

Brisbane Airport Post Implementation Review Advisory Forum

# **Final Report – November 2022**

October – November 2022

December 2022

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## Introduction

As Chair of the Brisbane Airport Post Implementation Review Advisory Forum (the Forum), I am pleased to present to you the Forum’s Final Report on activities and progress on achievement of deliverables from October through November 2022, in line with the Terms of Reference. This Report has been prepared, and agreed, by all Forum members.



Ross Musgrove

Chair

Brisbane Airport Post Implementation Review Advisory Forum

## Executive Summary

The Brisbane Airport Post Implementation Review Advisory Forum (the Forum) met two times in October and November 2022, continuing with oversight of the Airservices Australia (Airservices) Post Implementation Review (PIR) and community engagement processes. With the draft release of the Airservices PIR in October 2022 and expected final release in December 2022, the Forum is pleased to present its final report in line with the Terms of Reference.

### Final Comments

During this quarter, Airservices released their [draft PIR report](https://engage.airservicesaustralia.com/brisbane-airport-flight-path-change/news_feed/draft-pir-report-released) on 21October 2022 for public comment. A four-week public comment period on the draft was conducted between 21 October and 20 November 2022.

The Forum notes that the draft PIR report has adopted and expanded on all four packages recommended by the Trax International (Trax) report released in the previous quarter. These are:

* **Package 1 (strong, transparent and representative governance)** proposes governance mechanisms to oversee implementation of airspace changes;
* **Package 2 (maximise flights over water)** includes options for changes to airspace architecture and management procedures to extend the use of over-the-bay flight paths when weather and operational conditions permit;
* **Package 3 (reduce the frequency and concentration of flights over communities)** sets out options for small modifications to the existing flight paths on ‘compass operations’ to deliver short-term improvements; and
* **Package 4 (optimise performance of the Brisbane airspace system)** proposes options for more substantial airspace and operational changes. This includes noise sharing runway operations and other enhancements to the broader airspace network.

Package 2 – maximise flights over water – has been identified as being partially deliverable in early 2023. Work is underway with specific timings to be confirmed. The Package focusses on extending the use of Simultaneous Opposite Direction Parallel Runways Operations (SODPROPS), which has been under trial since February 2022. While this runway configuration is in use, all jet operations and most non-jet aircraft must arrive or depart over Moreton Bay. Currently, SODPROPS is primarily used between the hours of 10.00pm and 6.00am local time and in quieter periods over the weekend, and is reliant on lower levels of activity and favourable weather conditions. Airservices is looking to:

* Expand the timeframe in which SODPROPS is the prioritised runway configuration beyond the current 10.00pm – 6.00am window. An ongoing trial of extended SODPROPS has identified substantial benefit to be gained in improving noise outcomes for communities.
* Reduce complexity of moving into the SODPROPS mode by rewriting Air Traffic Control (ATC) procedures.
* Modify specific SODPROPS flight paths and ATC procedures in order to optimise final approach efficiency and reduce the impact of over water operations on affected communities.
* Additionally, Airservices is looking to engage with Defence in relation to Amberley restricted airspace that currently adds complexity to SODPROPS use.

The assessment and implementation of these changes will include environment assessments and further community engagement. The Forum recommends that Airservices continue to involve Trax as an independent collaborator in the implementation of the recommended packages.

The draft PIR report indicates that, during previous PIR community engagement, issues were raised that were not within Airservices’ remit and therefore not included in the PIR recommendations. These items included:

* Calls for Brisbane Airport to be subject to a curfew
* Calls for Brisbane Airport to be subject to movement caps

The Forum considered the implications of a curfew model in the previous quarter. The Forum’s position that it does not support the introduction of a curfew at Brisbane Airport is outlined in the September quarterly report.

