Melbourne Airport Third Runway

Draft Noise Sharing Plan summary

August 2026

MELBOURNE AIRPORT

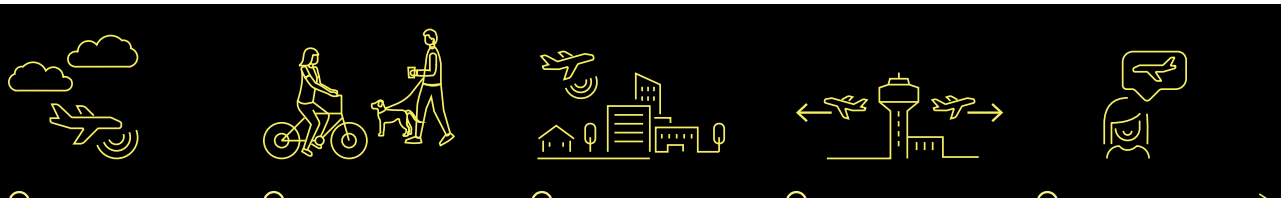
When all three runways at Melbourne Airport are operational circa 2031, the way aircraft noise is experienced across Melbourne will change. As a condition of the Federal Government's approval of the third runway, a draft Noise Sharing Plan has been developed. The draft Noise Sharing Plan outlines how Air Traffic Control can use different runway operating modes and flight paths to share aircraft noise across Melbourne.

This fact sheet provides a summary of the draft Noise Sharing Plan and what it may mean for local communities.

What is a Noise Sharing Plan?

A Noise Sharing Plan guides how runways and flight paths are used in the air. It is just one part of how aircraft noise is managed. Land use planning, aircraft technology improvements and airport ground operations are managed separately.

Independent consultants Trax and GHD have been engaged by Melbourne Airport to develop the Noise Sharing Plan.



Goal

Outside of busy periods and when safety and weather conditions permit, the Noise Sharing Plan will provide guidance on the planning of runway activity to share noise impacts across Melbourne.

What it will do

Noise sharing is a way to distribute aircraft noise so that no single community is exposed all the time. Rather than concentrating flights over the same few areas, the Noise Sharing Plan would distribute Melbourne Airport air traffic across different flight paths and runway operating modes, giving communities more regular breaks from aircraft noise.

What it won't do

It is impossible to share aircraft noise equally across all parts of Melbourne. That is not the goal of the Noise Sharing Plan. Instead, the plan aims to introduce alternative runway operating modes, so different communities get meaningful breaks from noise at different times.

How it works

The Noise Sharing Plan will provide guidance on the use of runway operating modes to share noise. This will be shaped by community input on how and when they should be used.

Why it matters

The Noise Sharing Plan is informed by community and stakeholder feedback. This is important to ensure that the Noise Sharing Plan best meets community needs.

The draft Noise Sharing Plan does:

- ☑ Focus on how and when runways are used (these are called 'runway operating modes')
- ☑ Provide options for respite from aircraft noise for communities
- ☑ Present the flight paths that will be used when the new third runway is in operation
- ☑ Consider feedback from the Melbourne community and stakeholders
- ☑ Help guide future decisions about flight paths and runway operations.

The draft Noise Sharing Plan does not:

- ☒ Introduce curfews
- ☒ Change land use planning controls
- ☒ Control ground-based noise (like taxiing or construction)
- ☒ Move flights to other airports
- ☒ Change airline schedules. These are managed through other processes.

Have your say

We are now inviting feedback on the draft Noise Sharing Plan.

Noise Sharing Plan project timeline

The Noise Sharing Plan has been shaped over many years as part of Melbourne Airport's long-term planning.

1990s

Location of the future runways at Melbourne Airport formalised in the early 1990s prior to privatisation. Subsequent Master Plans post privatisation continued to safeguard future runways

2013

Need for additional runway capacity identified publicly as part of Melbourne Airport's long-term expansion plans

2021-2022

Master Plan 2022 indicated intention to build third Runway in north-south orientation. Third Runway MDP process in 2021

2024

Third runway approved in September 2024 with conditions including the requirement to develop a Noise Sharing Plan

2025

Trax and GHD appointed to develop Noise Sharing Plan, facilitating Phase 1 of public consultation between October and December 2025. This phase gathered feedback to inform the draft Noise Sharing Plan

2026 WE ARE HERE

Phase 2 public consultation on the draft Noise Sharing Plan from August to October

Early 2027

Simulate flight paths to validate for operational and safety implications prior to finalising

Eastern Extension Project preliminary draft Major Development Plan finalised and placed on public exhibition

Mid-Late 2027

Phase 3 public consultation for feedback on updated Noise Sharing Plan

Late 2027-Early 2028

Noise Sharing Plan submitted to Airservices Australia for endorsement

Post approval of the Noise Sharing Plan: Airservices Australia will conduct detailed design, which involves safety assessments and operational validation on the flight paths

2031 (planned)

The new third runway becomes operational (approximately 2031), however further works will be needed on the existing north-south runway as part of the broader Third Runway project. During this period, the Noise Sharing Plan will not be fully implemented because changes to runway availability will affect how runways and flight paths are used.

What we've heard so far

In 2025, communities and stakeholders shared their views through drop-in sessions, an online survey, aviation sector sessions and webinars.

2025 ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

Total sessions held

24 community sessions

14 stakeholder sessions

551 participants engaged

574 Noise Sharing Plan online survey submissions

You told us:

- Clearer communication is needed to raise awareness.
- Alternating runway use is important to support noise sharing across communities.
- There is an interest in understanding how decisions are made.
- Demonstrating how community concerns are considered is important.
- A break from aircraft noise (respite) is preferred throughout the same day.
- You want to understand what noise to expect when the three runways are operational .
- You want to understand how changes will impact general aviation and training.
- How noise sharing will interact with other airports across Melbourne.

You said: "Consider more options that offer more regular respite"

Response: The Third Runway Major Development Plan introduced an increase in runway operating modes from 8 to 14. The draft Noise Sharing Plan goes further to explain how Air Traffic Control can use these additional modes to create greater flexibility to share noise and provide respite across communities.

How feedback has been considered in the draft Noise Sharing Plan and related engagement activities:

- The noise sharing principles that matter most to the community have been prioritised.
- More communication and engagement to improve awareness.
- Improved the interactive tool so you know what to expect at your location.
- Explored alternating runway use during the day to provide regular breaks from aircraft noise.
- Adjusted night time operations to reduce aircraft noise impacts on densely populated areas where possible.
- Provided clearer information on how flight paths are designed and decisions made.
- Changed the airspace to support access for training and recreational flyers.
- Showed how Melbourne Airport's airspace will interact with local airports.

NOTE: A flight path is the route an aircraft follows through the sky. Aircraft navigate between points which guide them both side-to-side (laterally) and up-and-down (vertically). On a map, a flight path is usually shown as a single line. In real life, aircraft don't always fly exactly on that line.

You said: "There should be regular public reporting"

Response: The Noise Sharing Plan recommends how Airservices Australia will monitor and publicly report on the Noise Sharing Plan. Airservices Australia publishes real time noise information collected through noise monitoring stations across Melbourne online via WebTrak and Aircraft in your Neighbourhood.

Measuring and reporting noise

Aircraft noise around Melbourne Airport is measured, monitored and reported using established noise monitoring systems, flight track data and recognised noise metrics.

WebTrak

Melbourne Airport noise contours and reports

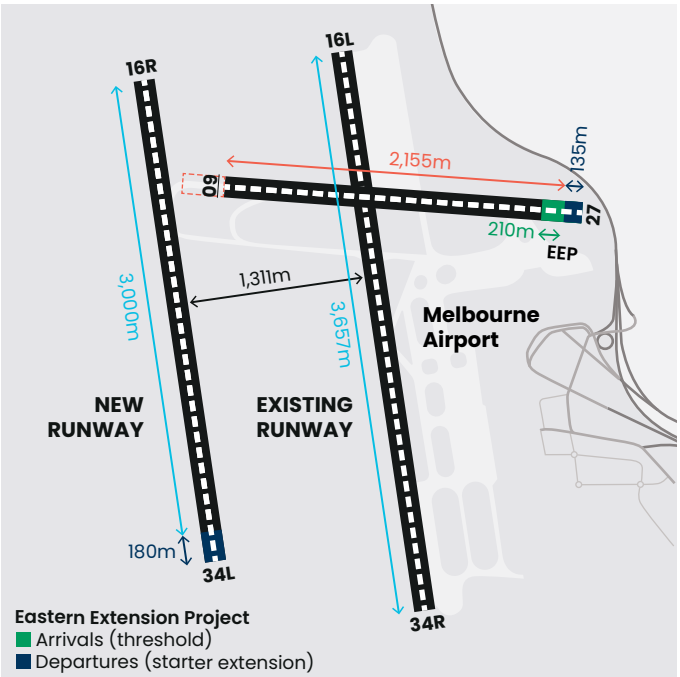
Airservices Aircraft in your neighbourhood

When the Noise Sharing Plan is operational, Melbourne Airport and Airservices Australia will publicly report on performance against noise sharing objectives.

Melbourne Airport's third runway

Planes take off and land into the wind because it helps them lift more easily and safely, and means they don't need as much runway. The north–south runway is positioned to line up with the most common wind directions, so it can handle most flights.

With three runways, there will be more ways to operate aircraft, giving greater flexibility to share noise across different areas.



Runway naming follows international standards: each runway designator reflects the magnetic heading of the runway direction, rounded to the nearest ten degrees.

For example, Runway 34 aligns with a heading of approximately 340°.

Where two runways are parallel, left (L) and right (R) suffixes are used to distinguish between them.

Eastern Extension Project (EEP)

To enable construction of the third runway, the east-west runway will be temporarily shortened. Following construction, the runway will be restored to its original length and extended at the eastern end. The flight paths in the draft Noise Sharing Plan have considered the eastern extension.

What to expect when the third runway is operational

Changes to aircraft operations and noise

With three runways in operation some communities will experience an increase in aircraft activity and noise, and some may experience aircraft noise for the first time. Changes will not occur immediately, but will build over time as population growth, increased freight movements and economic growth drive greater demand.

Depending on the weather, the time of day, and how busy the airport is, different combinations of runways can be chosen to keep the operation safe, efficient and reliable. These are known as runway operating modes. Air Traffic Control use a priority system to decide which runway arrangement to use.

Proposed runway Noise Sharing Plan mode priorities

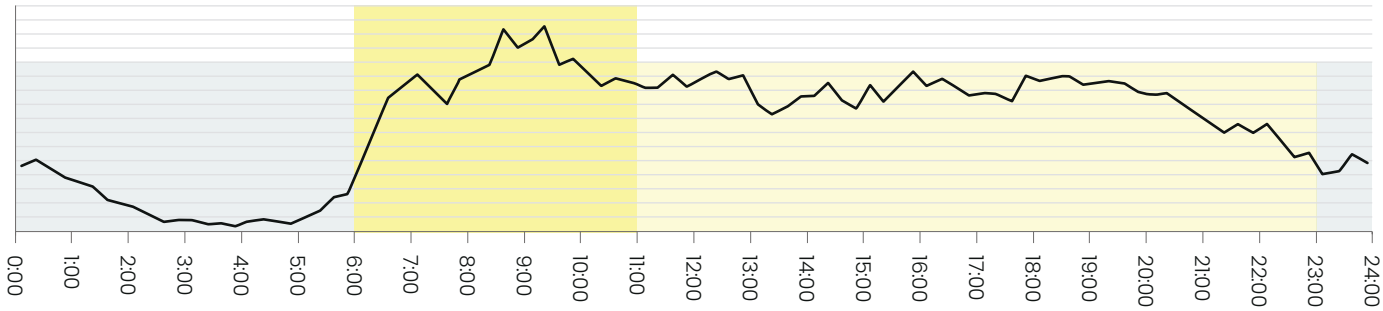
The draft Noise Sharing Plan proposes changes to the runway operating mode priority order during the day, at high capacity periods and at night. These changes aim to help distribute aircraft noise across communities, while fulfilling the conditions of the third runway approval.

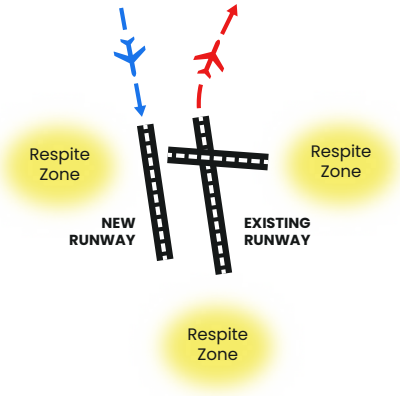
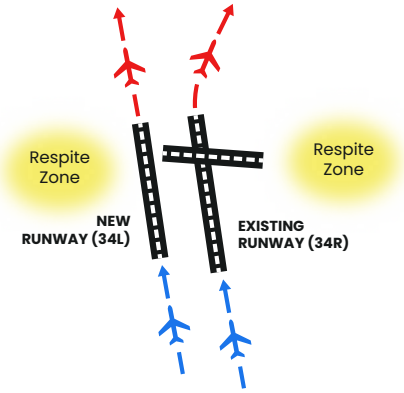
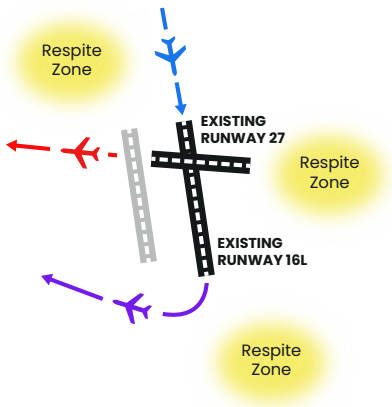
Understanding runway mode priority

Runway mode priority does not mean that runways at Melbourne Airport will always operate in the stated order. Safety considerations, wind conditions, traffic volume and aircraft performance requirements can and will result in arrivals and departures from the non-preferred priority. The priority is a guide for operational decision-making when conditions allow a choice.

