

Discussion Paper Response
into

SAFEGUARDS FOR AIRPORTS AND THE COMMUNITIES AROUND THEM



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Latrobe Regional Airport
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General Comments

Latrobe City Council and the Latrobe Regional Airport Board welcome the opportunity to respond to the discussion paper on “Safeguards for Airports and the Communities surrounding them”, that is currently being exhibited by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

The Latrobe Regional Airport is wholly owned by Latrobe City Council on behalf of the residents and ratepayers of Latrobe City. The Airport is home to State emergency and medical response facilities, Australia’s only commercial aviation manufacturing industry and, in addition, provides education/training, transport, recreation and tourism services to the region.

It is the intent of the Latrobe Regional Airport Board to promote the orderly development and expansion of the Airport in line with the adopted Master Plan 2009, while preserving a safe and liveable amenity for residents of the surrounding area.

The protection of the immediate airspace around the Latrobe Regional Airport from incompatible development is an integral component in maintaining a safe operating environment, while ensuring the amenity value of future residents.

This submission and attached document, provide an overview of the airport, regional services, related business and State Government investments associated with the Latrobe Regional Airport.

The attachment, titled “Strategic Planning Background Report” is the report presented to the Victorian Minister for Planning in June 2008, in order to have an Interim Development Control order granted to protect the areas surrounding the Latrobe Regional Airport from inappropriate development.

The attachment also provides comment on high risk areas identified within Flight Circuit Paths and outlines the necessary steps the Latrobe Regional Airport Board and Latrobe City Council will undertake to ensure the safety of both pilots and residents.

Master Plan 2009

During 2008 the Latrobe Regional Airport Board commissioned Aurecon to undertake an update of the Airport Master Plan. This Master Plan, which has now been adopted by the Airport Board, contains certain recommendations to amend the Latrobe Planning Scheme and provide some land use protection to prevent inappropriate development on land surrounding the airport.

Interim Development Control

Latrobe City Council currently has an Interim Development Control (IDC) order in place which seeks to provide some protection against inappropriate development on land surrounding the airport, until such time as the planning amendments recommended in the Master Plan 2009 can be enacted and incorporated into the Latrobe Planning Scheme.

This IDC covers an area consistent with the circuit area assigned to each runway. (Refer attached document) Control over land use and developments within this area are much more appropriate than relying on planning permit applications to be triggered from just the area within an ANEF. All land use and developments within the IDC area trigger a planning permit application to Council, which will then be referred to the Airport Board for comment.

The circuit area which includes approach and departure paths, is by far the most trafficked area around an airport, and therefore developments should be controlled to protect the operations of the airport, both current and future, and the amenity and livability for communities within the airport environs. The local planning scheme can provide the instrument to achieve this outcome, however appropriate tools to achieve this are absent within the Victorian Planning Provisions.

ANEF

The ANEF provides for planning land use/building restrictions within the mapped ANEF area only. Whilst the ANEF has a role to play in the requirement for noise abatement in new buildings within the area, it should not be the only planning tool available to municipal planners when judging the suitability of a planning application within the environs of an airport. Other factors such as frequency and type of operation should also be considered where an application is in an area with urban development potential to prevent inappropriate encroachment near an airport boundary.

OLS

While the OLS has some inputs to planning applications, particularly tall structures, it does not give Civil Aviation Safety Authority the power to preclude structures being built that intrude into the OLS. Rather it seeks notification that an intrusion is likely to occur. The OLS should not be used in isolation to protect approach and departure routes and the airport environs, and suitable Design Development Overlays should be embedded in to the local planning scheme to prevent any likely intrusion.

Planning Controls

The use of planning controls within the area surrounding an airport (possibly the circuit area) in conjunction with the ANEF and OLS, would prevent inappropriate land use development occurring around an airport. A zone or an overlay can control the type of use and development allowed (housing, industrial, education, accommodation etc) and the density of such development. However, at present the available tools are not adequate beyond the ANEF.

If developments and subdivision were limited, then the density of urban encroachment could be contained. Subdivisions nearest to the airport boundaries could have minimum lot size requirements and be designated low density development areas, particularly if the development is of a residential nature.

Similarly areas in the direct approach and departure paths, as defined by the OLS, could be even more restricted in their use and development opportunities.

Modified public safety zones need to be defined for each individual airport or airport type; ie major regular public transport (RPT) hub, high activity regional airport (with or without RPT), other certified or registered airports.

Consideration should be given to the highest Code numbered aircraft designated for each runway. (Refer aircraft codes in MOS 139 chapter 2) The distance from runway threshold should be adjusted as the Code number increases. This would create the Public Safety Zones for all airports, consistent with their current use and future use up to the maximum aircraft code number allowed.

Summary

Federal guidelines could be initiated that would lead to a consistent approach to safeguarding airports and the communities surrounding them. These guidelines should inform the preparation of new State and Local Government planning controls to prevent urban encroachment and other inappropriate land use developments near airport boundaries, thereby protecting the airports and the amenity of the surrounding communities.

The OLS is an appropriate vehicle to protect areas surrounding airports from developments where height is a major factor. This could be strengthened by giving Civil Aviation Safety Authority the option to object to a planning application involving possible intrusion into the OLS, before the development is allowed by Council.

The ANEF should remain as an indication of special building requirements within its contours, but not as an isolated trigger for a planning application or referral. Appropriate planning tools are needed to require planning permits for sensitive land uses beyond the extent of the ANEF.

For example, the circuit area surrounding each runway on an airport should attract special attention within a local planning scheme, either from a special zone being applied, or a Design Development Overlay similar to the Interim Development Control which is currently in operation within the Latrobe Planning Scheme. All developments or subdivisions within this area must be referred to the Airport Operator for comment.

Public Safety Zones could be established as described above, and these could further restrict the type of use and development acceptable in these areas. This should preclude such things as the use of land for medium and high density housing, limit the size of allotments in a subdivision, and prevent inappropriate developments (mining, land fill areas, accommodation houses etc) from occurring.

Airport Statistics

The Latrobe Regional Airport operates with an unconditional Civil Aviation Safety Authority Licence V007.

Physical attributes of Latrobe Regional Airport include:

- Two all weather runways - 03/21:1430 metres sealed to 23 metres wide and 09/27: gravel, 919 metres and 18 metres wide, and a grass strip 03L/21R 537 metres.
- Pilot activated lighting (PAL) on 03/21.
- Radio Navigation Aid, Non Directional Beacon.
- Fully Sealed Apron.
- Automatic Weather Information Service (AWIS).
- AFRU Beep Back.
- Aviation Fuel, AVGAS and JET A1.
- Modern air-conditioned terminal building.
- Sealed public car-park.
- On-site aircraft construction and maintenance facilities.
- Emergency facilities including State Emergency Services, Country Fire Authority, Department of Sustainability & Environment fire bomber base and Helimed helicopter ambulance.
- Charter flights available to anywhere in Australia.
- Serviced land available with direct access to runways for aviation related business activities.