### *Community calls to introduce a movement cap at Brisbane Airport*

The Forum understands that the introduction of movement caps – a legislated limit to the amount of flights travelling to and from Brisbane Airport on an hourly basis – is likely to have a negative net impact on the greater Brisbane area. These anticipated impacts would include:

* Capped passenger movements: capping flight movements while the passenger demand continues to increase would likely lead to higher airfares and a reduction in choice for the community. The airport would likely favour higher capacity aircraft to maximise passenger throughput (which is the basis for charging for aviation services). This would lead to larger international and domestic aircraft being preferenced over smaller aircraft, for example those services regional and remote communities.
* Network inefficiencies: to manage and enforce a movement cap, a strict demand management processes would be required to spread out activity across operating hours. There would be no capacity to match demand in the early morning and late afternoon peak periods, which would have a flow on effect across the domestic network. This will likely result in inefficiencies for airline scheduling, with reduced flexibility to operate aircraft across the network.
* Passed-on financial impacts: the inability to grow passenger numbers to generate revenue to repay the cost of constructing and maintaining runway infrastructure will add pricing pressures to the restricted movements leading to higher costs for consumers.
* Competition and growth: A cap of available slots will make it very difficult for the airport to add new routes (such as the recently commenced Brisbane to San Francisco service) and make it impossible for new carriers to get a foothold into the market. This comes at significant cost to the South-East Queensland communities, the tourism industry and limits competition, which is critical to driving lower air fares.

### *Ministerial directive*

In addition to a movement cap, the Forum also considered the potential for a ministerial directive to require Airservices to conduct operations at Brisbane Airport in a particular way (such as an operating plan similar to the Long-Term Operating Plan at Sydney Kingsford-Smith Airport).

As part of Package 1: Strong, Transparent and Representative Government, Trax International recommends the establishment of a Noise Action Plan. A Noise Action Plan would set out a plan for managing the impacts of aircraft noise and where possible reduce noise over the short, medium and long-term around the airport.

Airservices has committed to the approach in its draft Final PIR Report and the Forum understands the Noise Action Plan will be progressed through the governance arrangements that will oversee the implementation of improvement measures identified for further progress in the final report, including consultation with community stakeholders. The Noise Action Plan proposes to include:

* Ongoing community monitoring and input into airspace changes and improvement around Brisbane Airport
* Ensuring specific noise mitigation measures are included as part of the plan as it evolves, with accountability and performance measures.
* Maintaining cross-industry and community stakeholder involvement and momentum behind the development and implementation of noise mitigation measures.

The Forum agrees that the proposed Noise Action Plan (recommendation 1.4 of the draft PIR report) is the most appropriate mechanism for stakeholder involvement in the development of noise mitigation measures. As such, the Forum considers that a ministerial directive is not required.

**Taking into account all of the above information, members have formed a view that a movement cap and/or ministerial directive for Brisbane Airport would have detrimental economic impacts on the community that are likely to outweigh any perceived benefit. The Forum therefore does not support the introduction of a movement cap or a ministerial directive for aviation operations at Brisbane Airport.**

### *New independent community body*

The Australian Government has committed to the establishment of a permanent, independent community body to better manage engagement on aircraft noise around Brisbane Airport. The Forum understands that the Government will announce the arrangements for the permanent body alongside the finalisation of the PIR.

The Forum looks forward to the implementation of the packages developed by Trax International and adopted in the Airservices Post Implementation Review Final Report, with appropriate advice and feedback from the new independent community body, once established.

### Acknowledgements

The Forum recognises the ongoing challenges and competing priorities in the Brisbane noise space, as well as the significant work that has been undertaken to develop a plan that considers the needs of the community and the needs of the growing aviation industry. The Forum members extend their thanks to all organisations and community members who have contributed to the work of the Forum.

Further details on progress against previous matters identified by the Forum is included as an Appendix to this report.

## Background

On 24 September 2021, the then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Regional Development announced the establishment of the Forum in recognition of significant community interest in aircraft operations around Brisbane Airport.

The independent, community-oriented Forum was established specifically to provide advice and feedback to Airservices on matters relating to its PIR of Brisbane Airport’s new airspace operations following the opening of the new parallel runway.

Under the Terms of Reference, the Forum is required to report quarterly to the Minister on its activities and progress on achievement of deliverables, which include:

* Provide relevant, constructive and evidence-based feedback to Airservices on its PIR documentation in relation to community impacts ahead of and post broader community consultation phases.
* Provide considered and constructive input to Airservices on community engagement methodologies for the PIR and options for improvement.
* For the PIR, provide considered, constructive and evidence-based input from a whole of community perspective to Airservices in relation to:
  1. airspace management procedures and flight paths at Brisbane Airport, and
  2. possible options to improve noise sharing across the Brisbane community, having regard to historical and forecast noise impacts on communities from both legacy flight paths and new flight paths arising from the NPR.