An example of sharing noise using the preferred runway operating modes

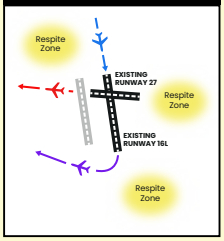
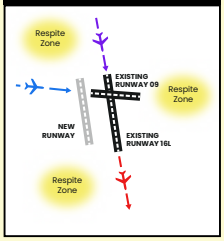
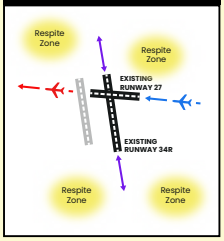
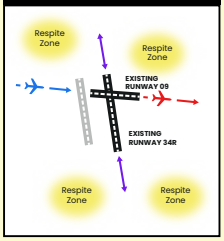
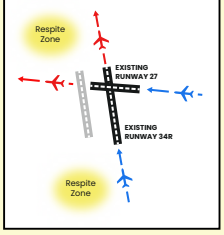
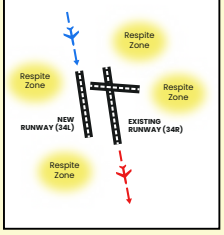
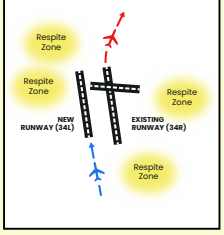
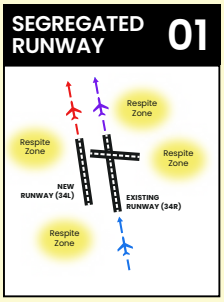
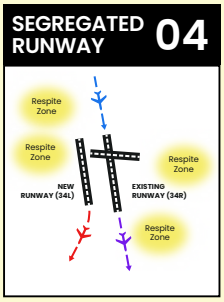
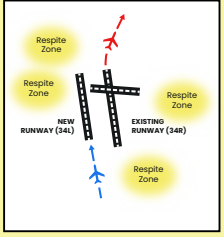
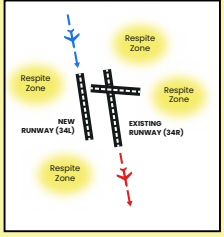
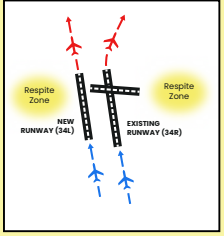
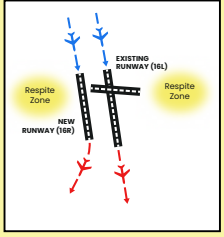
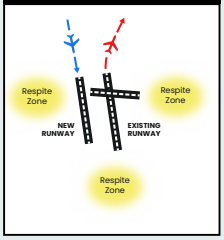
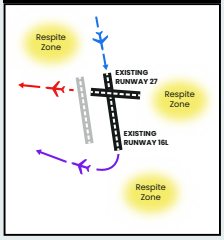
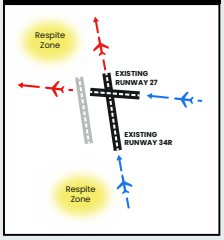
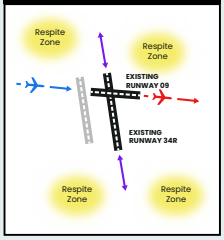
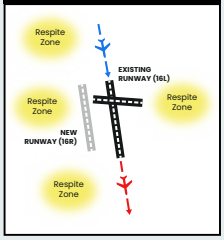
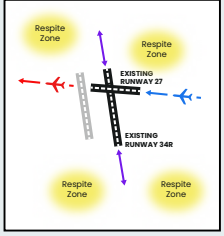
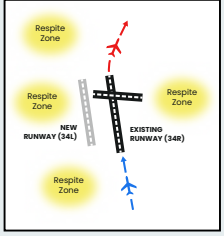
When conditions allow, changing runway operating modes can be used to give different communities a break from aircraft noise, called respite.



SODPROPS (34R DEP - 16R ARR)	MIXED MODE RWY 34	CROSS RWY 1 (27 DEP - 16 ARR)
Noise preferred into high capacity →		High capacity into noise preferred →
		
When conditions allow at night, the preferred night time operating mode is Simultaneous Opposite Direction Parallel Runway Operations (SODPROPS).	As traffic demand increases into the morning, the runway operating mode will transition into Mixed Mode which is the recommended preferred high capacity mode that will be able to manage the increased demand more efficiently.	Outside of peak periods during the day, the runway operating mode will be shifted to the priority mode Cross Runway operations to provide respite to communities to the east and south of the airport.

Proposed runway modes by priority

See graphic on next page.

PRIORITY 1	PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY 3	PRIORITY 4
DAY 0600-2300			
CROSS RUNWAY 01 	CROSS RUNWAY 03 	SINGLE RUNWAY 27 	SINGLE RUNWAY 09 
CROSS RUNWAY 02 		SEGREGATED RUNWAY 02 	SEGREGATED RUNWAY 03 
		SEGREGATED RUNWAY 01 	SEGREGATED RUNWAY 04 
HIGH CAPACITY			
SEGREGATED RUNWAY 03 	SEGREGATED RUNWAY 02 	MIXED MODE RUNWAY 34 	MIXED MODE RUNWAY 16 
NIGHT 2300-0600			
SODPROPS 	CROSS RUNWAY 01 	CROSS RUNWAY 02 	SINGLE RUNWAY 09 
			SINGLE RUNWAY 16 
			SINGLE RUNWAY 27 
			SINGLE RUNWAY 34 

Proposed changes to daytime operating mode priorities

Outside of peak periods during the day, the preferred runway operating modes that are used today will remain a priority in the future. So communities may notice little change to flights during the day. This aligns with the conditions for the third runway's approval to maximise the existing east-west runway outside of busy periods. It is expected that the east-west runway will be utilised 40-60% of the time upon implementation of the Noise Sharing Plan.

Segregated modes have been included in the daytime priority order to provide more opportunities to share noise when the cross runways are not able to be used.

Priority	Existing	Future	Future – Weather dependent
1	Cross Runway 1 Cross Runway 2	Cross Runway 1 Cross Runway 2	
2	Cross Runway 3	Cross Runway 3	
3	Single Runway 27		Single Runway 27 Segregated Mode 1 or Segregated Mode 3 Segregated Mode 2 or Segregated Mode 4 Single Runway 09
4	Single Runway 16L Single Runway 34R		
5	Single Runway 27		

Proposed high capacity day priorities

During peak periods, high capacity runway operating modes will need to be used. The draft Noise Sharing Plan recommends more options in the priority order during peak periods to provide more opportunities to share noise.

Priority	Existing	Future
1	High-Capacity (LAHSO)	Segregated Mode 3
2		Segregated Mode 2
3		Mixed Mode 34
4		Mixed Mode 16

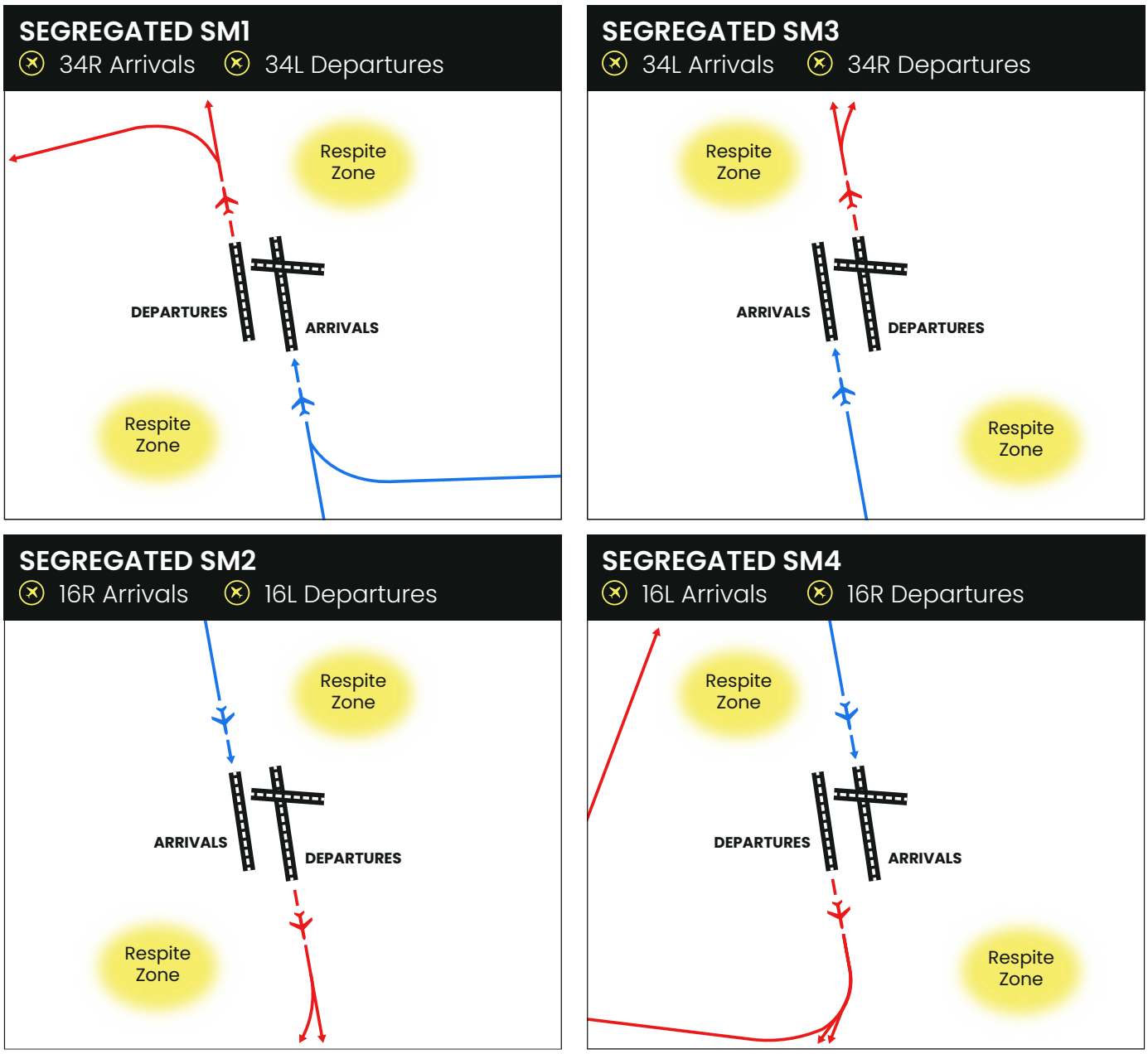
Proposed changes to night time operating mode priorities (2300 to 0600)

During the night, night time runway operating modes will be used. The draft Noise Sharing Plan recommends more options in the priority order at night to provide more opportunities to share noise during low traffic overnight periods.. he only night mode using the new runway is SODPROPS, all other night operations utilise the existing runways except for emergency operations or when Runway 16L/34R is operationally unavailable.

Priority	Existing	Future
1	Cross Runway 1	SODPROPS
2	Cross Runway 2	Cross Runway 1
3	Single Runway 27	Cross Runway 2
4	Single Runway 34R or 16L	Single Runway 27 Single Runway 34R Single Runway 16L Single Runway 09
5	Single Runway 09	

Alternation for Segregated Modes

Community feedback helped shape the approach to runway alternation in Segregated Modes. Rather than using the same segregated runway mode for long periods, alternation between two segregated runway modes can take place throughout the day, when weather and operating conditions allow. During northerly winds, the airport alternates between Segregated Modes 1 and 3. During southerly winds, it alternates between Segregated Modes 2 and 4. By changing which runway is used for arrivals and departures, aircraft noise can be shared more evenly across communities, providing periods of respite.



Melbourne Airport operations

The new north-south runway will give Melbourne Airport more flexibility in how aircraft operate, enabling new modes of operation not available with two runways.

This allows Air Traffic Control to use different runway operating modes at different times to respond to the weather and demand.

Changing operating modes will move aircraft noise to different areas across Melbourne, so no one community continuously experiences aircraft noise.

You said: "Some areas are copping it more, you need to spread this out more"

Response: The design has been updated to include more opportunities for sharing noise through a greater number of runway operating modes available, depending on weather and traffic demand.

WHEN DEMAND IS LOW
More options to share noise, when safety and weather conditions allow.

WHEN DEMAND IS HIGH
High capacity operating modes are prioritised to keep flights moving while sharing noise where possible.

