

Community Health Study

Melbourne Airport's third runway will help keep Victoria connected to Australia and the world, delivering the additional capacity needed to support the state's growing population.

As part of delivering the third runway, Melbourne Airport is required to undertake an independent study into the health impacts of aircraft noise associated with the third runway on surrounding communities.

While potential health impacts were assessed during the approval process, this will be the first long-term community health study of its kind undertaken by a major Australian airport.

It will collect baseline data before the runway opens and continue for 20 years after operations begin.

Community Health Study Terms of Reference

Melbourne Airport appointed a team of independent health experts from Deakin and Liverpool universities to develop the Terms of Reference for the Community Health Study. Following submission in September 2025, the Terms of Reference were approved by the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development in April 2026, enabling the study to proceed.

The Terms of Reference were developed in consultation with the Melbourne Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group, international health experts and key community stakeholders. They:

- set out the study methodology, including:
 - monitoring health impacts associated with aircraft noise identified in Chapter D3 (Health Impact) of the Major Development Plan, such as annoyance, sleep disturbance, myocardial infarction, communication interference, childhood reading comprehension and migraines
 - collecting baseline data before the third runway opens
 - collecting data annually for 20 years after operations begin

- outline how the independent health expert team will prepare annual reports on the study findings
- outline how these reports will be provided to the Melbourne Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group and published on the Melbourne Airport website.

The Terms of Reference are available on the Melbourne Airport website and Major Projects Hub. A team of health experts will be identified in 2027 to progress the study in line with the approved Terms of Reference.

Visit www.melbourneairportprojectshub.com.au

How is the Community Health Study independent?

The Community Health Study must be conducted by suitably qualified and independent community health experts. Melbourne Airport consulted with the Melbourne Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group to identify experts to develop the Terms of Reference and will undertake similar consultation to identify the experts who will carry out the study.

What health impacts were assessed as part of the Major Development Plan?

To support submission of the third runway Major Development Plan to the Australian Government, Melbourne Airport assessed health impacts associated with aircraft noise.

Further detail is outlined in Chapter D3 (Health Impact), with examples including:

Sleep disturbance

Night-time aircraft noise associated with the third runway is expected to contribute to sleep disturbance.

Flexible use of the three-runway system can deliver periods of respite for the most affected communities, particularly at night to reduce disruption to sleep.

Communication interference

The airport's health analysis included outcomes for primary, primary-secondary (P-12) and special development schools. They found that no school would see an increase of more than 20 decibels A-weighted in noise during school hours with the use of a third runway, with minimal potential effects on childhood learning, reading comprehension and cognitive function.

Other potentially vulnerable community facilities were also evaluated for noise impacts, including early childcare centres, kindergartens, aged care facilities, hospitals, places of worship and libraries. This also considers the effects of noise at levels that interfere with normal conversation and other communications like watching TV or listening to radio at home.

Annoyance

Large areas further from the airport will experience new or increased aircraft noise due to flight paths serving the third runway, while some areas may experience less.

These changes may lead to increased annoyance and stress.

Awareness of airport growth, including how and why flight paths change, can help reduce these impacts. Melbourne Airport engages with communities further afield to provide information and support understanding of future noise exposure.

Further information and resources

Find out more about the Community Health Study by clicking or scanning the QR code to the left.

For further information about Melbourne Airport's third runway, visit <https://www.melbourneairportprojectshub.com.au/third-runway-project>

For further information contact newrunway@melair.com.au or call 03 9297 1597

