Welcome to the fifth edition of Take Off, a newsletter that will keep you updated on Brisbane’s new runway. Take Off covers all of the project’s major milestones as we head towards opening in 2020.

Although the new runway will give Brisbane the most efficient runway system in Australia and bring huge benefits to the region and state, we know that it will also bring aircraft noise challenges for some people. Brisbane Airport is committed to open communication about aircraft noise, and this edition will cover some of the ways we are achieving this. We will continue to work with our local community to educate and empower them with knowledge about aircraft noise and flight paths in the lead-up to, and well after, the runway opening.

Gert-Jan de Graaff
Chief Executive Officer
Brisbane Airport Corporation

Construction update

With fewer than 12 months to go on construction of the project, the airfield is really starting to take shape.

The airfield conduits and pits are 90 per cent complete, with a staggering 202,668m of conduits going in across the airfield.

The 12km of taxiways are nearing completion, with the modified crushed rock pavement layer 80 per cent complete and the final pavement layer of concrete is nearly 60 per cent complete.

And the runway itself is also on the home stretch.

Over the next three months, more than 100,000 tonnes of aircraft-grade asphalt will be placed on top of the runway’s 2.5 metres of compacted sand and 600-millimetre layer of fine crushed rock.

Following the completion of the construction program, the detailed commissioning process for the new ground lighting, navigational aids and control tower systems will commence.

Brisbane’s new runway remains on track to be operational in mid-2020.
There’s a change in the air

Brisbane’s new runway (BNR) is located parallel to and 2,000 metres west of the existing runway. In addition to the construction of the new runway, the development of the new runway involves the introduction of new flight paths into and out of Brisbane Airport that will be used once the new runway is operational in mid-2020. This incredibly complex process is known as airspace design.

The airspace design for BNR was undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Statement and Major Development Plan (EIS/MDP) processes, which was completed and approved by the Australian Government in 2003. It was then reviewed - by BAC as the airport operator and Airservices Australia as the organisation responsible for designing and maintaining airspace across Australia - between 2016 and 2018 to ensure all new aviation procedures, technologies and policies since the EIS/MDP were considered.

BAC and Airservices Australia are now focusing their attention on educating the community (and pilots and air traffic controllers too) about these new flight paths that will come into effect once the new runway is operational. Luckily, they have a few specialised tools up their sleeves to help:

Introducing the Flight Path Tool

The Flight Path Tool is the pot arrival and departure flight paths from Brisbane Airport, both now and when the new runway opens in mid-2020. It allows you to search any address in Brisbane to see where it lies in relation to existing and future flight paths.

Visit the flight path tool at bne.com.au/flightpaths

The tool also shows noise mapping, highlighting areas affected by aircraft noise of 70 decibels or more.

Introducing Benny

As we move closer to the countdown to opening, Brisbane Airport is using a number of bespoke tools to engage with the community and share information about the new runway, airspace management, flight paths and aircraft noise.

The largest component of community engagement during this education period will be the mobile information centre affectionately known as ‘Benny’, a clever derivative and play on the BNE airport code.

Benny has been designed to pop-up in community areas such as parks, shopping centres and community festivals. It houses interactive screens featuring the Flight Path Tool, as well as information on Brisbane Airport’s history, aircraft noise, and the runway construction process.

Benny will be on the road from now until the end of 2020. It will be staffed by a mix of Brisbane Airport Corporation staff and technical experts such as air traffic controllers.

Be sure to check the BNE website regularly for Benny’s schedule, and if you have any suggestions for local events that Benny should be visiting, please fill out the feedback form at: bne.com.au/benny.

Search any address in the flight path tool to see the changes

Benny will be on the road from the end of 2020

Saturday 15 July - Sunday 14 July
Samford Show
Samford Showground
Samford QLD 4520
9am-1pm

Thursday 18 July - Saturday 20 July
Gran’s Place Shopping Centre
2-19 Gran’s Place Rd, Browns Plains
9am-4pm

Tuesday 23 July
King George Square, Brisbane City
9am-5pm

Thursday 29 July - Friday 27 July
Indooroopilly Shopping Centre
522 Moggill Rd, Indooroopilly
9am-4pm

Saturday 27 July
Red Hill Fair, Woolcock Park
50 Waterworks Rd, Red Hill
9am-3pm

Friday 9 August - Saturday 18 August
Eagles
Gregory Terrace, Bowen Hills
9am-6pm

I do not have power to direct the Government or any agency, however, I make recommendations. To date all Aircraft Noise Ombudsman recommendations have been accepted and have been (or are being) acted on.

There are some other limitations on the work we can do. For example, we cannot review a complaint unless it has first been raised with Airservices or Defence and the complaint must be about aircraft noise – not other aviation issues such as safety or airline service.

What is the most challenging part of your role?