RUNWAY OPERATING MODE CAPACITY

LOW CAPACITY:
20-50 movements an hour

MEDIUM CAPACITY:
50-60 movements an hour

HIGH CAPACITY:
60+ movements an hour

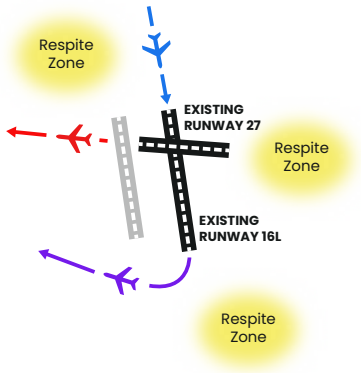
Existing runway operating modes at Melbourne Airport (two runways)

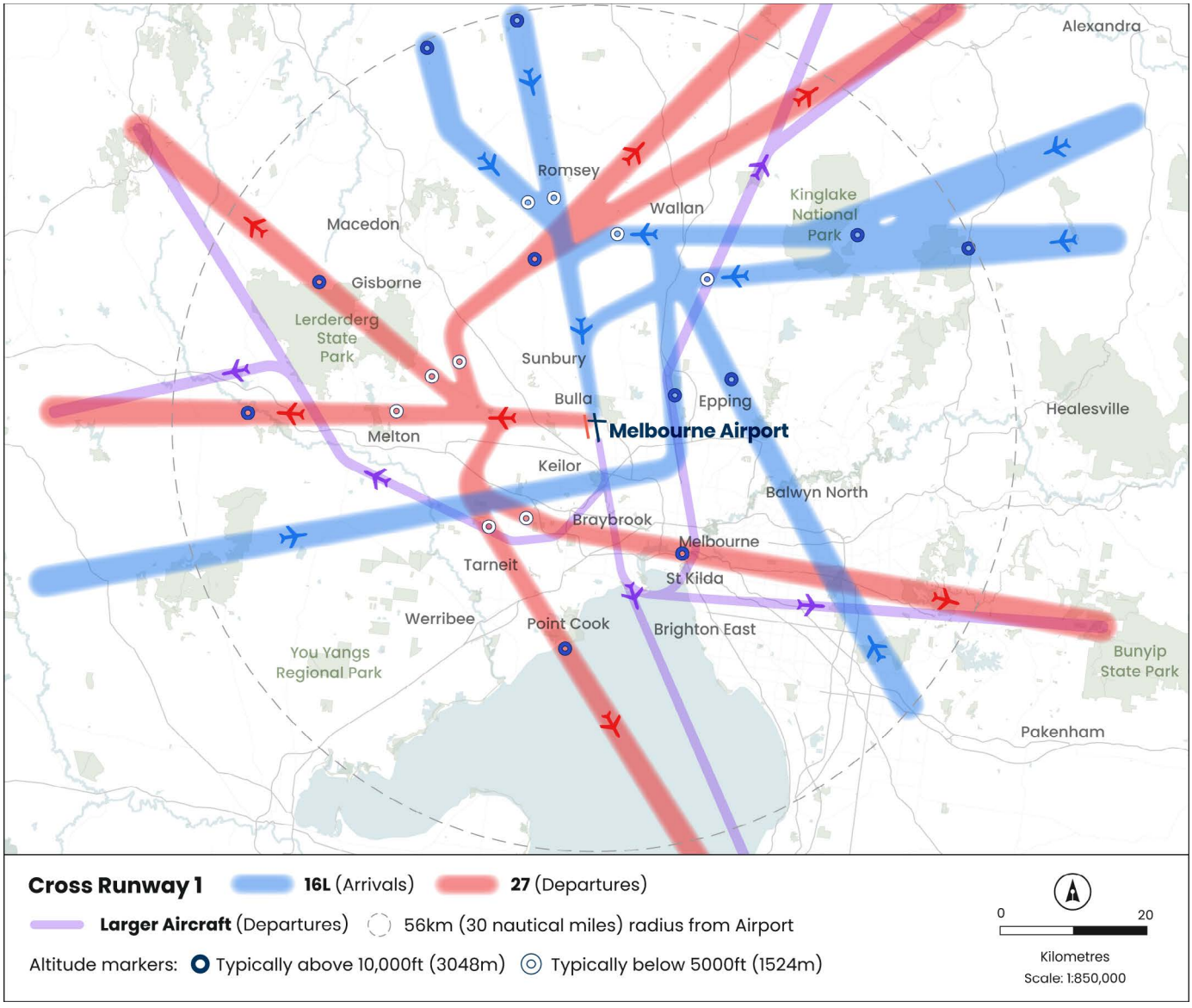
There are eight existing runway operating modes that can be used with the current two cross runway system at Melbourne Airport. This will increase to fourteen when there are three runways.

This section outlines the existing eight modes that will continue to be used when the Noise Sharing Plan is operational.

Cross Runway 1

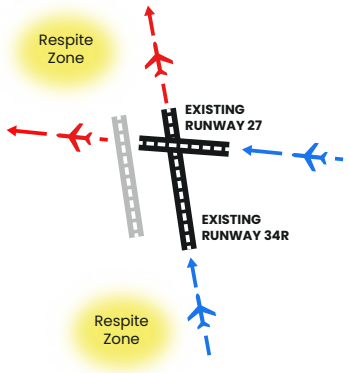
Runways	Arrivals 16L	Departures 27 and 16L		
Weather	South westerly or calm			
Timing	Available 24 hours			
Special conditions	Larger aircraft may require the long runway and depart to the south off 16L			
Capacity	Medium			
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**2025** 38.7%	**Implementation** 24-38%	**+5 years** 16-25%	**2047** 9-15%

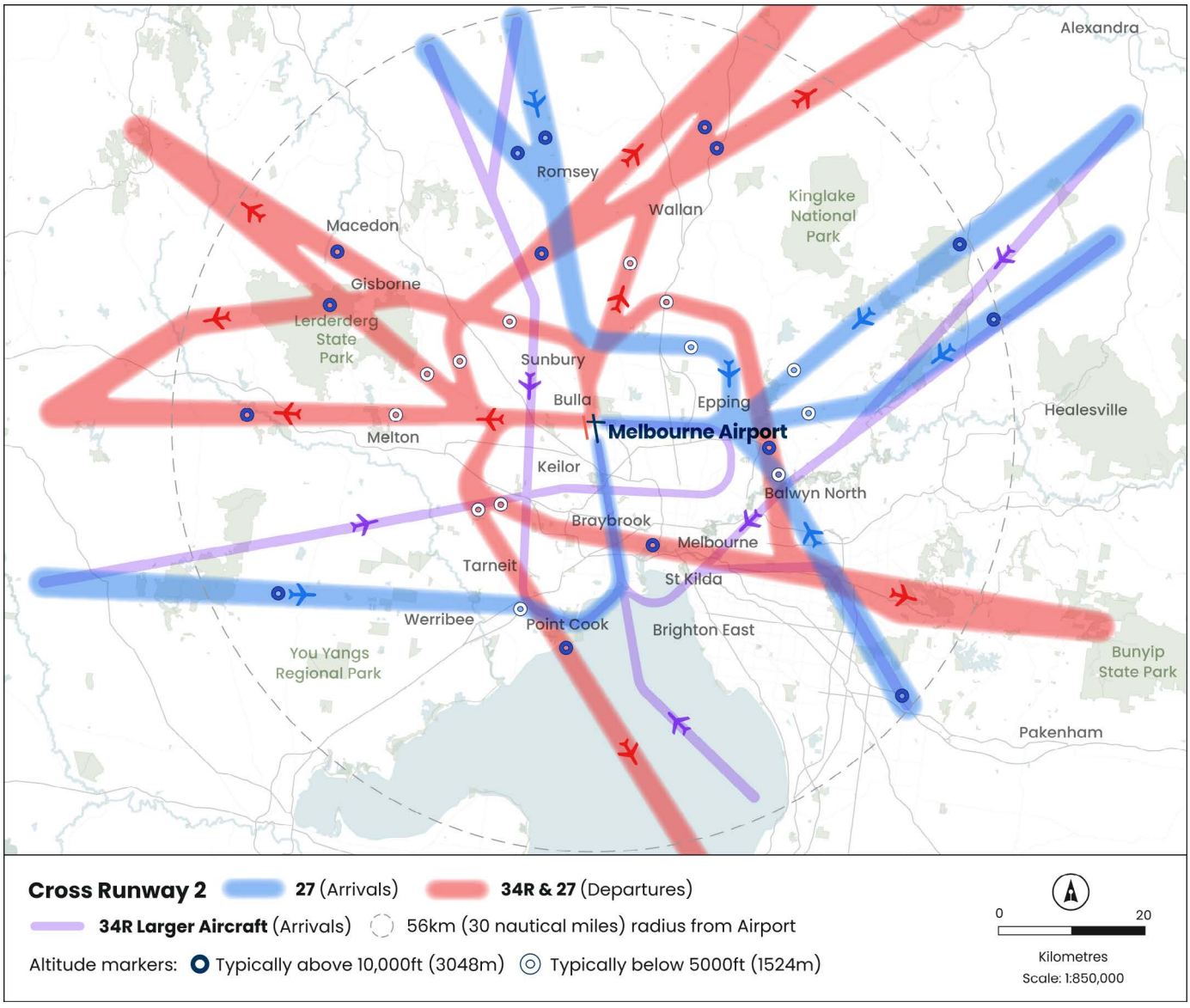




Cross Runway 2

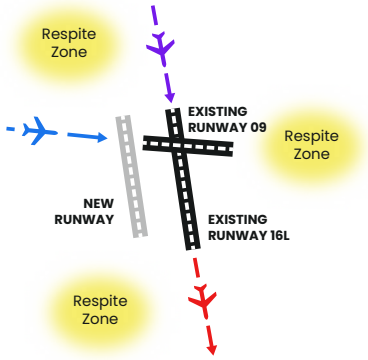
Runways	Arrivals 27 and 34R		Departures 27 and 34R	
Weather	North westerly or calm			
Timing	Available 24 hours			
Special conditions	Larger aircraft may require the longer Runway 34R for arrival			
Capacity	Medium			
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**2025** 17.6%	**Implementation** 13-20%	**+5 years** 10-16%	**2047** 9-15%

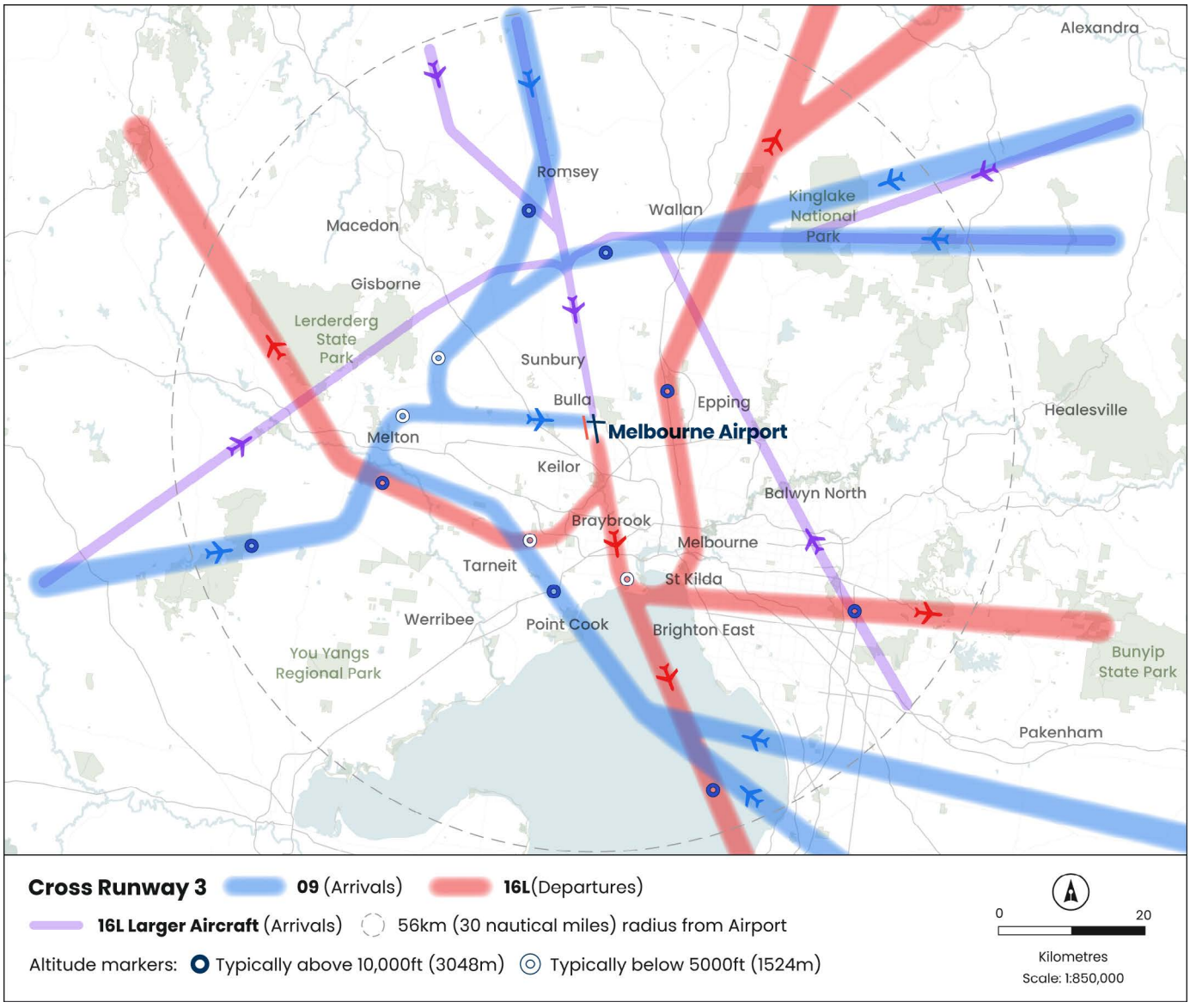




Cross Runway 3

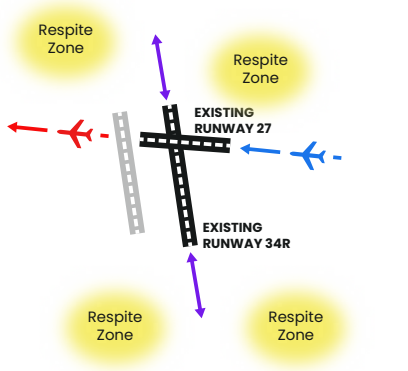
Runways	Arrivals 09	Departures 16L		
Weather	South easterly wind			
Timing	Day use 6am-11pm			
Special conditions	Larger aircraft may require the longer runway 16L for arrival			
Capacity	Medium			
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**2025** 1.1%	**Implementation** 2-4%	**+5 years** 1-2%	**2047** <1%

