, what information needs to be provided and the standard to which the impact of aircraft noise must be reduced (Australian Standard 2021:2015 Acoustics - Aircraft Noise Intrusion).

Community Health Study

Within 12 months of the approval of the MDP for the third runway, Melbourne Airport must submit a draft terms of reference for an independent long-term study into the impacts of aircraft noise associated with the ongoing operation of the third runway on the community surrounding Melbourne Airport.

The terms of reference will be developed in consultation with the Melbourne Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group and will set out the methodology for the study. A suitably qualified, independent community health expert/s will be appointed to carry out the study over a period of 20 years.

Environment

A range of environmental conditions have also been placed on the building of the third runway. These include requirements to secure biodiversity offsets in accordance with EPBC Act requirements, and engaging an Independent Environmental Assessor(s) to review and endorse Construction Environmental Management Plans and associated Environmental Management Plans prior to submission to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts for approval.

Where can I find the conditions?

These conditions, along with a range of environmental requirements, will balance the future growth of Melbourne Airport with the needs of communities around Melbourne.

The conditions have been published by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts and can be found:

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/media/publications/third-runway-major-development-plan-melbourne-airport-conditions-approval-10-september-2024>