One of the challenges of aircraft noise management is that while developments and expansions in aviation benefit the community through greater access to travel, freight goods and increased economic activity, the burden of that expansion is not evenly distributed throughout the community and some pockets experience increased aircraft noise more than others.

Sometimes little can be done to alleviate this burden after safety and operational requirements have been met. It is difficult to communicate that bad news to people who have been affected but we try to make sure we explain clearly why there is no solution that Airservices or Defence could reasonably provide and how we independently investigated the issues raised and sought possible alternatives (often to no avail).

Irrespective of problems that are not solvable, I try to make sure we clarify what Airservices or Defence can reasonably provide.

Why is your professional background and what does your current role involve?

My background is 38 years of Air Traffic Control and Air Traffic Management working with Airservices Australia, including managing implementation of the latest satellite-based aircraft navigation technology across Australian airports, developing and implementing improvements for communities affected by aircraft noise across Australian airports, and ensuring any airspace designs provide the best outcomes for the community. I was also involved in explaining to communities how air traffic control works and why aircraft fly where they do.

My current role is working for Brisbane Airport Corporation as an Aeronautical Capacity Planner, which involves runway and airfield capacity planning and providing technical support for our community engagement program and its accompanying support tools like Benny and the Flight Path Tool. I will be spending some time in the community answering questions (in Benny) over the next 12 months in the lead up to the runway becoming operational.

What are the common questions asked by community when it comes to Brisbane’s new runway?

The most common would have to be:

- Will international and domestic aircraft use different runways when the new runway opens?
- Will there be noise impacts?
- How many extra aircraft will there be?
- How will the flight paths change for me?

The current runway will primarily cater for aircraft arriving from or departing to a south or east destination such as Sydney, Melbourne, Fiji or Los Angeles. The new runway, once operational, will primarily cater for aircraft arriving and departing to a north or west destination such as Perth, Cairns, Singapore or Dubai.

The development of a new terminal is not part of the immediate five-year period, but it is an integral part of the longer-term plan for Brisbane Airport. BAC will maximise the efficiency of the existing terminals over the next five years.

While the new runway will effectively double Brisbane Airport’s capacity, it is important to understand that this does not mean there will be 500 flight movements per hour as soon as it becomes operational. The increase of aircraft movements will be gradual, with forecasts indicating Brisbane Airport will reach 350,000 aircraft movements in 2039–40. In 2017–18, there were 213,914 total aircraft movements. I encourage people to jump onto the Flight Path Tool to look at the information specific to their address. It will allow them to understand how high aircraft are at that location, the average number of flights on that particular flight path, and noise mapping.

What is the most challenging part of aircraft noise management and air traffic control?

In South East Queensland, the challenge for airspace design is to provide for access across all aircraft into Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Amberley, Archerfield, and Wallum Airport given that many of those aircraft must cross paths. Ensuring they do this safely with minimum noise impacts and delays, now and in the future, is a complex and lengthy process.

If you could fly anywhere in the world, where would it be?

I would love to jump on a plane and fly to anywhere in the world! If you could fly anywhere in the world, where would it be?
Aircraft noise and property value

When Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) commenced the planning and approvals process for Brisbane’s new runway (BNR) in 2005, an extensive community consultation process was also commenced to establish honest and constructive communication with the public, with a goal to understand surrounding communities and their concerns in relation to the impact of BNR.

The possibility of a negative impact of aircraft noise on property values was an obvious concern for homeowners, so BAC enlisted the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) to undertake comprehensive research to establish what impact flight paths have had on the value or saleability of residential property in Brisbane.

QUT’s research analyses the past 30 years of residential property sales transactions, looking at 53 suburbs across Brisbane that are subject to existing flight paths, as well as the new flight paths when BNR commences operations in mid-2020.

While the impact of aircraft noise to an individual is subjective, the QUT research concluded that housing and units located under designated flight paths in Brisbane have their value and price determined by a range of factors that are not detrimentally impacted by aircraft noise: “The location of a property under a flight path will have minimal if any impact on the price, saleability, investment performance and capital growth of that property.”

A full copy of the study and annual updates can be found via the BNE website: bne.com.au/qutstudy

Did you know?

Before the flight paths and modes of operation for BNR were approved, Safety Case and Environmental assessments were completed by Airservices Australia. In October 2018, these assessments were approved by the Office of Airspace Regulation (OAR) within the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).

The new runway will allow around 60 per cent of all overnight aircraft operations to occur over the bay (between 10pm and 6am).

Brisbane Airport has the largest noise buffer zone of any capital city airport in Australia, with the nearest residence around 6.7km away from the end of the current runway and 6km away from the new runway.

Once BNR opens in mid-2020, Brisbane Airport will move to parallel runway operations. Generally, aircraft departing to or arriving from the west or north will use the new runway while aircraft departing to or arriving from the south or east will use the current runway.