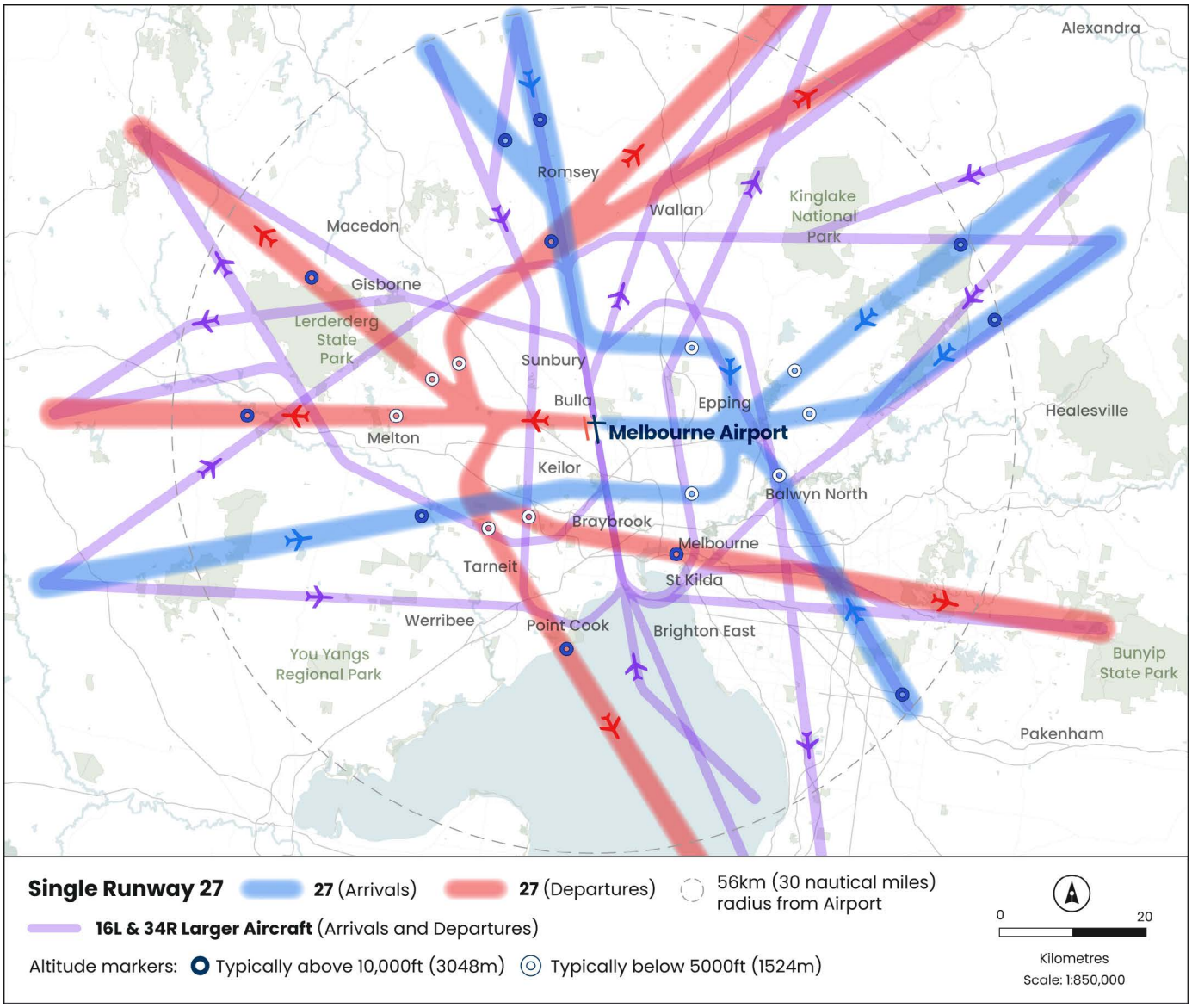




Single Runway 27

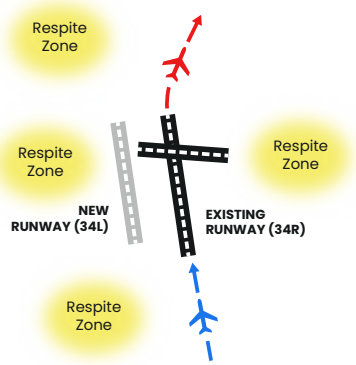
Runways	Arrivals 27	Departures 27		
Weather	Westerly wind			
Timing	Available 24 hours			
Special conditions	Larger aircraft may require the longer Runway 34R/16L for arrival or departure			
Capacity	Low			
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**2025** 6.1%	**Implementation** 2-4%	**+5 years** 2-4%	**2047** 1-3%

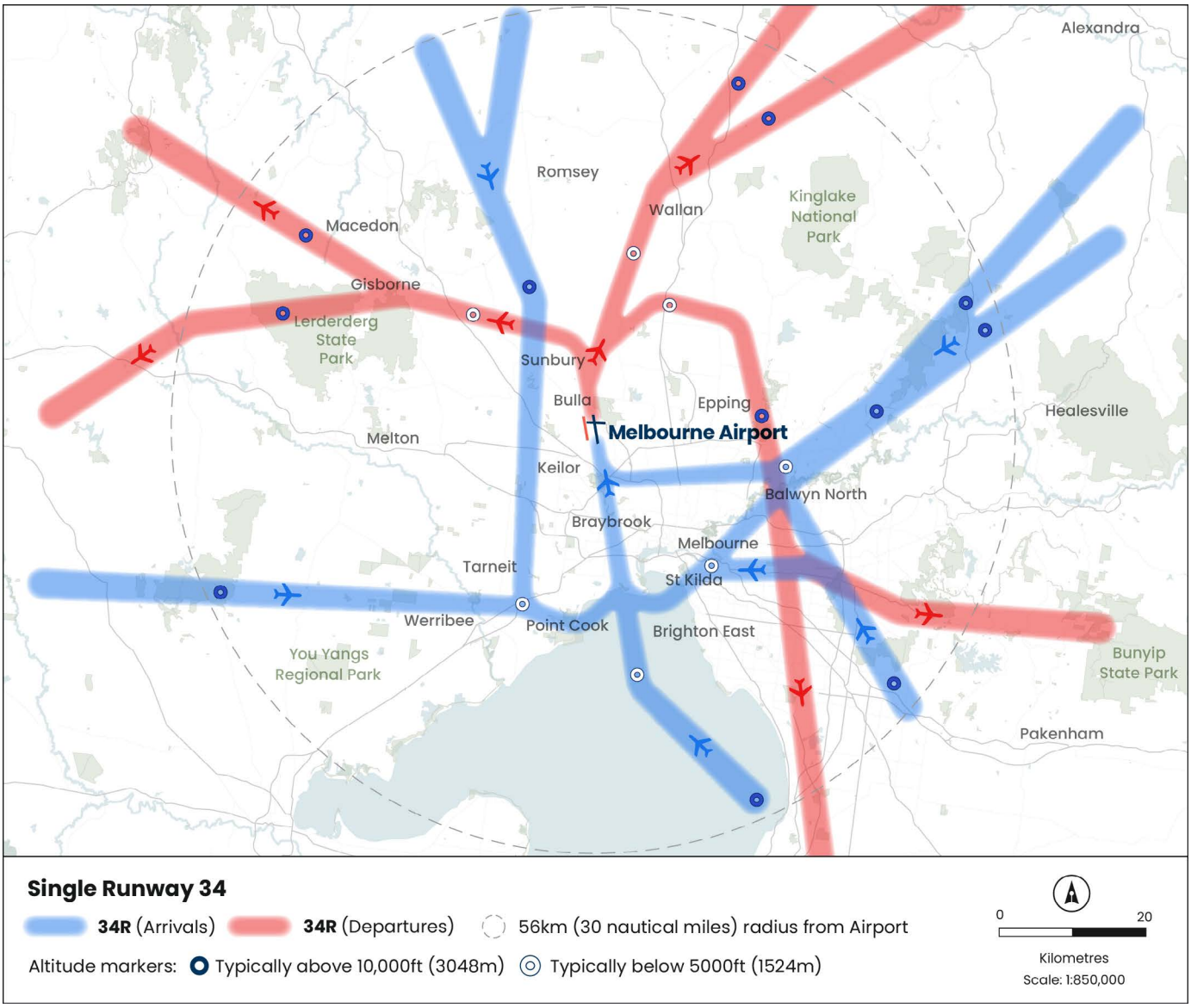




Single Runway 34

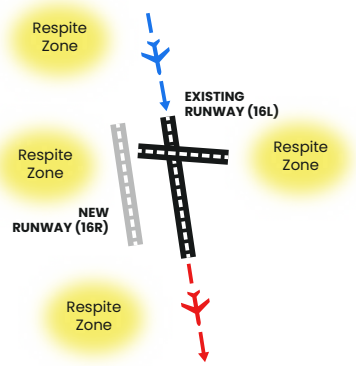
Runways	Arrivals 34R		Departures 34R	
Weather	Northerly wind			
Timing	Available 24 hours			
Special conditions	N/A			
Capacity	Low			
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**2025** 17.6%	**Implementation** 2-4%	**+5 years** 2-4%	**2047** 2-4%

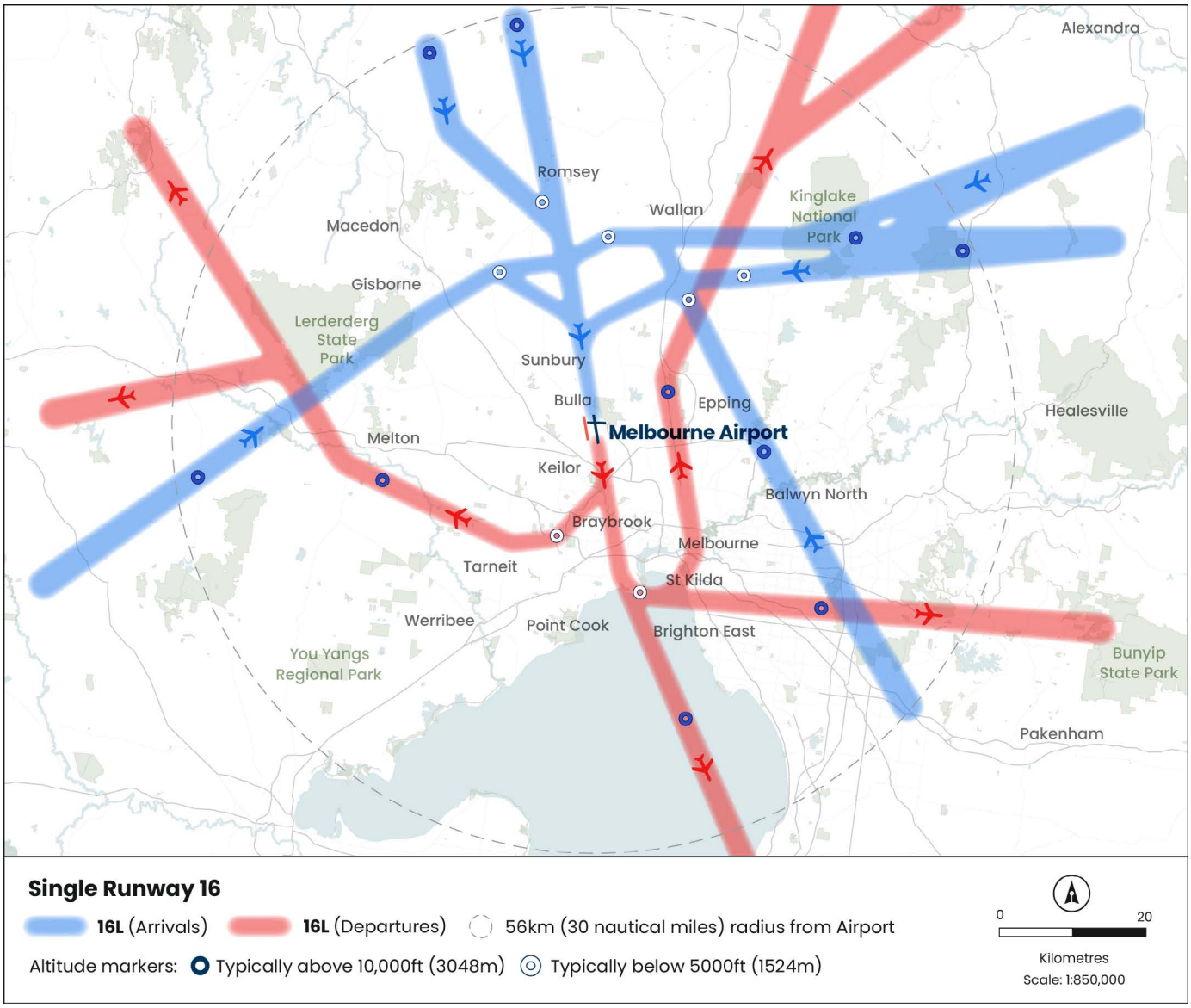




Single Runway 16

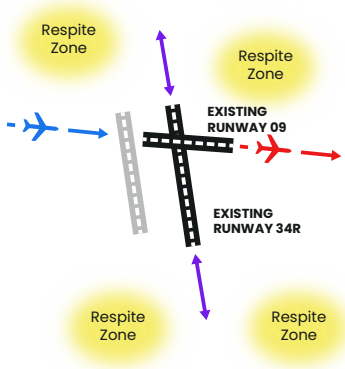
Runways	Arrivals 16L		Departures 16L	
Weather	Southerly wind			
Timing	Available 24 hours			
Special conditions	N/A			
Capacity	Low			
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**2025** 15.4%	**Implementation** <1%	**+5 years** <1%	**2047** <1%

