

# NASF Airport Public Safety Areas Guideline

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What

#### **Q: What is a Public Safety Area (PSA)?**

A: Public Safety Areas (PSAs) are designated areas of land at the end of airport runways within which certain planning restrictions may apply. These areas seek to limit land uses within the PSA that increase the number of people living, working or congregating in the area and the storage of hazardous materials in the area. The approach to PSAs in Australia (through the National Airports Safeguarding Framework (NASF) Guideline I) provides flexibility for state/territory governments to be proactive and identify and map PSAs at airports, or take a reactive approach and consider public safety risk on a case-by-case basis in response to development proposals in close proximity to airport runways.

#### **Q: What area does a PSA cover?**

A: The size and shape of PSAs are dependent on each airport's unique set of operations. This means that for some airports the PSA will be contained within the airport boundary, whereas for other airports the PSA will cover a wider area extending to land outside of the airport. However, in most cases, a PSA takes the shape of an elongated triangular or four-sided area tapering away from the runway end. See **Attachment A** for an example from the current Queensland planning system.

#### **Q: How does it differ from a Runway End Safety Area (RESA)?**

A: PSAs are sometimes confused with RESAs, which are cleared ground areas extending from the end of the runway strip for the purpose of minimising damage to an aircraft if it overruns or undershoots the runway. While a RESA seeks to address the risk to aircraft and passengers, the PSA seeks to address the risk to the community around an airport. The application of PSAs occurs in addition to safety areas required by legislated safety standards, such as RESAs.

### Why

#### **Q: Why consider PSAs at airports?**

A: By enabling suitable developments to be properly located and preventing unsuitable new developments from going ahead, the use of PSAs reduces the already low risk of an air transport accident affecting people who live, work or travel in close proximity to airports. Analysis of commercial airliner crash data indicates that over 50% of aircraft accidents occur in the initial stages of take-off and climb, and the final stages of approach and landing, when aircraft are below 1,000ft elevation and aligned with the runway.

The United Kingdom, United States of America and some European countries already have policies in place to limit development near airport runway ends. However, Queensland is currently the only Australian jurisdiction to have in place an airport Public Safety Area policy.

**Q: Why now?**

A: The National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group (NASAG), comprising of Commonwealth, State and Territory Government planning and transport officials, the Australian Government Department of Defence, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, Airservices Australia and the Australian Local Government Association, has been working collaboratively to develop a Guideline on PSAs. This new Guideline forms part of the National Airports Safeguarding Framework (NASF). The NASF is a national land-use planning framework that aims to ensure aviation safety requirements are recognised in land use planning decisions. It is the responsibility of each state and territory to implement the PSA Guideline into their respective planning systems. While the Guideline informs a consistent approach to PSAs at Australian airports, it also allows for some flexibility in how states/territories choose to adopt PSAs.

**Q: Has something changed to make it less safe to live around the airport?**

A: The risk to those living, working or congregating in PSAs is the same as it always has been. The presence of a PSA does not increase the risk of an aircraft crash. It is a very low risk compared with many other risks that most people encounter in their daily lives.

## Who

**Q: Who is responsible for implementing PSAs?**

A: Twenty-two Australian airports are under Commonwealth Government planning control administered by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities (Infrastructure) under the *Airports Act 1996* (the Airports Act). Infrastructure is responsible for policy advice regarding public safety risks within the boundaries of these leased federal airports. The Minister responsible for the Airports Act considers this advice in the assessment of Airport Master Plans and Major Development Plans. The Department of Defence is responsible for providing public safety advice in relation to military airfields and joint-user airports.

State, territory and local governments are responsible for land use planning outside the boundaries of leased federal airports and Defence airfields. Planning on and around other airports that are not leased federal airports is also the responsibility of state, territory and local governments or private operators. This includes consideration of public safety risks in the vicinity of the ends of airport runways.

**Q: Who is affected by this change?**

A: PSAs vary by location. To find out if a particular house, business or any other structure is located within a PSA you should contact the relevant airport, or your state/territory or local planning authority.

**Q. My house or business is within the PSA. What does that mean for me?**

A: PSAs are not applied to existing development and many types of future development – such as extensions to existing houses – may still be allowed. For more information, you should contact your state/territory or local council/planning authority.

**Q: How will the introduction of a PSA affect the value of my property?**

A: The risk to those living in or near a PSA is the same as it has always been. Therefore, the introduction of a PSA should not affect the value of properties located around the airport.

