

Updates to engaging on Melbourne Airport's Noise Sharing Plan

Melbourne Airport's Third Runway is a nationally significant infrastructure project designed to enhance capacity, reduce delays, and support long-term growth in passenger and freight demand.

Designing new flight paths is a complex and technical task. The process considers safety, environmental impacts, operational constraints, and community feedback. It is guided by Airservices' flight path design principles, which prioritises safety and operational compliance, and strives to balance other competing priorities including the impact on the community, fuel burn and carbon emissions, and efficiency for airlines and air traffic control.

Noise Sharing refers to the design and planning of flight paths and runway operations so communities have periods of respite. The goal is to prevent any area from continuous noise exposure, rather than give all areas an equal share of aircraft noise.

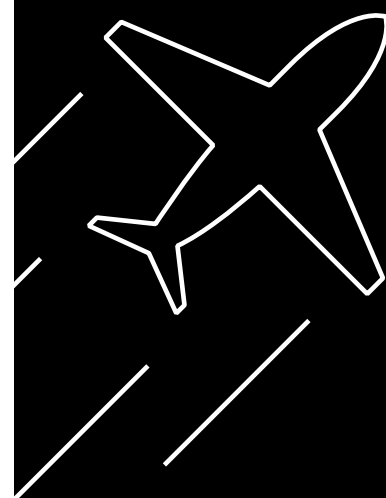
Noise sharing strategies aim to offer meaningful breaks from aircraft noise, even if only during off-peak times, nights, or specific weather conditions. Rather than spreading flights equally, these approaches focus on managing when and how often noise occurs, improving predictability and reducing long-term disruption for communities.

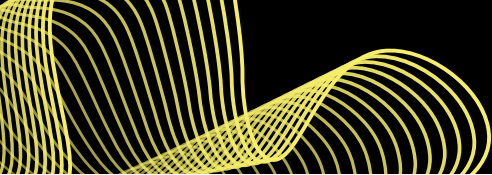
While it is not possible to eliminate all overflight impacts, the design seeks to avoid dense residential areas where feasible and prioritise noise sharing outside peak periods.

A Noise Sharing Plan is an approval requirement for the Melbourne Airport's Third Runway Major Development Plan. GHD and Trax have been engaged by Melbourne Airport to deliver the Noise Sharing Plan in line with Ministerial requirements.

What is a Noise Sharing Plan?

A Noise Sharing Plan is a strategy where aircraft noise is distributed across more areas by alternating flight paths and/or runway operations, to reduce the concentration of flights over affected communities. This approach aims to reduce the number of people significantly affected by noise though more people may be affected overall.





Community and industry input is vital for helping us shape the Noise Sharing Plan

Community engagement is a critical part of the noise sharing plan process. A Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed to inform the community and industry of the project and seek feedback on the Noise Sharing Plan throughout its development.

Input will be sought from the public and industry across three phases to:

1. Gather feedback on runway flows, flight paths and noise sharing to inform the development of a draft Noise Sharing Plan
2. Consult on the Draft Noise Sharing Plan
3. Consult on the updated draft Noise Sharing Plan prior to finalising

In addition to public input the Noise Sharing Plan will be informed by historical and future flight data and trends, and the current review of the flight paths and airspace outlined in option 2 in the publicly available Major Development Plan (MDP) for Melbourne Airport's Third Runway Project.

How feedback will inform the Noise Sharing Plan

Early engagement is focused on building awareness, identifying key concerns, and establishing communication channels, with a priority on the areas most impacted by increased noise from aircraft. Feedback gathered at this stage will inform the Draft Noise Sharing Plan.

We will consult on the Draft Noise Sharing Plan in 2026. The Draft Plan will be made public and updated based on the feedback received at this stage. We will consult again on the updated Draft Noise Sharing Plan prior to finalising.

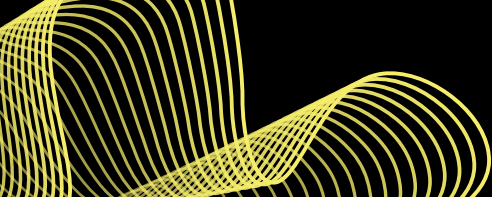
The flight paths in Melbourne Airport's Third Runway Major Development Plan may be updated where appropriate, including as a result of community and stakeholder feedback gathered through the Noise Sharing Plan engagement process.

After each phase of engagement, an engagement summary report will be made public to demonstrate how feedback received was considered in decision making. All personal information gathered throughout the engagement process will be kept confidential in line with Victoria's Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014.