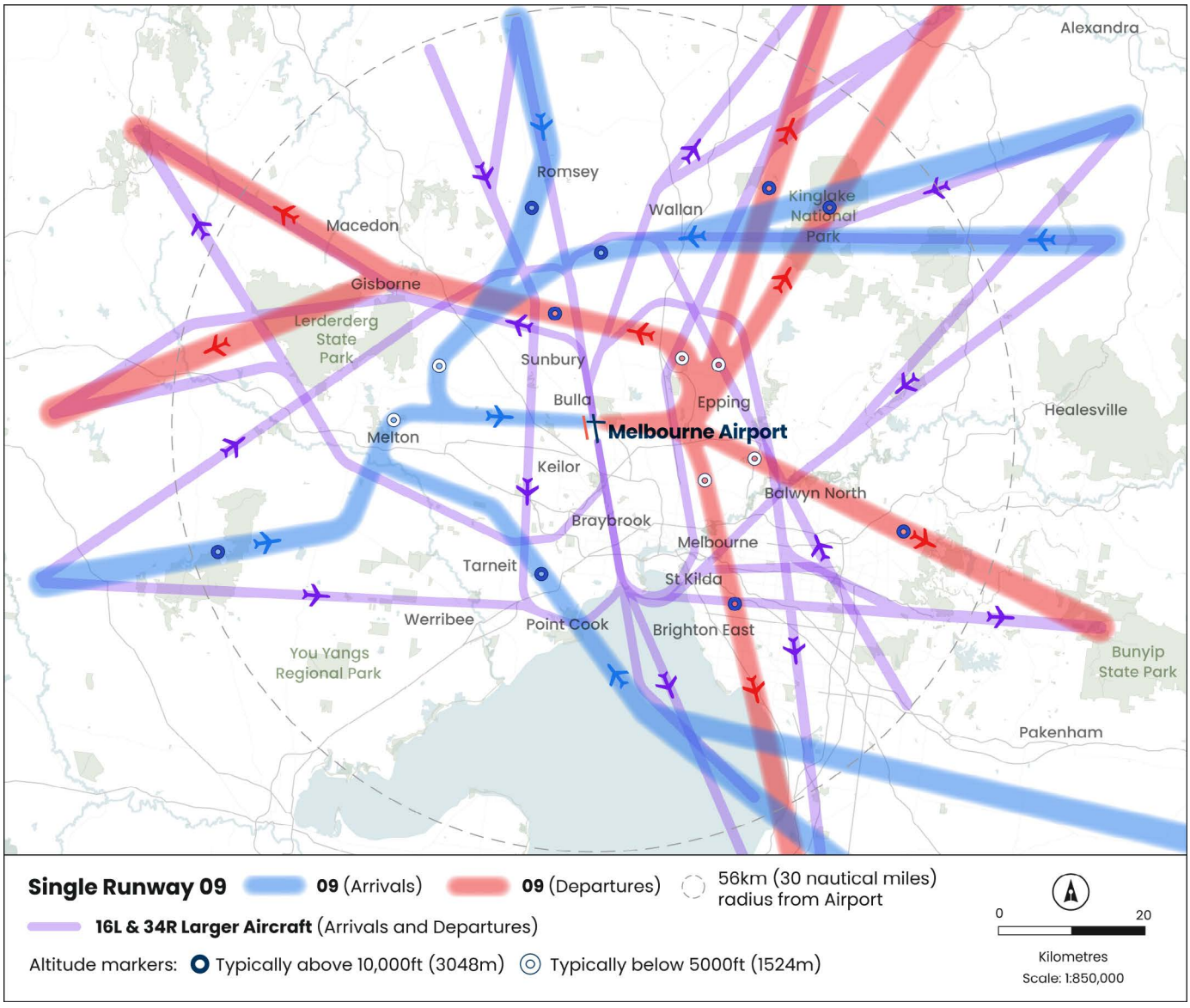




Single Runway 09

Runways	Arrivals 09		Departures 09	
Weather	Easterly wind (rare)			
Timing	Available 24 hours			
Special conditions	Larger aircraft may require the longer Runway 16L/34R for arrival or departure			
Capacity	Low			
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**2025** 0.2%	**Implementation** <1%	**+5 years** <1%	**2047** <1%



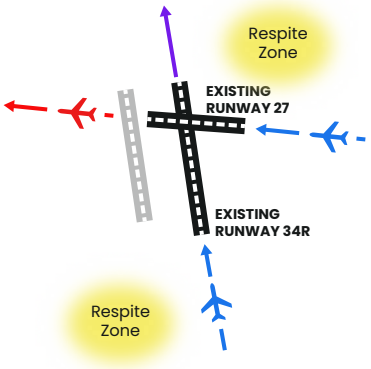


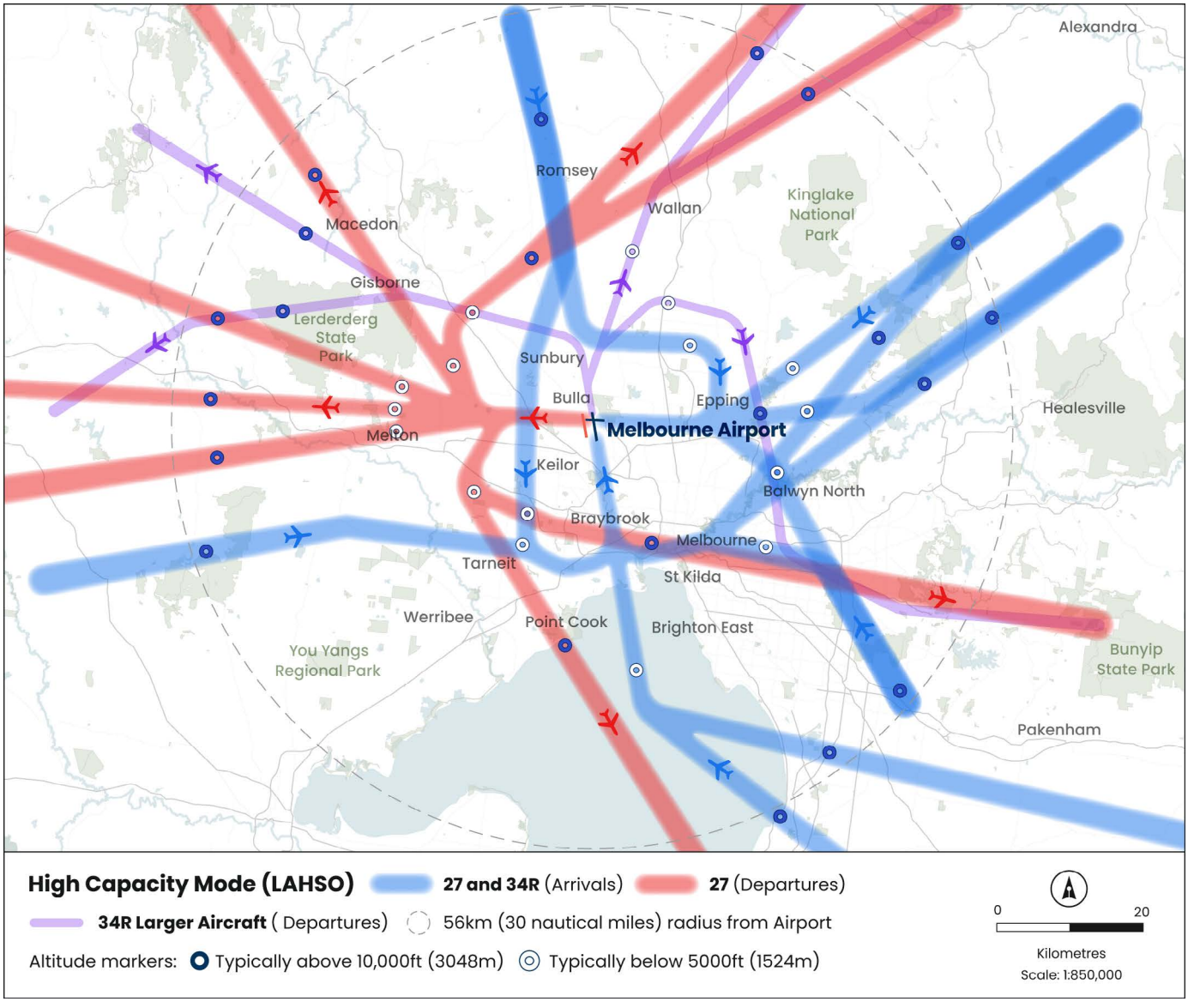
High-Capacity Mode (LAHSO)

LAHSO will not be available once the third runway becomes operational as other high-capacity modes will replace it.

Runways 27 and 34R for arrivals and departures

- Melbourne's only current high-capacity mode uses Land and Hold Short Operations (LAHSO) for approved operators and aircraft.
- LAHSO is a day-only mode and may be used during peak traffic periods only when specific weather conditions permit.
- Simultaneous arrivals are conducted on Runways 34R and 27, with departures allocated to Runway 27.
- Certain aircraft performance requirements may demand the use of the longer Runway 34R for departures depending on the local weather conditions at the airfield.
- LAHSO procedures require aircraft arriving on Runway 34R to hold short of the Runway 27 intersection, enabling simultaneous and independent operations on both runways with amended separation requirements.





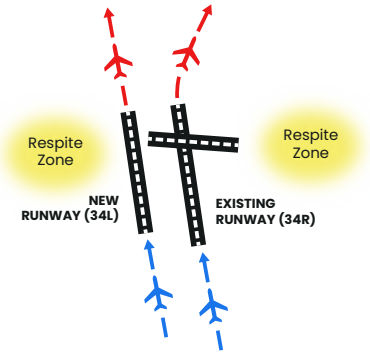
Future runway operating modes at Melbourne Airport (three runways)

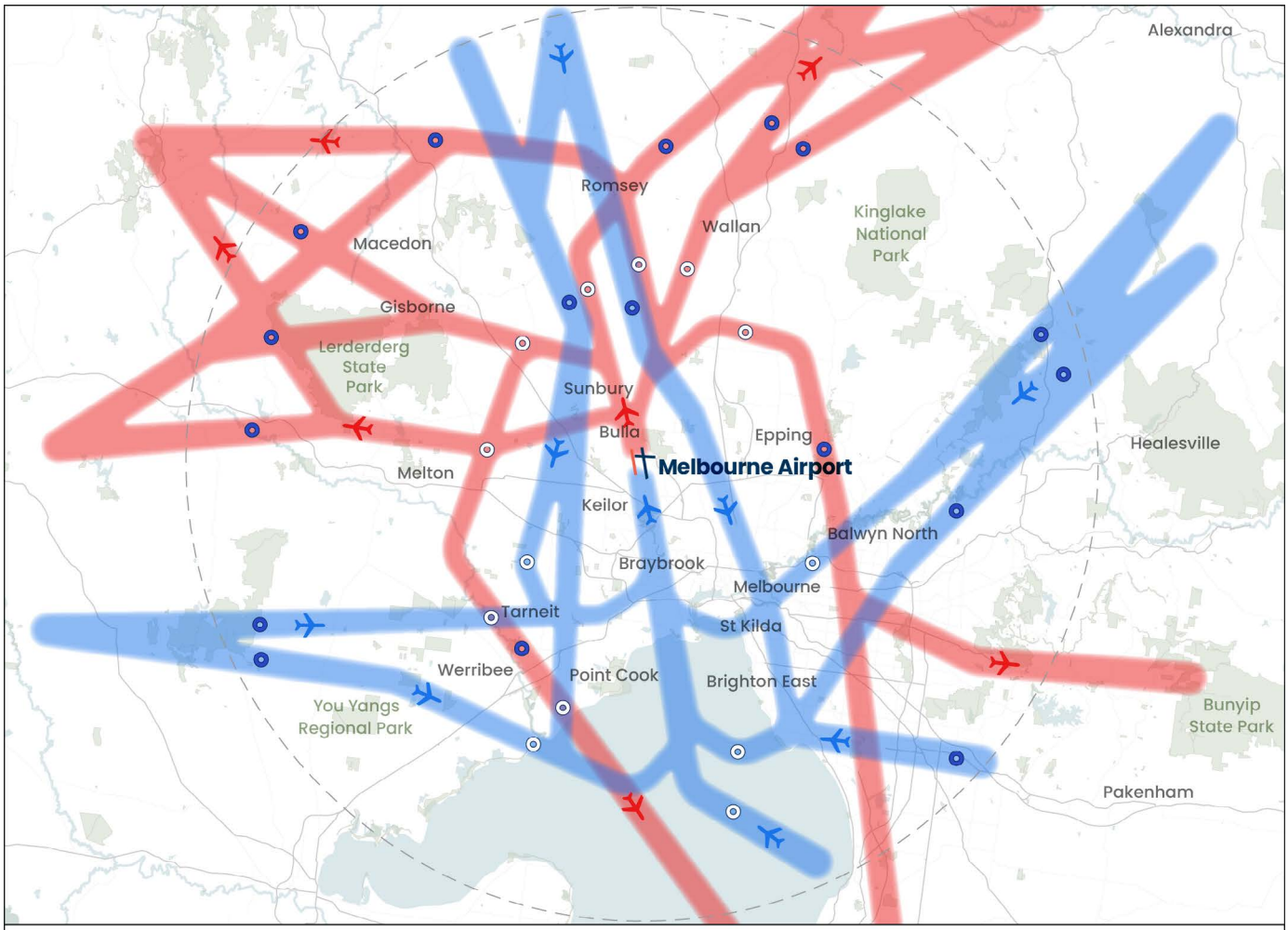
The draft Noise Sharing Plan introduces introduces seven new runway operating modes for a total of fourteen when all three runways are operational, and LAHSO is not longer in use.