Although focused on the impact of aircraft noise rather than PSAs, studies<sup>1</sup> have found that, houses in aircraft noise affected locations, have achieved similar or higher prices and capital growth than non-affected locations. The decision to purchase a house has also been shown to be based on a range of factors such as proximity to schools, work and services.

**Q: Will any properties have to be vacated, demolished, or modified as a result of the introduction of PSAs?**

A: No. The introduction of a PSA will not have any impact upon existing residential, commercial or industrial properties.

**Q: How is the community being consulted/informed about PSAs?**

A: General information about the NASF PSA Guideline can be found:

- on the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities website; or
- through links on your state/territory planning department website.

During public exhibition from 11 May to 12 July 2018, the Guideline was available on the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities website and emailed to a number of stakeholders. Consultations were also undertaken through Community Aviation Consultative Groups (CACGs)<sup>2</sup> and Planning Coordination Forums (PCFs)<sup>3</sup> in each state/territory. Information on the new PSA Guideline will continue to be disseminated through these groups.

Since the new Guideline allows for flexibility in how states/territories choose to adopt PSAs, detailed community consultation is a matter for individual jurisdictions and will depend on the approach taken. For example, some states choosing to adopt a planning-led approach may provide additional community information sessions and/or airport specific information through local councils.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, a Queensland University of Technology study of 180,000 house sales between 1988 and 2013 found that property prices had grown faster in some suburbs under flight paths than in similar regions with no aircraft noise. A similar study for Melbourne Airport's proposed Runway Development Program, conducted by RMIT, concluded that price and performance of property value is more closely linked to socio-economic status than aircraft noise impact.

<sup>2</sup> All federally leased airports operate CACGs, with membership usually by invitation only and generally consisting of representatives from the airport, federal and state governments, Airservices Australia, and local communities.

<sup>3</sup> All major capital city airports and some secondary airports operate PCFs. These forums provide for consultation between airport operators and senior local, state and federal government authorities responsible for town planning, transport and infrastructure investment. Membership is by invitation and generally consists of representatives from the airport, federal, state and local governments, and Airservices Australia.

# Where

## **Q: Which airports will have PSAs?**

A: All leased federal airports will be expected to consider public safety risk on airports. It is up to each state/territory and local government to decide how best to implement the new NASF PSA Guideline into their planning schemes. A PSA will not necessarily be introduced at all airports. For more information on which airports will be introducing PSAs, please contact the relevant airport, or your state/territory or local planning authority.

## **Q: How are PSAs determined?**

A: The PSA boundary identifies the area within which, any person living or working for a period of a year, has approximately a 1 in 100,000 chance per year of being fatally injured as a result of an aircraft accident. As discussed below, compared to other risks we take every day, this risk is very low.

## **Q: How does this risk compare to other risks in daily life?**

A: The 1 in 100,000 individual risk associated with living or working within a PSA is actually a low level of risk compared with many other risks that most people encounter in their daily lives. For example, with an annual road toll of around 1,200 deaths, the risk to an individual of being fatally injured in a road accident in Australia is about 5 in 100,000.

# When

## **Q: When will PSAs be introduced?**

A: Following the completion of public consultation in July 2018, NASAG incorporated feedback and then presented the finalised Guideline to the Transport and Infrastructure Council<sup>4</sup> (the Council). The new Guideline was agreed by Ministers at the Council on 9 November 2018. As the NASF PSA Guideline allows for state/territory governments to choose how they can best address PSAs, it is a matter for each individual approval body to determine the timeframe and approach for the introduction of PSAs. For more information, please contact the relevant airport, or state/territory or council/local planning authority.

# What else

## **Q: What other types of PSAs exist?**

A: The consideration of public safety risks is not unique to airports. These risks are also considered for developments and emergency management in the vicinity of a range of existing or proposed industrial sites that can give rise to adverse public safety outcomes. Examples of legislation, regulation and planning documents that prescribe buffer zones and non-aviation PSAs include

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<sup>4</sup> The Transport and Infrastructure Council brings together Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for transport and infrastructure issues, as well as the Australian Local Government Association.

those for the nuclear research facility in Lucas Heights, NSW and the protection of World Heritage sites.

