



TRANSPORT GROUP / DOMESTIC AVIATION & REFORM DIVISION / SYDNEY AIRPORT DEMAND MANAGEMENT
REGULATOR AND POLICY SECTION

Recovery period declarations

October 2025

The *Sydney Airport Demand Management Act 1997* (the Act) includes a provision for the Minister to make a ‘recovery period declaration’ enabling an increase to Sydney Airport’s hourly aircraft movement cap from 80 to 85 movements for up to consecutive two hours. The Minister may declare multiple recovery periods on the same day. Under section 9A of the Act, the Minister may declare a recovery period by written notice if satisfied:

- aircraft movements at Sydney Airport on the relevant day are significantly disrupted;
- the cause or circumstances of the disruption meet criteria set out in the regulations; and
- Airservices Australia has recommended the declaration.

The Minister or her delegate retains discretion and is not required to make a declaration even if all three criteria are met. However, all three criteria must be met prior to the Minister making a declaration. Regulation 7 of the Sydney Airport Demand Management Regulations 2025 provides the following criteria for the cause or circumstances of the disruption:

- aircraft operations in Australian airspace are unavailable or are restricted and the unavailability or restriction adversely affects aircraft movements at Sydney Airport;
- airport infrastructure in Australia is unavailable or its use is restricted and the unavailability or restriction adversely affects aircraft movements at Sydney Airport.

As per 9A(7) of the Act, the Minister must cause a recovery period declaration to be published on the department’s website. The department intends to publish recovery period declarations within 2 business days of the declaration.

This policy outlines what would generally be indicative of movements being ‘significantly disrupted’ as required by 9A(1)(a) of the Act.

Meaning of ‘significantly disrupted’

For the purposes of making a recovery period declaration, a 25% or greater decrease in aircraft arrivals within any consecutive two-hour period on a single day would generally indicate that aircraft movements at Sydney Airport have been significantly disrupted.

This is not a determinative test, and decision-makers must retain flexibility to consider other relevant factors. The percentage is not prescriptive but provides a useful practical guide.

The department will review this policy annually to assess whether declarations reflect policy intention.

Version	Release date	Approver	Reason for update
1.0	Jan 2026	Ben Meagher, Assistant Secretary	Initial release
1.1	Jan 2026	Kathryn Scarano, Director	Details on publication of Recovery Period on department's website