Each new mode is described below, together with the conditions under which Melbourne Airport will operate in that configuration and the respite locations it is intended to deliver.

Mixed Mode Runway 34

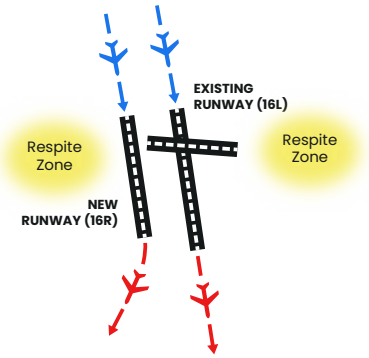
Runways	Arrivals 34R and 34L	Departures 34R and 34L	
Weather	Northerly wind		
Timing	During high demand periods		
Special conditions	Runways are operated in 'independent parallel mode' meaning aircraft can land and depart side-by-side at the same time		
Capacity	High		
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**Implementation** 7-12%	**+5 years** 14-22%	**2047** 20-32%

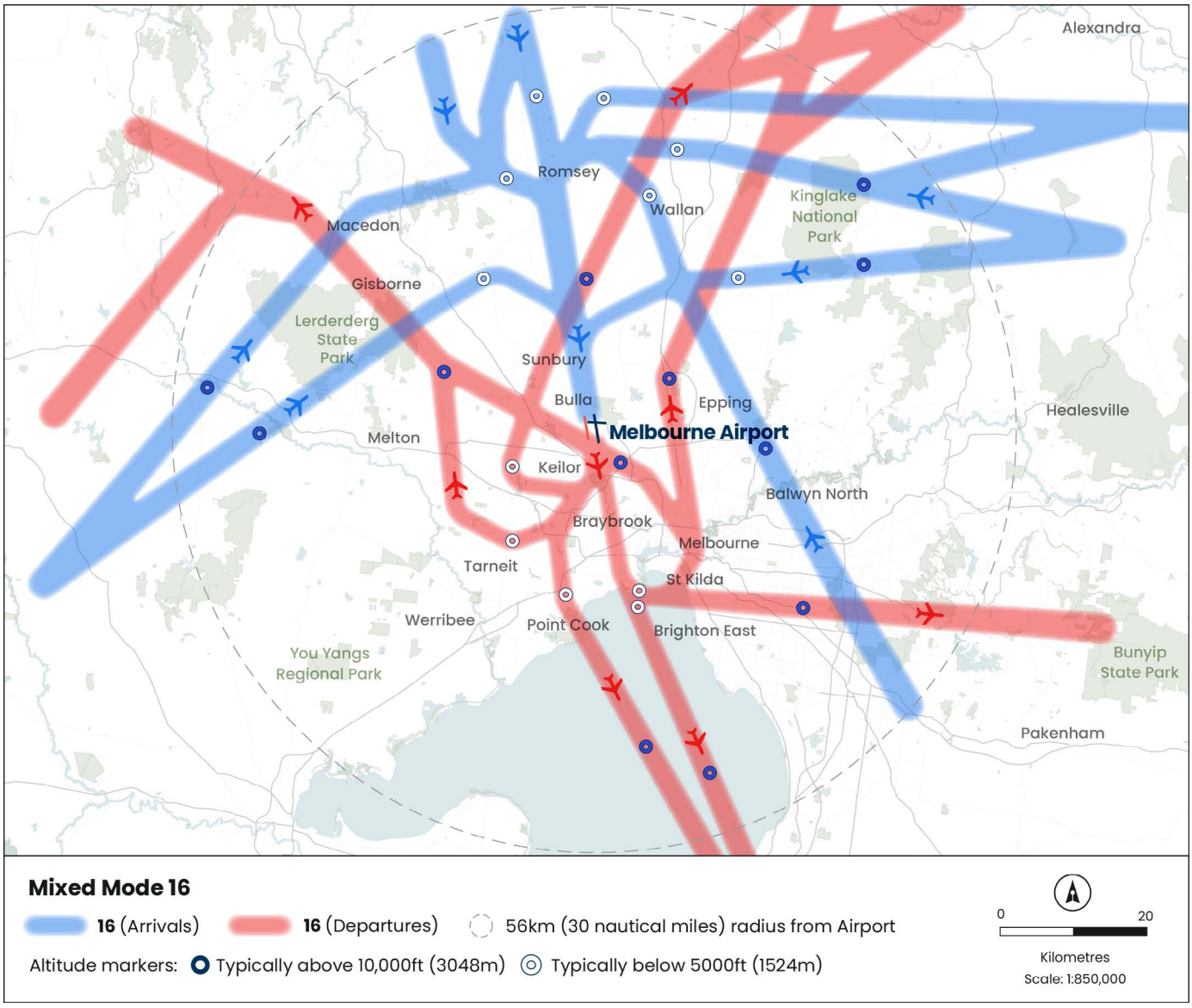




Mixed Mode Runway 16

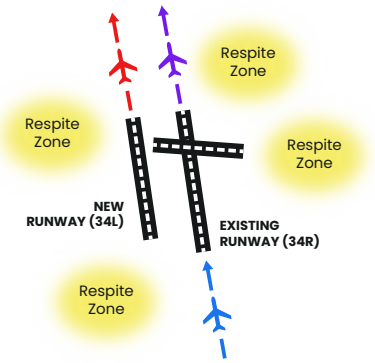
Runways	Arrivals 16R and 16L	Departures 16R and 16L	
Weather	Southerly winds		
Timing	During high demand periods		
Special conditions	Runways are operated in 'independent parallel mode' meaning aircraft can land and depart side-by-side at the same time		
Capacity	High		
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**Implementation** 3-6%	**+5 years** 10-17%	**2047** 17-27%

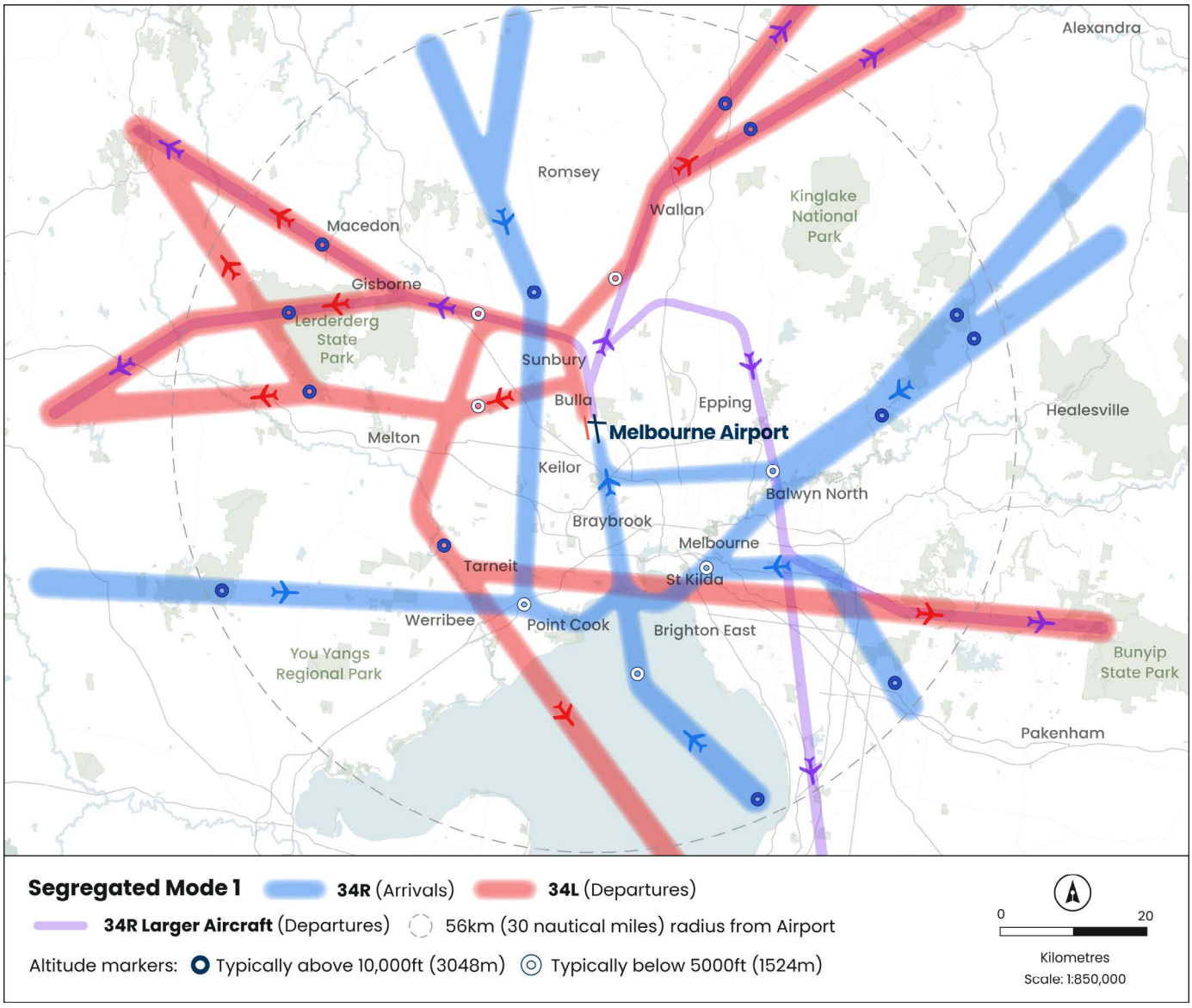




Segregated Mode 1

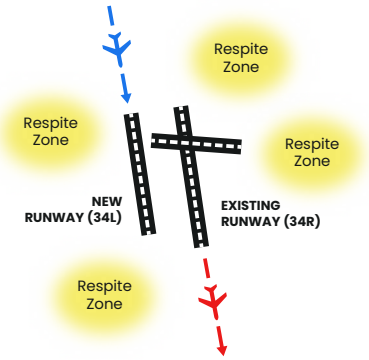
Runways	Arrivals 34R	Departures 34L	
Weather	Northerly wind		
Timing	Available 24 hours, expected use 6am-11pm		
Special conditions	Some larger aircraft may require the longer Runway 34R for departure		
Capacity	Medium		
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**Implementation** 3-6%	**+5 years** 1-3%	**2047** 3-5%