**Q: What other measures are in place to minimise the risk to public safety near airport runways?**

A: Safety at aerodromes is enhanced in a variety of ways and is governed by Australia's Aviation State Safety Programme (SSP), as required by the International Civil Aviation Organization. The SSP sets out Australia's arrangements for maintaining and improving aviation safety. Under the umbrella of the SSP, Australia's aviation agencies and the aviation industry have significant roles to play in delivering quality safety outcomes. For example, runway safety is enhanced by airport operators through investment in infrastructure such as longer, wider landing strips; Runway End Safety Areas; dual taxi lanes on aprons; installation of runway stop bars; and upgraded approach lighting.

Australia's Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) also plays a key role in aviation safety through regulatory oversight of such functions as pilot licencing, aircraft operations and maintenance, and through safety education and training while Airservices Australia contributes to the safety of aircraft operations at and near airports through the provision of a range of air traffic management and advisory services. It is also important to note that airports around Australia already take into consideration aircraft crash risks and general public safety through their airport master planning processes.

**Q: How do I find out more?**

A: General enquiries regarding the NASF may be directed to the General Manager, Aviation Environment Branch, Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development or by email to [safeguarding@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:safeguarding@infrastructure.gov.au).

For specific information on how PSAs may be applied in your state or territory please contact the relevant airport, or follow the link below to find contact information for your jurisdiction:

[https://infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/environmental/airport\\_safeguarding/nasf/](https://infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/environmental/airport_safeguarding/nasf/)

## Attachment A: Example Public Safety Area maps – Queensland State Planning Policy



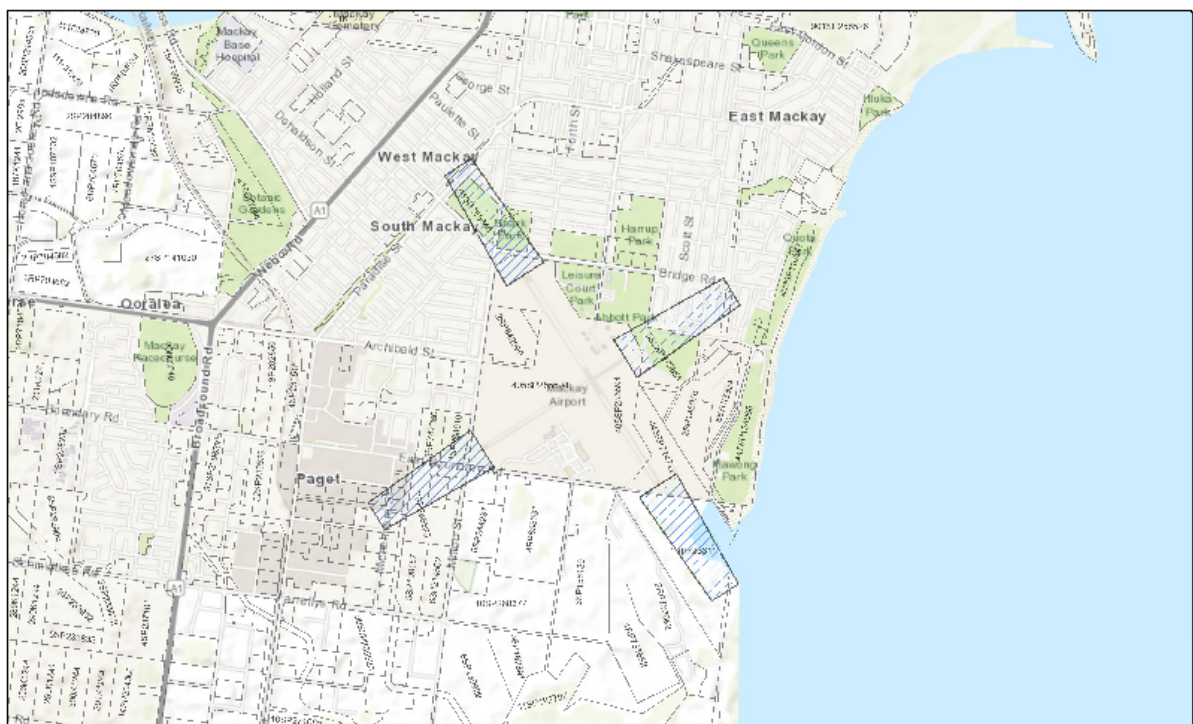
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**State Planning Policy**  
Making or amending a local planning instrument  
and designating land for community infrastructure

0 1,100 2,200 3,300 4,400  
Metres

Date: 06/03/2018

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**State Planning Policy**  
Making or amending a local planning instrument  
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0 580 1,160 1,740 2,320  
Metres

Date: 06/03/2018

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## State Planning Policy

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0 290 580 870 1,160  
Metres

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