The Forum’s Quarterly Progress Reports for October to December 2021, January to March 2022, April to June 2022 and July to September 2022 are available at https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/aviation/airports/brisbane-airport-post-implementation-review-advisory-forum.

## Summary of activity

The Forum met on the following dates:

* Monday 17 October 2022 – Meeting #15
* Monday 21 November 2022 – Meeting #16

Since 1 October 2022, the Forum has met with officials from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.

Minutes from the BAPAF meetings are available at https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/aviation/airports/brisbane-airport-post-implementation-review-advisory-forum.

References and attachments

**Appendix – Update on issues and recommendations in the BAPAF Final Report – October-November 2022**

## **Appendix**

Progress on issues identified in BAPAF Quarterly Reports

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | Issue/matter raised | Forum response – First quarterly report | Update – as at 21 November 2022 |
| 1. | Concerns about a lack of adequate engagement and/or inaccurate information provided by Brisbane Airport Corporation and/or Airservices Australia about changes to flight paths as a result of the new parallel runway. | The Forum agrees with these concerns.  Based on the submissions and briefings provided, the Forum notes consistent and significant concerns from the community on the adequacy and accuracy of engagement on changes to airspace and noise impacts associated with the new parallel runway, despite a significant public engagement campaign run by BAC.  The Forum expects genuine consideration of all potential and feasible options to minimise the impact of noise of aircraft operations on the Brisbane community. | Refer to update at Item 11. |
| 2. | Concerns the content of the 2007 New Parallel Runway Major Development Plan / Environmental Impact Statement (MDP/EIS) prepared by Brisbane Airport Corporation was flawed. | The Forum notes these concerns.  Based on briefings provided, the Forum understands the 2007 MDP/EIS was drafted by BAC and based on legislative requirements, technology and information available at that time. The operational plan was required to be approved closer to the runway opening. The Forum has not considered the adequacy of the 2007 MDP/EIS document as this is outside the scope of the Forum’s Terms of Reference.  However, the Forum expects genuine consideration of all potential and feasible options to minimise the impact of noise from aircraft operations on the Brisbane community. This should include the development of, and consultation on, comprehensive environmental assessments for any new flight paths or airspace changes developed through the PIR. | Refer to update at Item 11. |
| 3. | Concerns that the airspace design implemented differed from the operating plan set out in the 2007 MDP/EIS. | The Forum notes these concerns.  Airservices has committed to review the forecast noise levels in the Airservices Environmental Assessment of the final airspace changes approved in 2018 and 2019, against actual aircraft movements and noise levels following the opening of the new parallel runway.  This data will inform potential and feasible changes to airspace design through the PIR. | Item closed following update in the Forum’s June 2022 Quarterly Progress Report. |
| 4. | Concerns that the Brisbane Airport Flight Path Tool website contains information that indicates the number of noise events expected on any given day is lower than actually experienced. | The Forum agrees with these concerns.  Airservices has committed to pursue changes to target the 2007 EIS/MDP flight number and noise event forecasts.  The Forum also recommends that BAC review their online Flight Path Tool to ensure it is accurately reflecting actual activity. | Item closed following advice from BAC reported in Forum’s March 2022 Quarterly Progress Report. |
| 5. | Concerns about the volume of flights landing or departing over the city, particularly during peak air travel periods (6‑8am weekdays and early evenings), particularly from but not limited to residents of suburbs under flight paths utilising the new runway. | The Forum agrees with these concerns.  The Forum expects genuine consideration of all potential and feasible options to minimise the impact of noise from aircraft operations on the Brisbane community, including maximising over the Bay operations, when safe to do so. | Refer to update at Item 11. |
| 6. | Concerns that providing noise relief for communities impacted by new flight paths will reduce noise sharing and push aircraft operations back to legacy runway communities. | The Forum recognises these concerns.  The Forum agrees that the PIR should focus on options that minimise noise impacts for all affected communities, rather than options that would shift noise back to legacy runway communities. | Refer to update at Item 11. |