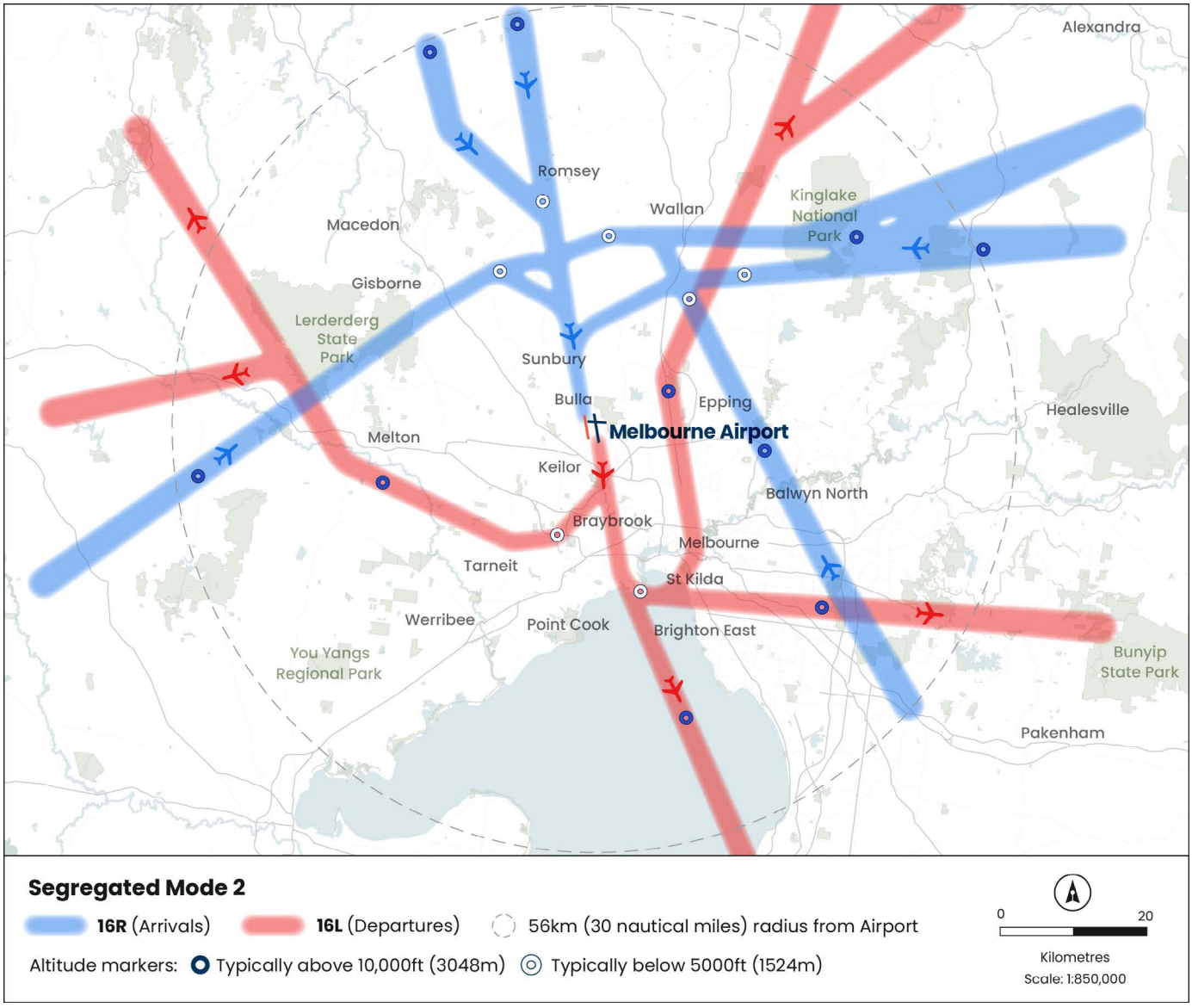




Segregated Mode 2

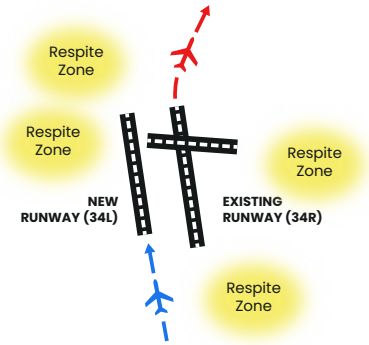
Runways	Arrivals 16R	Departures 16L	
Weather	Southerly winds		
Timing	Available 24 hours, expected use 6am-11pm		
Special conditions	N/A		
Capacity	Medium-high		
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**Implementation** 4-8%	**+5 years** 5-9%	**2047** 3-6%

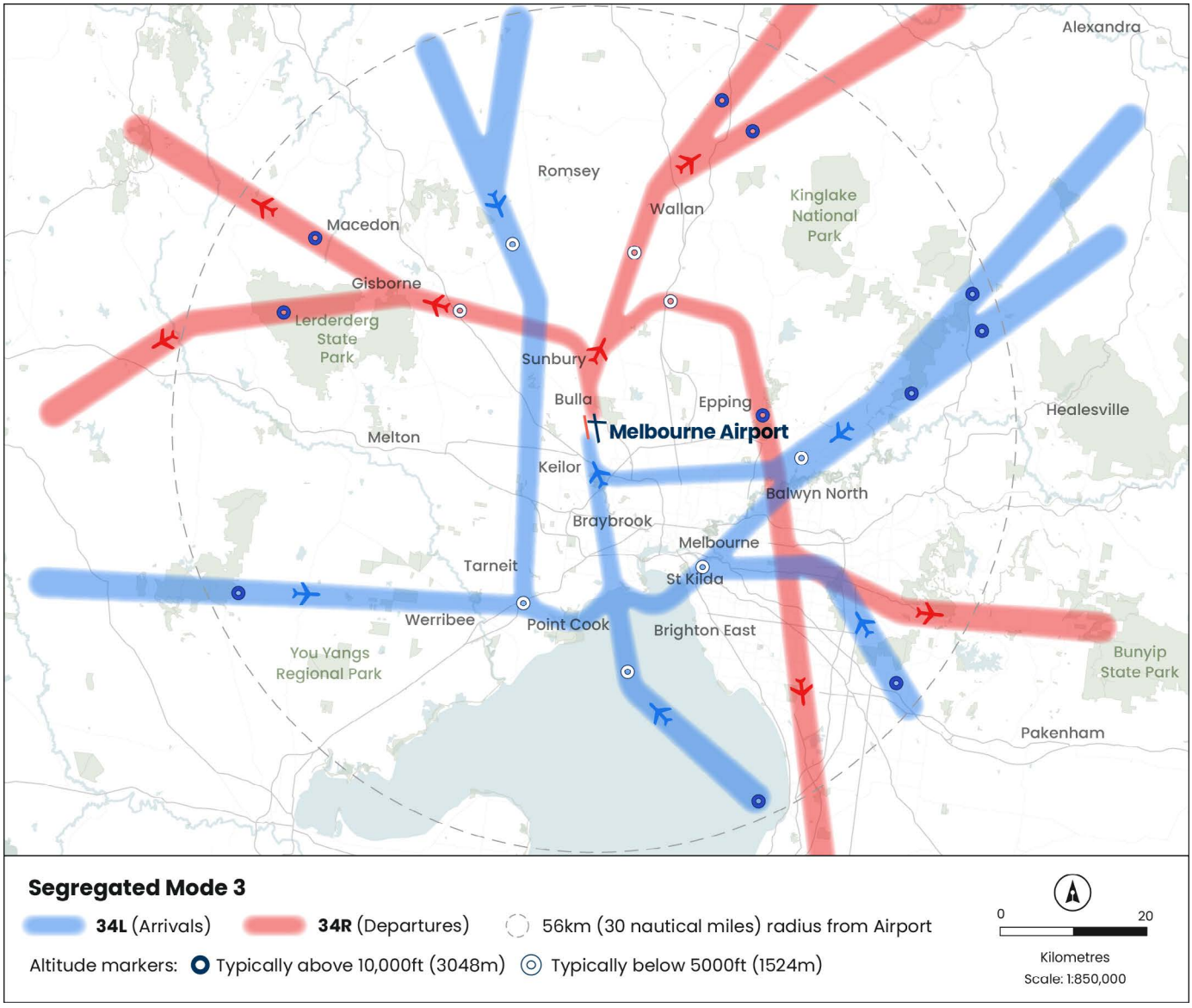




Segregated Mode 3

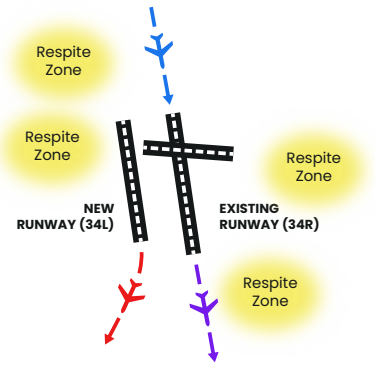
Runways	Arrivals 34L	Departures 34R	
Weather	Northerly wind		
Timing	Available 24 hours, expected use 6am-11pm		
Special conditions	N/A		
Capacity	Medium - high		
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**Implementation** 9-14%	**+5 years** 8-13%	**2047** 3-6%

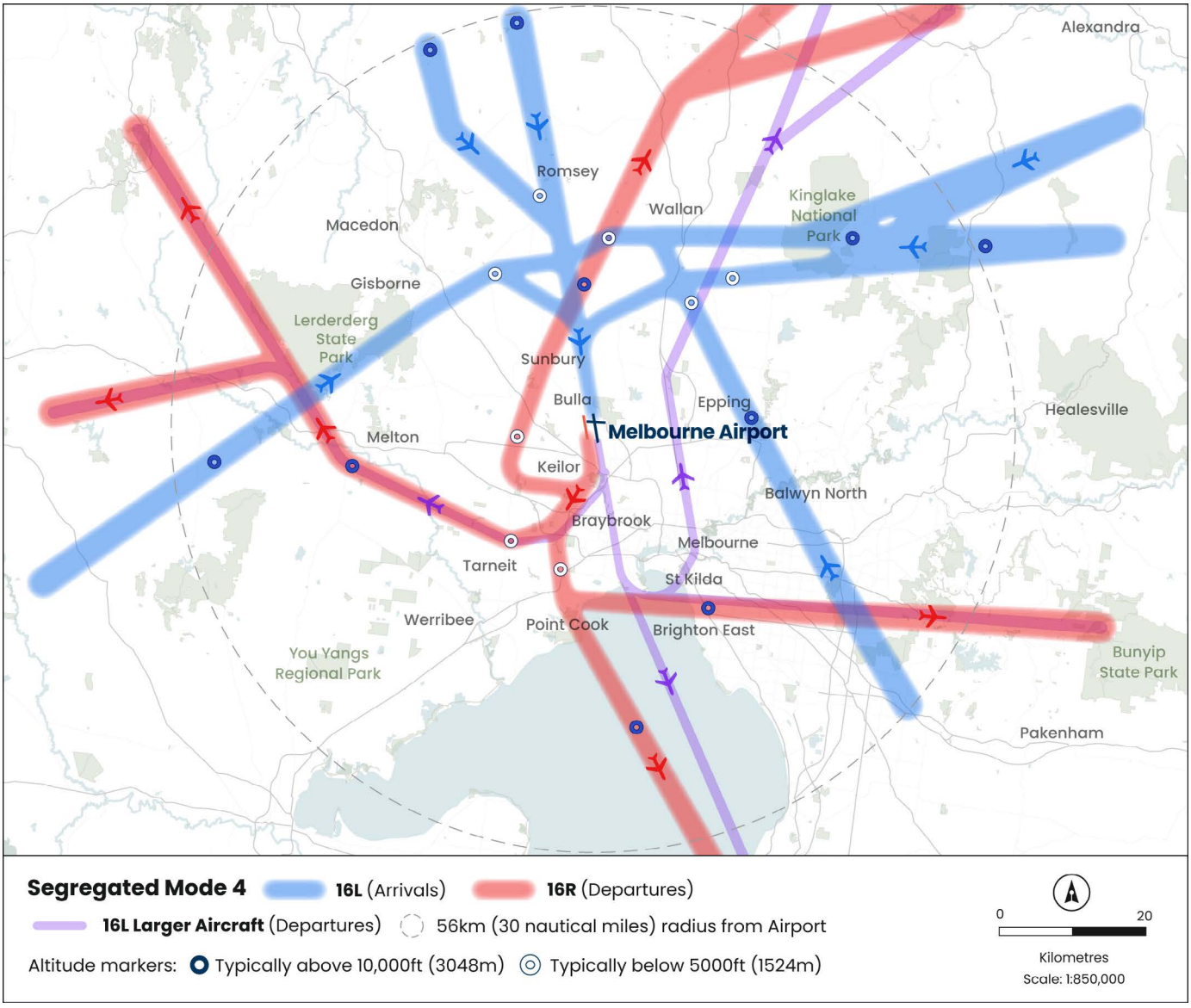




Segregated Mode 4

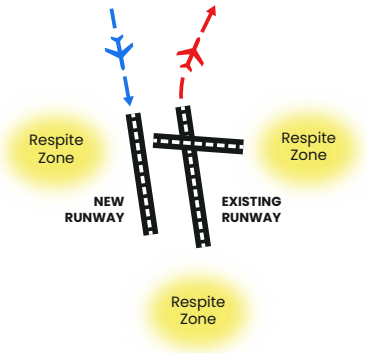
Runways	Arrivals 16L	Departures 16R	
Weather	Southerly winds		
Timing	Available 24 hours, expected use 6am-11pm		
Special conditions	Larger aircraft may require the longer Runway 16L for departure		
Capacity	Medium		
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**Implementation** <1-2%	**+5 years** <1%	**2047** 1-3%