Engagement objectives for the Noise Sharing Plan

The objective of the Noise Sharing Plan engagement approach is to align with the Ministerial Conditions of Approval for engagement including:

- Developing a community consultation process that aligns with Airservices' Community Engagement Standard.
- Outline the consultation that Melbourne Airport has taken in preparing the Noise Sharing Plan with each of the following:
 - airlines that operate flights to/from, and airport operator groups based at, Melbourne Airport and Essendon Fields Airport
 - other Melbourne Basin aerodromes (including Avalon Airport, Moorabbin Airport and RAAF Base Point Cook)
 - the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning
 - local governments in the area surrounding Melbourne Airport
 - local communities in the area surrounding Melbourne Airport
 - outline how Melbourne Airport has taken into account any feedback received during consultation and, if and where feedback has not been adopted in preparing the Noise Sharing Plan, the reasons for doing so
 - address any feedback provided by CASA during the process of developing the Noise Sharing Plan.



2026 Updates to engaging on Melbourne Airport's Noise Sharing Plan

Independent consultants Trax and GHD have been engaging on the Noise Sharing Plan since 2025. Since we released the engagement plan mid 2025, we have added an additional round of consultation to inform the Noise Sharing Plan. Below outlines the next steps for developing the final Noise Sharing Plan prior to it being submitted to the Minister for approval.

We will be seeking feedback on the draft Noise Sharing Plan August – October 2026

In August 2026, the draft Noise Sharing Plan will be released for public consultation to provide communities, aviation stakeholders and other interested parties with an opportunity to review the proposed approach to noise sharing and provide feedback.

Feedback will be sought on the draft Noise Sharing Plan including:

- how runway operating modes and flight paths will be used once the third runway is operational and all runway construction activities are completed
- how aircraft noise will be shared across communities
- how community and aviation stakeholder feedback has been considered in shaping the proposed noise sharing approach.

Feedback received during this consultation period will be reviewed, documented and used to inform refinements to the Noise Sharing Plan where appropriate. A summary of consultation outcomes, including key themes and responses, will be published to demonstrate how input has been considered.

Digital simulation of flight paths will refine the draft Noise Sharing Plan from October 2026

Following consultation the draft Noise Sharing Plan will be further refined, to consider feedback received and any further technical assessment required.

At this stage, proposed runway operating modes and noise sharing principles will be validated through Air Traffic Control and Airline flight path digital simulation.

In 2027, we will seek further feedback on the updated draft Noise Sharing Plan

An updated draft Noise Sharing Plan will be prepared following digital simulation and refinement and will be made available for further public consultation.

This additional consultation phase will focus on:

- explaining refinements made since the consultation on the draft Noise Sharing Plan
- presenting updated information and noise modelling where flight paths or operating arrangements have changed
- providing communities and aviation stakeholders with an opportunity to understand and comment on the final proposed approach before approval.

Approval of the Noise Sharing Plan

Once updates have been incorporated following consultation on the updated draft Noise Sharing Plan, the final Noise Sharing Plan will be submitted to Airservices Australia for endorsement.

The Noise Sharing Plan will then be assessed by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts against the conditions of approval attached to the Third Runway Major Development Plan.

The Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government is the final decision-maker on approval of the Noise Sharing Plan.

ENGAGEMENT PLAN



Consult on the development of the Melbourne Airport Noise Sharing Plan with key stakeholders and impacted communities



Melbourne Airport principles: Purposeful, respectful, transparent, inclusive and accessible, responsive, improvement

Airservices Australia principles: transparent, meaningful, scalable, outcomes-focused, options-based, inclusive, accessible and responsive, balanced, clear and concise, tailored and considered

Mid-Late 2025 ✈

Mid-Late 2026 ✈

2027 ✈

Late 27 – early 28 ✈

Consultation Phase 1

Engage with communities and stakeholders to gather feedback on runway modes, flight paths and noise sharing principles



Consultation Phase 2

Engage with communities and stakeholders on runway modes, flight paths and noise sharing



Consultation Phase 3

Seek feedback on updated Noise Sharing Plan following digital simulation assessment, and feedback what we heard in the previous engagement



Reporting

Closing the loop, feed back what has been heard throughout consultation and how it was considered in the Noise Sharing Plan



Information available on Melbourne Airport's Major Projects Hub

- Fact sheets
- Videos explaining the Noise Sharing Plan
- Public facing Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
- Noise tool
- Email updates
- Local media
- Project updates in Melbourne Airport's Community Newsletter
- Recorded community webinar
- Community newsletter