| 7. | Concerns that Airservices is conducting a review of airspace design that they were responsible for developing.  Calls for an independent review of airspace design. | The Forum supports an independent review into Brisbane airspace design.  Airservices has informed the Forum of the appointment of an independent specialist advisor with the remit to review and make recommendations on all aspects considered by the PIR. Reports developed by the independent advisor will be made available to the public. | Item closed following update in the Forum’s September 2022 Quarterly Progress Report. |
| 8. | Concerns about a lack of cooperation and ownership of issues between Government agencies responsible for aviation, and BAC | The Forum agrees with these concerns.  The Forum considers there could be better communication and cooperation between all Government agencies with an interest in the Airservices Post Implementation Review, as well as BAC. | The Forum understands that relevant government agencies, Brisbane Airport Corporation and industry representatives will remain involved in the governance structure that will oversee implementation of improvement measures identified for further progress in the final PIR report. |
| 9. | Concerns about the impact of aircraft emissions pollution on the environment, and particularly on water supply for residents in the Samford Valley, Brookfield and Upper Brookfield regions. | The Forum notes these concerns and recommends quarterly random water tank sampling in the Samford Valley, Brookfield and Upper Brookfield regions.  The Forum is seeking further information and assessment on the potential impact of aircraft emissions on water supplies. | Item closed following advice from Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and the Arts as reported in the Forum’s June 2022 Quarterly Progress Report. |
| 10. | Concerns about the impact of aircraft noise on human health and children’s education. | The Forum notes these concerns.  The Forum expects genuine consideration of all potential and feasible options to minimise the impact of noise from aircraft operations on the Brisbane community. | Refer to update at Item 11. |
| 11. | Concern that the remit of the Airservices Australia Post Implementation Review is too restrictive. | The Forum agrees that the PIR should not be limited in its review of the airspace design for Brisbane Airport but notes that the PIR cannot consider issues frequently raised by the community for which Airservices has no regulatory responsibility.  The Forum notes the draft Terms of Reference for the Airservices PIR was amended following the first round of community consultation to include consideration of additional areas of focus.  The Forum has sought commitments from Airservices to genuinely consider all potential and feasible options to minimise the impact from aircraft operations on the Brisbane community.  Airservices have committed to consider a number of further potential measures to address noise impacts, including:   * opportunities to concentrate flight path operations over less densely‑populated areas; * opportunities to alter the jet departure from Runway 19R to reduce the communities overflown that are also overflown by the jet arrival for Runway 01L; * runway operations; and * options for noise sharing and respite, including radar vectoring.   The Forum notes the airlines and industry support reviewing flight paths and runway operations.  The Forum recognises some of these proposals may move noise to new communities through design of alternative flight paths, which will require environmental assessments and significant community consultation.  The Forum reserves its position on concerns raised on matters outside of Airservices’ remit until the outcomes and impact of changes through the trials proposed by BAC and the PIR are known (see below). | Trax International completed their independent assurance review in August 2022. The review report identified four work packages that could improve Brisbane airspace operations and mitigate impacts of aircraft noise. Airservices has adopted all recommendations in the Trax Final Report.  Airservices held community meetings in September 2022 to consult and gather feedback from impacted residents on options put forward in the final Trax report. Following these consultations, the Brisbane New Parallel Runway Flight Paths PIR draft report was published online in October 2022 for public comment.  Community members and other stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the draft report, which will inform the recommendations to be progressed in the final PIR report. Submissions closed on 20 November 2022. The PIR is currently expected to be finalised in December 2022. |
| 12. | Calls for the development of a new Environmental Impact Statement | The Forum supports the development of, and consultation on, a comprehensive environmental assessment for any new flight paths or airspace changes developed through the PIR.  Based on briefings provided, the Forum is advised that an environmental impact statement is a project approval document. The EIS for the new parallel runway related to the approval for construction of the runway.  The Forum understands that the Airservices PIR will consider actual noise levels against those modelled in Airservices’ environmental assessment of the final flight path design, which were completed in 2018/19. | Item closed. |