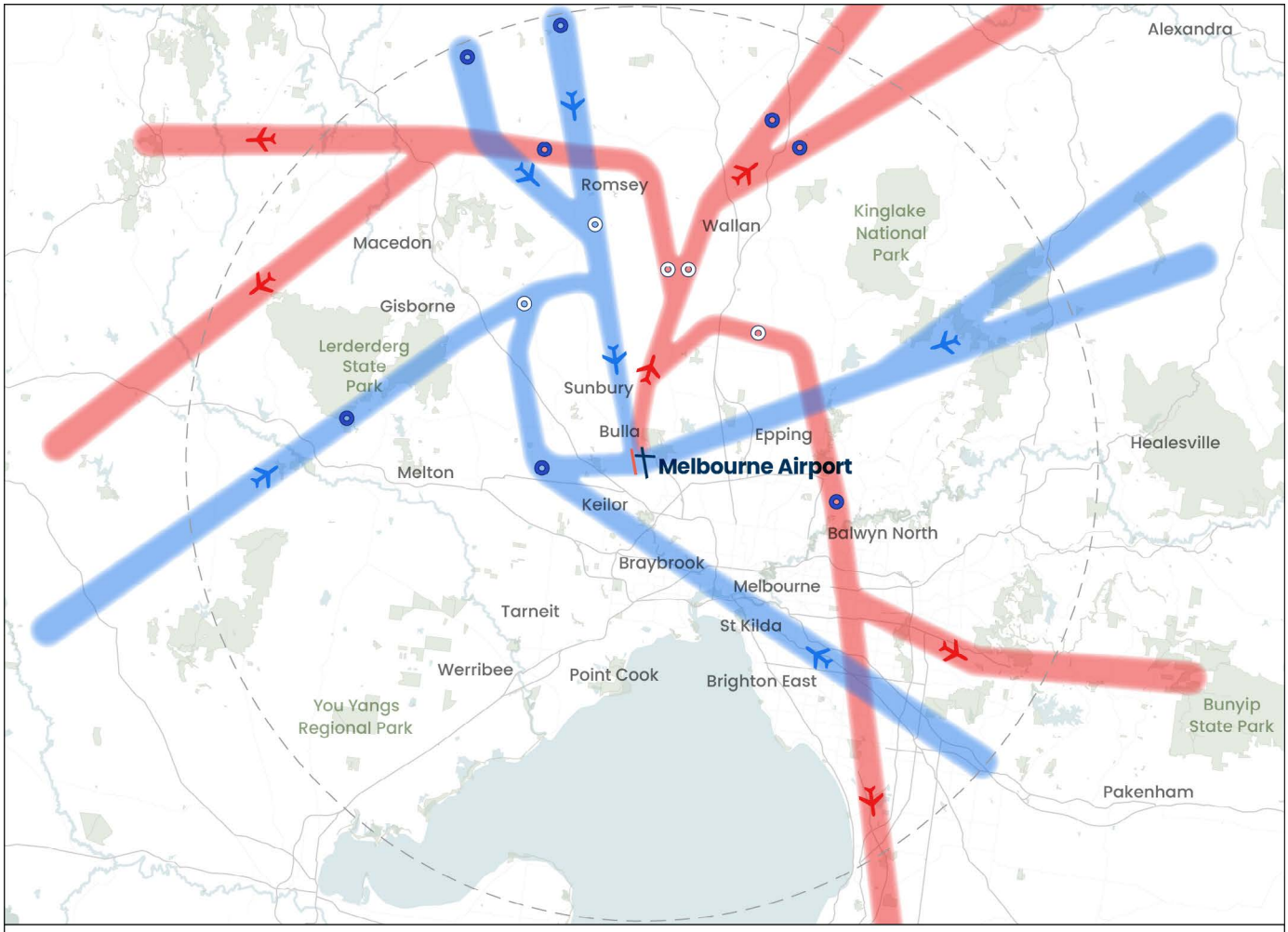




Simultaneous Opposite Direction Parallel Runway Operations SODPROPS

Runways	Arrivals 16R	Departures 34R	
Weather	Clear, wind less than 5 knots		
Timing	Only used overnight (11pm - 6am)		
Special conditions	Requires a dry runway with visibility at least 8 kilometres and low traffic demand		
Capacity	Low		
Forecast usage range (% of time)	**Implementation** <5%	**+5 years** <5%	**2047** <5%





SODPROPS (Simultaneous Opposite Direction Paralllel Runway Operations)

16R (Arrivals) **34R** (Departures) 56km (30 nautical miles) radius from Airport

Altitude markers: Typically above 10,000ft (3048m) Typically below 5000ft (1524m)

0 20

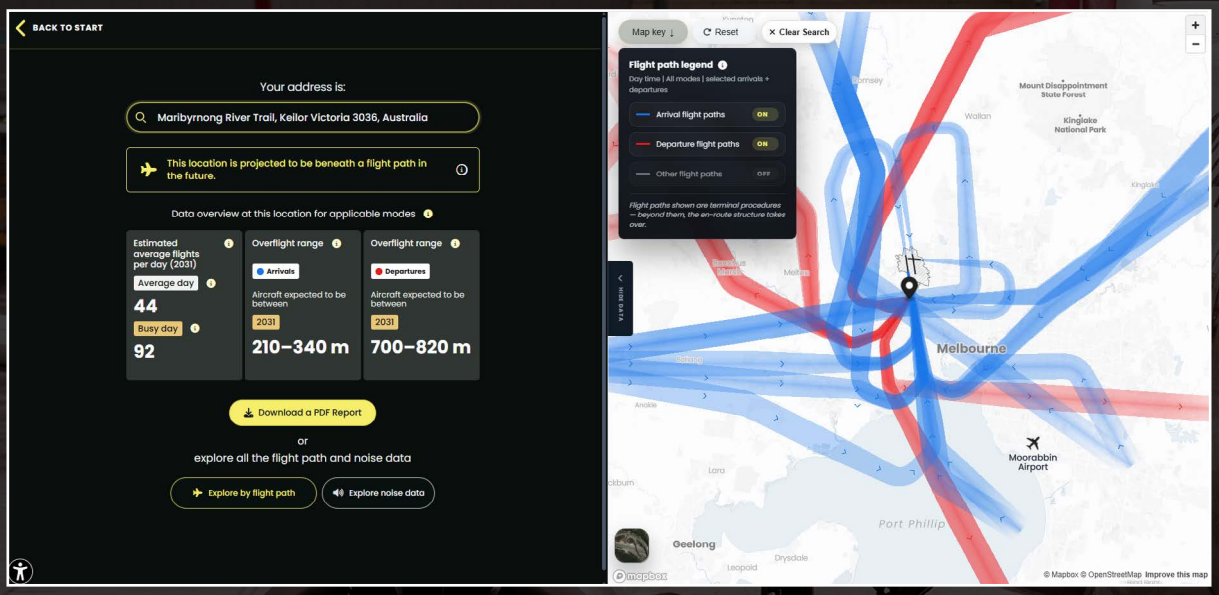
Kilometres

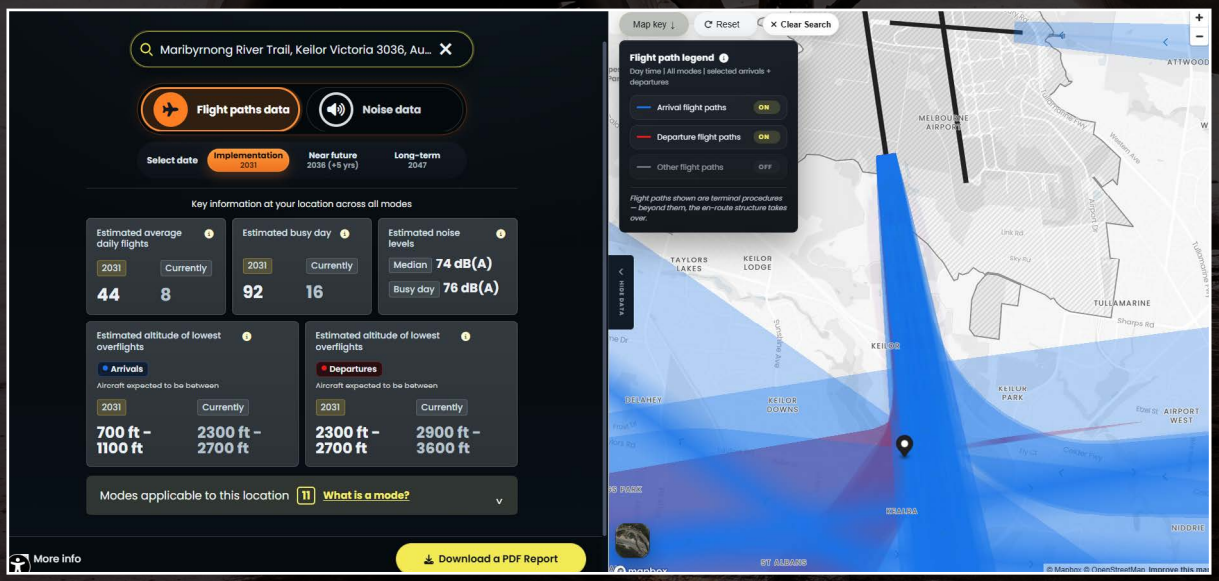
Scale: 1:850,000

What to expect in your area

To understand what the runway operating modes mean for your area, visit the interactive tool to enter your address and explore expected aircraft activity and noise near you. Use the tool to:

- See nearby flight paths when the three runways are operational
- Understand how noise may change in your local area
- Explore different operating scenarios using runway modes.



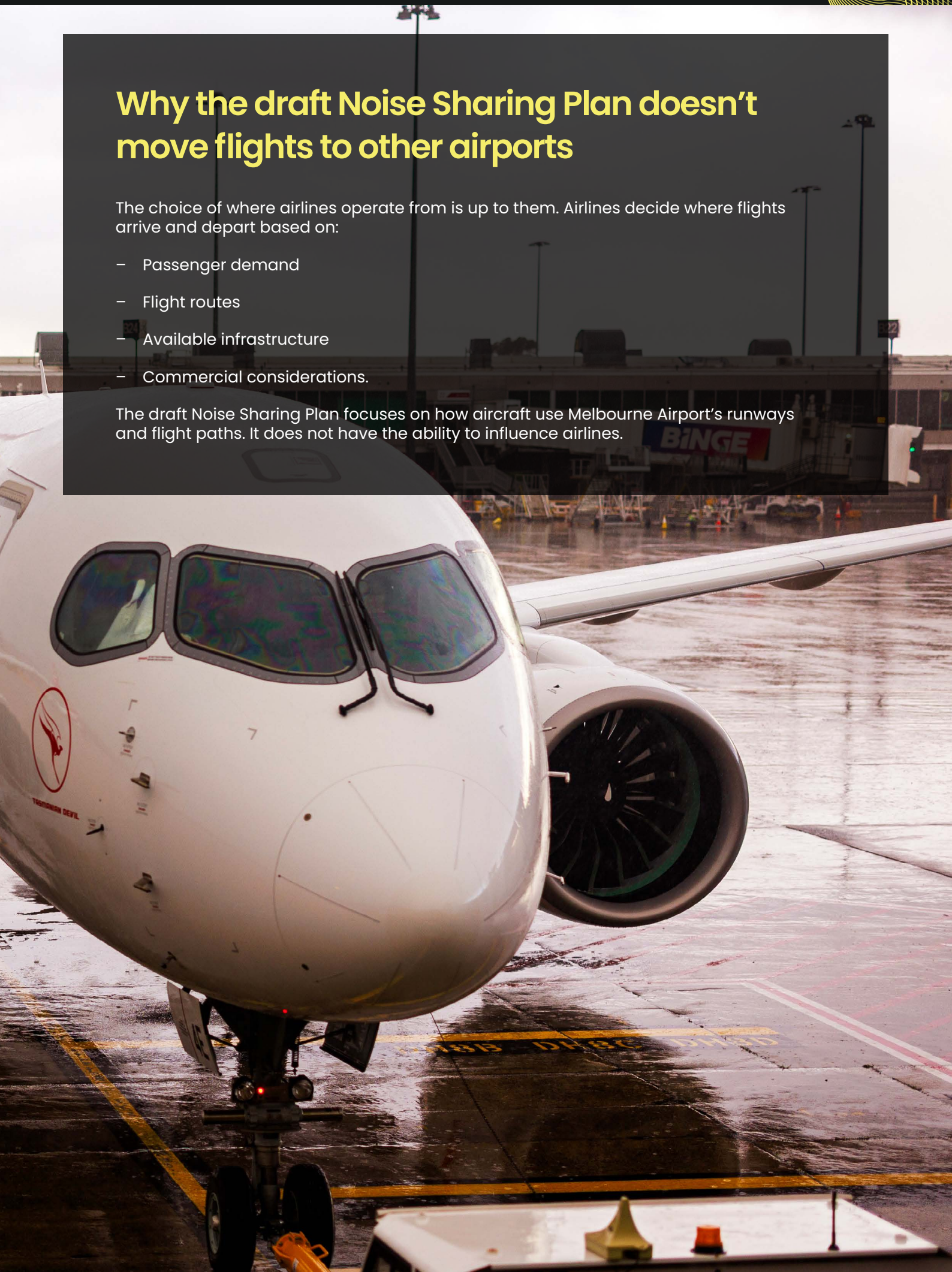


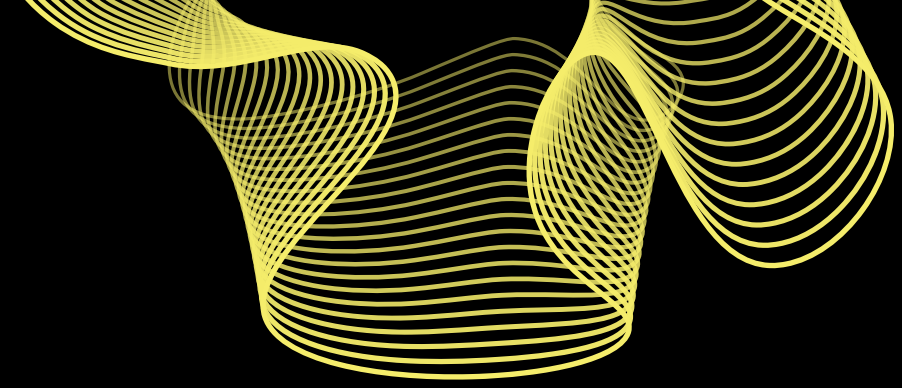
Why the draft Noise Sharing Plan doesn't move flights to other airports

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





Find out more

Your feedback helps shape how aircraft noise is managed across Melbourne. We encourage you to have your say.

Or visit the Major Projects Hub to learn more about noise sharing and what changes could mean for your area.

If you require interpreter services, you can contact the free Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask them to call us on 1800 810 680.

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الإلكتروني: engagement@ghd.com

如果需要中文资料，请与我们联系：
engagement@ghd.com

Để biết thông tin bằng các ngôn ngữ khác, vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi qua email: engagement@ghd.com

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

MELBOURNE AIRPORT