



6 October, 2023

Mr Ron Brent
aab.secretariat@infrastructure.gov.au

Dear Ron

Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) understands aircraft noise can be a genuine concern for some residents. I acknowledge there are no quick fixes or simple solutions to reducing these noise impacts, however, I am keen to update you on the actions taken by BAC to help improve amenity for impacted residents.

While BAC's control over airspace and airline flight operations are extremely limited, we gave a commitment to the community to investigate our own operations, and to work with aviation partners such as Airservices Australia (Airservices) and airlines to investigate further ways to minimise aircraft noise.

You may know, Airservices is the Australian Government authority responsible for airspace design and air traffic control operations. Airservices recently conducted a second round of community consultation on a range of options contained in the Noise Action Plan for Brisbane. This includes proposed changes to some of the flight paths.

BAC provided input to these community engagement sessions and worked with Airservices to explore flight path change options which focussed on reducing aircraft noise impacts where possible. At the same time BAC is mindful of the continual balance between these changes and the needs of Queensland's growing population and the rising demands for passenger and cargo flight capacity.

These community engagement sessions, conducted throughout parts of Greater Brisbane, outlined Airservices' second set of proposed flightpath options to be developed over the next two years. These include increasing flights over the waters of Moreton Bay, reducing the impact of night-time operations, and decreasing the concentration of flights over some communities.

BAC is supportive of Airservices considering changes that reasonably and safely enable more flights to arrive and depart over water. That is why BAC supported Airservices' Safety Case to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) which seeks to increase the allowable tailwind tolerance from the current 5 knots to 7 knots at Brisbane Airport. By increasing the tailwind allowance, Airservices believes that a material increase in the number of arrivals and departures over water will be achievable, particularly during sensitive night-time hours.

For almost three decades Brisbane Airport operated incident free with a 10-knot tailwind allowance, 'passing' each and every safety audit. However, in 2016 CASA required a reduction to Brisbane Airport's tailwind allowance to align with the international standard of 5 knots.

Airservices sought to have the 10-knot tailwind allowance re-established in 2017 but this was not agreed to by CASA, despite support for this change from a number of domestic and international airlines.

Airservices is currently considering another application to achieve a 7-knot tailwind allowance

via a new Safety Case to CASA. Noting that whilst the official allowable tailwind is 5 knots, airlines and pilots may opt to accept a higher tailwind.

In light of this, BAC has also engaged with a number of our airline partners, particularly those flying during the sensitive night-time hours, to explore ways to minimise noise. I am pleased to advise you that Singapore Airlines, Emirates Airlines and Cathay Pacific have asked their operating crews to consider the use of over water departures for night-time noise abatement reasons. Pilots calculate their takeoff performance for both runway directions and if they consider it safe and within the operational capability of the aircraft, they can request a runway change from air traffic control.

This will mean there is a higher probability of achieving more departures and arrivals over the water, weather permitting. These airlines believe they can modify their operations in certain circumstances that will enable fewer flights over the populated areas of the city without any reduction in safety.

Between the opening of Brisbane's new parallel runway on 12 July 2020 to 1 October 2023, 68% of all arrivals and departures between 10pm – 6 am AEST have been over the waters of Moreton Bay. 49% of all departures and arrivals between 6am – 10pm AEST have also been over water, and when combined, 51% of all arrivals and departures at Brisbane Airport occurred over the Bay.

BAC continues to engage with our passenger and cargo airline partners to explore opportunities to minimise noise where it is safe and reasonable to do so.

You may be aware that when the new parallel runway opened in 2020 BAC had developed its own Noise Abatement Procedure for night-time operations which sought to prohibit aircraft using the new runway for landing or take-off over the city after 10pm, except in exceptional circumstances. However, on occasions Airservices' Air Traffic Control had given permission for aircraft to use the City end of the new runway after 10pm.

BAC made representations to Airservices on this matter asking that the Noise Abatement Procedure be formally adopted by Air Traffic Control. I am pleased to advise you that Airservices has facilitated an official NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) update to its operations recognising that Brisbane's new runway is not to be used for flights over the City from 10pm – 6am (5am during daylight saving periods) unless there are exceptional circumstances such as in an emergency, the loss of infrastructure such as the closure of the Legacy Runway, or extreme weather conditions.

Some of the greatest improvements to both noise and sustainability come from airlines renewing their aircraft fleet. For example, China Southern Airlines recently announced a recommencement of services between mainland China and Brisbane flying new generation A350 aircraft. This aircraft is stated by the manufacturer to be up to 50% quieter, and 25% more fuel efficient than previous generation aircraft.

Similarly, Jetstar has announced plans to deploy new generation A321Neo aircraft to Brisbane, which are also 50% quieter than previous generation aircraft. Jetstar has also agreed to a request from BAC to make a number of noise improving modifications to other aircraft flown to Brisbane.

I am very happy to inform you Jetstar advised BAC it will be fitting new Vortex Generators to its current legacy fleet of A320s which will reduce noise from those aircraft on approach to Brisbane Airport. Fitting of Vortex Generators was one idea raised by members of the community via the recent rounds of community engagement. Jetstar has indicated this program of modifications will commence later this year.

Other areas of improvement pursued by BAC includes our work as a member of the Hydrogen Flight Alliance (HFA). HFA aims to fly Australia's first commercial green hydrogen powered route between Brisbane and Gladstone by 2026. According to HFA partners, hydrogen powered aircraft will be 'cleaner, cheaper and quieter' than conventionally powered aeroplanes. The only tailpipe emission from these aircraft will be water vapour. HFA partners include BAC, Griffith University, CQ University, Stralis, Skytrans, Aviation Australia, Gladstone Regional Council and Gladstone Airport.

I would like to assure you that BAC is working hard on behalf of the community, and we continue to engage Government, Airservices and our airline partners to investigate all reasonable and safe measures to minimise noise. I look forward to keeping you up to date on these improvements as they progress.

Yours sincerely



Gert-Jan de Graaff
Chief Executive Officer