| 13. | Calls to increase the number of flights arriving and departing over Moreton Bay, in particular through:   * Extending SODPROPS active operating hours beyond current 10pm-6am timeframe * Increasing permissible tailwind limit above five knots | The Forum supports this proposal for immediate implementation.  The Forum agrees there is merit in BAC and Airservices submitting an application to CASA to increase the tailwind limit.  BAC has proposed a 12-month trial to extend SODPROPS active operating hours on weekends to assess operational impacts and benefits to the community of doing so, and to determine longer-term options. Extended active SODPROPS operating hours on weekends will be subject to demand not exceeding 45 movements per hour. Airservices Australia is supportive of the trial. The Forum is supportive of this proposal.  Based on briefings provided, the Forum understands that an increase to the 5-knot tailwind limit may enable an increased number of flights to land or depart over Moreton Bay, reducing flights overland. The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) is responsible for assessing applications to increase the tailwind limit and considers a number of factors, with safety of aircraft operations the key priority. CASA did not approve an application by BAC to increase the permissible tailwind to 10 knots.  The Forum has been advised that BAC and Airservices will submit an application to increase the tailwind limit to 7 knots. The Forum is supportive of this proposal where it can be safely implemented, noting CASA is the decision-maker. | The 12-month trial to extend SODPROPS active operating hours by two hours on weekends to operate between 10pm and 8am (instead of ending at 6am) at Brisbane Airport commenced on 24 February 2022.  Airservices released data reporting results from the second quarter of the trial from 24 May to 23 August 2022. The data showed that a total of 12 hours of SODPROPS could be utilised between 6am and 8am on the 13 weekends during the second quarter of the trial, with 152 flights directed over the bay during that time. Weather conditions continued to limit further use of SODPROPS between 6am and 8am on weekends during the second quarter.  Following announcement that the of SODPROPS extended operating hours trial would to include Saturday evenings from 8pm to 10pm from 7 May 2022, SODPROPS was able to be utilised for 16.5 hours in this time period over the thirteen weeks of the second quarter, directing an additional 99 flights over water.  Tailwind limit  Airservices and BAC submitted a safety case and supporting material to CASA on 29 April 2022, requesting an increase in the tailwind limit from 5 knots to 7 knots at Brisbane Airport.  CASA, as the aviation safety regulator, is considering the request. |
| 14. | Calls to improve or introduce new noise abatement procedures utilised at Brisbane Airport. | The Forumsupports this proposal for immediate implementation.  The Forum expects genuine consideration of all potential and feasible options to minimise the impact of noise from aircraft operations on the community, including improvements to noise abatement procedures where available.  BAC has advised the Forum they will work with Airservices to introduce a Noise Abatement Procedure requiring jet aircraft to remain on the Standard Instrument Departure path until they reach 10-12,000 feet, which will ensure jet aircraft use the published departure flight path corridors communicated to the public prior to the runway opening. | Item closed following advice from Airservices and Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts as reported in the Forum’s June 2022 Quarterly Progress Report. |
| 15. | Calls to end intersection departures. | The Forum supports this proposal.  BAC has proposed a 12-month trial to remove intersection departures for aircraft departing on the new parallel runway towards residential communities to assess operational impacts and benefits to the community of doing so, and to determine longer-term options. Airservices Australia is supportive of the trial. | The 12-month trial to remove intersection departures at Brisbane Airport for aircraft departing on the new parallel runway towards residential communities commenced on 24 February 2022.  Airservices released data reporting on the second quarter of the trial from 24 May to 23 August 2022. The data showed that the average maximum single event noise levels recorded at monitors under flight paths during the second quarter of the trial were largely consistent with, or slightly higher than, noise levels recorded pre-trial at all locations, with no apparent benefit to noise outcomes for communities under new parallel runway flight paths. |
