



ICAO

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Agenda Item 3: Global, Regional and National Guidance/Best Practices on Wildlife Hazard Management

AN AUSTRALIAN APPROACH TO AIRPORT SAFEGUARDING

(Presented by Australia)

SUMMARY

This paper outlines Australia's development of a best-practice framework for land use planning around and on-airport sites and discusses the associated roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of governments, industry stakeholders and individual land owners. The framework includes guidance to inform the management of wildlife hazards and risks, consistent with ICAO Annex 14.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The concept of airport safeguarding is not new, most readers will be familiar with the subject in one form or another. Safe, well planned and regulated airports are in everyone's best interest. However, balancing the competing interests of airport safety and growth, with government/community expectations for areas near airports does pose a challenge for all stakeholders involved.

1.2 Australia's National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group (NASAG) was formed in 2010, bringing together State and Territory planning and transport departments, the Australian Department of Defence, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA, the Regulator)), Airservices Australia (the ANSP), the Australian Local Government Association and the (State) Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.

This partnership recognises that airports are a vital part of the nation's infrastructure, as well as being large employment hubs and important drivers of the economy of the State or Territory in which they are located.

1.3 In developing a consistent approach to land use planning around Australian airports NASAG's safeguarding objectives were threefold -

➔ **first** to protect the safety of aircraft operations and communities. There will always be safety risks associated with aircraft operations. The concept of safeguarding was developed with a view to minimising this risk for communities living in the vicinity of airports and that inappropriate off-airport development does not pose a risk to the safety of aircraft operations

→ **second** to ensure the future viability of our airports is not compromised by the pressures of poor off-airport planning decisions. By putting in-place better mechanisms for collaboration between airports and local communities, we are in a stronger position to harness future opportunities for aviation growth

→ **third** to protect the amenity of communities near airports. National and international experience to date has taught us that airport noise does not stop at a line on a map. Every effort should be made to avoid placing new residential developments in greenfield areas which are, or will be, affected by significant aircraft noise in the future.

1.4 In 2012 State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers endorsed the first National Airports Safeguarding Framework (NASF) documents which included seven overarching Principles and six Guidelines. Between 2012 and 2018 three additional Guidelines were endorsed by Ministers for inclusion in the NASF¹.

1.5 Current NASF Guidelines consider aviation-related safety and amenity issues including: aircraft noise, building induced windshear and turbulence, wildlife hazard management, wind turbines, pilot lighting distraction, airspace protection, protection of air navigation equipment, protection of strategic helicopter landing sites, and public safety areas near the end of runways.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The purpose of the NASF is to enhance the current and future safety, viability and growth of aviation operations, by supporting and enabling:

- a. the implementation of best practice in relation to land use assessment and decision making in the vicinity of airports and strategic helicopter landing sites;
- b. assurance of community safety and amenity near airports and strategic helicopter landing sites;
- c. better understanding and recognition of aviation safety requirements and aircraft noise impacts in land use and related planning decisions;
- d. the provision of greater certainty and clarity for developers and land owners;
- e. improvements to regulatory certainty and efficiency; and
- f. the publication and dissemination of information on best practice in land use and related planning that supports the safe and efficient operation of airports and strategic helicopter landing sites.

2.2 NASF provides an opportunity to drive improvements in planning outcomes consistently across Australian States and Territories, and contribute to the improvement of the current and future safety and viability of aviation in Australia.

2.3 By putting in-place better mechanisms for collaboration between airports and local communities we create a stronger position from which to harness the opportunities from aviation growth with the support of local communities.

Guideline C - Managing the Risk of Wildlife Strikes in the Vicinity of Airports

2.4 Under Commonwealth legislation all aviation incidents involving wildlife strikes must be reported to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB)².

¹ [National Airports Safeguarding Framework](#)

² [Australian Transport Safety Bureau](#)

The likelihood of a bird strike on an aircraft substantially increases within and in the vicinity of airports. ATSB statistics indicate that most bird strikes in Australia occur within five kilometers of airports, where the aircraft is in its lowest trajectory, where pilot workload is high and where, on approach, aircraft recovery is compromised by the aircraft speed and landing configuration.

2.5 While CASA has well-established safety requirements for wildlife management plans on-airport, in-keeping with ICAO Annex 14, some wildlife hazards do originate outside the airport fence. Given that current aviation safety legislation regarding management of wildlife only applies on airport land, there is potential to improve land use management around airports to further minimise the risk of wildlife hazards to aviation.

2.6 In Australia responsibility for land use planning in these off-airport areas rests primarily with State, territory and local governments. Land around airports acts as a buffer zone where wildlife attracting land uses should be avoided; for example, land uses such as intensive agriculture, wildlife sanctuaries, wetlands, land fill sites, abattoirs, and piggeries can attract groups of birds which increases the risk of interaction with aviation activity.

2.7 NASF Guideline C¹ was developed to provide guidance to airports, councils and land owners and assists in minimising the risk of off-airport wildlife hazards impacting aircraft and airport operations.

2.8 The guideline recognises that at many existing Australian airports it may be difficult to eliminate or change existing wildlife attractants. In such cases, airport operators should work with land owners and local government to mitigate the risk of wildlife strike.

2.9 Additionally, where a greenfield site is being considered for the establishment of a new airport, site selection parties can refer to the attachments contained in the guideline to assess the degree of incompatible land use, including wildlife attractants, in the vicinity of potential sites.

2.10 Risk mitigation measures to be considered for new airports may include the requirement for wildlife-management programs; establishment of wildlife-management performance standards; allowance for changes to design and/or operating procedures at places/plants where land use has been identified as increasing risk of wildlife strike to aircraft; establishment of appropriate habitat management at incompatible land uses; authority for airport operators to inspect and monitor properties close to airports where wildlife hazards have been identified and consistent and effective reporting of wildlife events in line with ATSB guidelines.

2.11 Finally, it is important that the future viability of our airports is not compromised by the pressures of poor off-airport planning decisions. It is common sense that there are significant benefits to be gained when airport operators and land use planning decision makers follow a common, coordinated approach to managing this risk together.

2.12 By putting in place better mechanisms for collaboration between airports and local communities we place ourselves in a stronger position to proactively maintain airport safety and harness future opportunities for aviation growth.

¹ [NASF Guideline C](#)

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this information paper; and
- b) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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