- Engagement summary outlining how feedback from Phase 1 was considered in the Draft Noise Sharing Plan
- Draft Noise Sharing Plan
- Public facing Community and Stakeholder
- Engagement Plan
- Email updates
- Local media
- Social media
- Project update in Melbourne Airport's Community Newsletter
- Recorded community webinar

- Engagement summary outlining how feedback from Phase 2 was considered in the updated Noise Sharing Plan
- Updated Noise Sharing Plan
- Email updates
- Local media
- Social media
- Project update in Melbourne Airport's Community Newsletter
- Recorded community webinar

- Project engagement summary to be published outlining how feedback was considered
- Submit the Noise Sharing Plan to the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government for approval
- Publish engagement report and final Noise Sharing Plan.

Opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback

- Key stakeholder briefings
- Community pop-ups and drop in sessions
- Mobile trailer activations
- Online webinar (recorded)
- Online survey

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We will also actively seek feedback from:

- Melbourne Airport's Community Aviation Consultation Group
- Key aviation industry groups and organisations
- Key government agencies and stakeholders

Feedback will influence...

- Runway operations (when constraints allow)
- Opportunities for respite
- Industry specific
 - Operating assumptions
 - Aviation stakeholder requirements for access and operations

Feedback will not influence...

- Which airport flights depart from
- Curfew or night flights
- Making noise distribution equal across Melbourne
- Changes to current flight paths prior to M3R going live
- Runway configuration as part of the MDP process
- Fleet and aircraft performance limitations
- Runway direction, as aircrafts must take off and land into the wind
- Safety and regulatory requirements



Negotiables

Stay up to date on the Noise Sharing Plan project and locations our team will be visiting via the Major Projects Hub



Engagement aligning with industry standards

The engagement plan has been developed to align with the Airservices Engagement Standards while addressing the conditions and builds on the work that Melbourne Airport has been doing in the community to raise the awareness and seek feedback on their operations.

MELBOURNE AIRPORT

2031: While the third runway will be operational, ongoing works on the existing north-south runway will temporarily affect runway use, delaying full implementation of the Noise Sharing Plan

Digital simulation of flight paths by Airservices Australia

Why feedback will not influence which airports flights come from

The choice of where airlines operate from is up to them. Airlines decide where flights arrive and depart based on:

- Passenger demand
- Flight routes
- Available infrastructure
- Commercial considerations.

The Noise Sharing Plan focuses on how aircraft use Melbourne Airport's runways and flight paths. It does not have the ability to influence airlines.

Why feedback is not being sought on curfews or night flights

A curfew is not being considered, consistent with the Commonwealth Government's 2024 Aviation White Paper, which focuses on managing aircraft noise through planning, operational measures and community engagement, rather than introducing additional operating restrictions that would limit airport capacity.

Roles and responsibilities in the development of a Noise Sharing Plan

GHD and Trax: responsible for the leading the community and stakeholder engagement to support diverse views being heard and captured in the development of noise sharing options. Trax will also develop and evaluate the technical airspace design and operating strategies, leading the engagement with industry stakeholders.

Melbourne Airport: While Melbourne Airport leads the overall Third Runway project, its role in the Noise Sharing Plan is to be facilitative due to the independence required as part of the project's Conditions of Approval. Melbourne Airport is responsible for ensuring the Noise Sharing Plan is delivered in accordance with the Ministerial approval conditions attached to the Melbourne Airport Major Development Plan.

Airservices Australia: Airservices Australia is responsible for managing Australian airspace and will ultimately implement the airspace and flight path changes proposed in the Noise Sharing Plan. Airservices is providing advice and information to inform the Noise Sharing Plan. The Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed to align with Airservices Australia Community Engagement Standard.

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA): The Department administers the Airports Act 1996 and oversees compliance with the MDP approval conditions. For the Noise Sharing Plan, the Department ensures that the plan meets ministerial expectations and statutory obligations, and that it reflects the public interest. The Minister for Infrastructure the Hon. Catherine King remains the final decision-maker for any amendments or approvals related to the NSP.

Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA): CASA is the regulator responsible for the administration of airspace under the Airspace Act 2007 (Commonwealth). CASA will provide advice to support approval of airspace changes, as well as validate the proposed flight procedures and ensure they meet the safety standards set out under the Civil Aviation Act 1988. CASA's role is regulatory and independent, with final authority over whether the proposed changes can be implemented.

Stakeholders and community: provide feedback and advice to be inform a Noise Sharing Plan that is most appropriate for the Melbourne context.



Stay up to date

on the Noise Sharing Plan and find out how you can get involved by visiting the Major Projects Hub