| 16. | Calls to reconsider the compass parallel runway operation used at Brisbane Airport. | The Forum supports this proposal.  The Forum has emphasised the importance of considering the potential impacts of different parallel runway operations and operating models to BAC and Airservices. Airservices have committed to consider a number of measures to address noise impacts, including:   * Preferred runway and mode priority at different times of the day; * Climb gradients and early turn options; * Review distribution of movements on Instrument Landing System (ILS) and Required Navigation Performance (RNP) paths.   The Forum also recommends that Airservices and BAC expedite the implementation of Ground Based Augmentation System (GBAS) navigation, to ensure the airport and industry can operate using contemporary technology while the community may benefit from more precise navigation tools that can reduce noise pollution.  Any changes to flight paths would require environmental assessments and community consultation.  The Forum notes the airlines and industry support reviewing flight paths and runway operations. | Refer to update at Item 11.  The Forum notes that some recommendations set out in work packages 3 and 4 of the Trax Report include further consideration of options that may alter flight paths and result in some communities being overflown for the first time, or increase frequency of overflight in other areas.  The Forum notes such proposed changes, should they be progressed further, will need to be carefully considered, including on safety and environmental grounds, and be subject to extensive consultation with residents in areas that may be impacted. |
| 17. | Calls to revoke approval for current airspace operating plan. | The Forum does not supportthis proposal.  The Forum believes the intent of this proposal from members of the community is to seek a complete redesign of Brisbane airspace.  The Forum agrees that the PIR should not be limited in its review of the airspace design for Brisbane Airport to existing flight paths (see above), noting that Brisbane Airport needs to remain operational. | Item closed. |
| 18. | Calls to amend the RAAF Amberley protected airspace. | The Forum notes this proposal.  The Forum notes Airservices has undertaken to raise community’s views on Amberley protected airspace with the Department of Defence and advise the community of the outcome of these discussions. | The Forum has been advised by Airservices that it has been engaging with the Department of Defence in relation to the Amberley Restricted Airspace.  Trax International has also identified potential modifications to use of Amberley airspace for further investigation as part of Package 2: Maximise flights over water in their final independent review report.  The Forum understands Airservices will continue to engage with the Department of Defence on potential modifications to use of Amberley Restricted Airspace where it interacts with the Brisbane Airport airspace. |
| 19. | Calls to amend the *Airservices Act 1995* to better protect communities from the impacts of aircraft operations, particularly noise. | The Forum notes this proposal.  The Forum has not considered the need for amendments to the *Airservices Act 1995*. Amendments to the *Airservices Act 1995* could have broad implications to aviation operations Australia-wide and is outside the scope of the Forum’s Terms of Reference.  However, the Forum supports the Australian Government’s commitment to aviation regulatory reform set out in their Aviation Recovery Framework released on 20 December 2021. | Item closed. |
| 20. | Calls for airport demand management measures such as night curfews for passenger flights or movement caps. | Position reserved.  The Forum reserves its position on the need for demand management measures until noise improvements achieved from immediate measures proposed by BAC, and the outcomes of changes committed to through the Airservices PIR, are known. | Airport night curfew  Item closed following discussion as outlined in the September 2022 Quarterly Progress Report.  Movement caps  Refer to the Executive Summary for a detailed summary of the Forum’s determination that it does not support the call for a movement cap on Brisbane Airport. |
| 21. | Calls for ministerial directive to require Airservices to conduct operations at Brisbane Airport in a particular way (e.g. an operating plan similar to the Long-Term Operating Plan at Sydney Kingsford-Smith Airport). | Position reserved.  The Forum reserves its position on the need for demand management measures until noise improvements achieved from immediate measures proposed by BAC, and the outcomes of changes committed to through the Airservices PIR, are known. If changes result in positive outcomes and reduction of noise impacts on the community, a ministerial directive may not be required. | In their final report, Trax International recommends the establishment of a Noise Action Plan as part of Package 1: Strong, Transparent and Representative Government. A Noise Action Plan would set out a plan for managing the impacts of aircraft noise and where possible reduce noise over the short, medium and long-term around the airport.  The Forum understands the Noise Action Plan will be progressed through the governance arrangements that will oversee in implementation of improvement measures identified for further progress in the final PIR report, including consultation with community stakeholders.  The Forum has determined that the Noise Action Plan is the most appropriate mechanism for stakeholder involvement in the development of noise mitigation measures. The Executive Summary provides a detailed summary of this matter. |