

Melbourne Airport Noise Sharing Plan – Runway operating modes

Melbourne Airport's Third Runway Project involves the construction of a new north-south runway to provide more capacity for passengers and exports, support competition, reduce delays and enable economic growth.

As more flights support Melbourne's growth, some areas will experience aircraft noise for the first time, and others will experience more than they currently have – but efforts will be made to share that noise.

Melbourne Airport is developing a Noise Sharing Plan. The Noise Sharing Plan is one of the conditions set by the Federal Government as part of the third runway approval. Melbourne Airport has engaged independent consultants to develop the Plan.

The third runway will allow



136,500 more arrivals and departures per year,

making way for a growth to **76 million** passengers by 2042.



Melbourne Airport third runway

Melbourne Airport will soon have three runways. Each runway can be used in two directions.

Melbourne Airport currently has two runways – one orientated north-south (known as Runway 16/34) and one east-west (Runway 09/27). In 2031, the new third runway will be in operation and will be known as Runway 16R/34L. To distinguish between these parallel runways, they will use a Left or Right suffix depending on the flight direction.

Runways are named using two numbers that show the direction an aircraft is arriving, based on a compass heading. For example, **Runway 16** points to 160° on the compass (towards the south), while **Runway 34** points to 340° on the compass (towards the north).

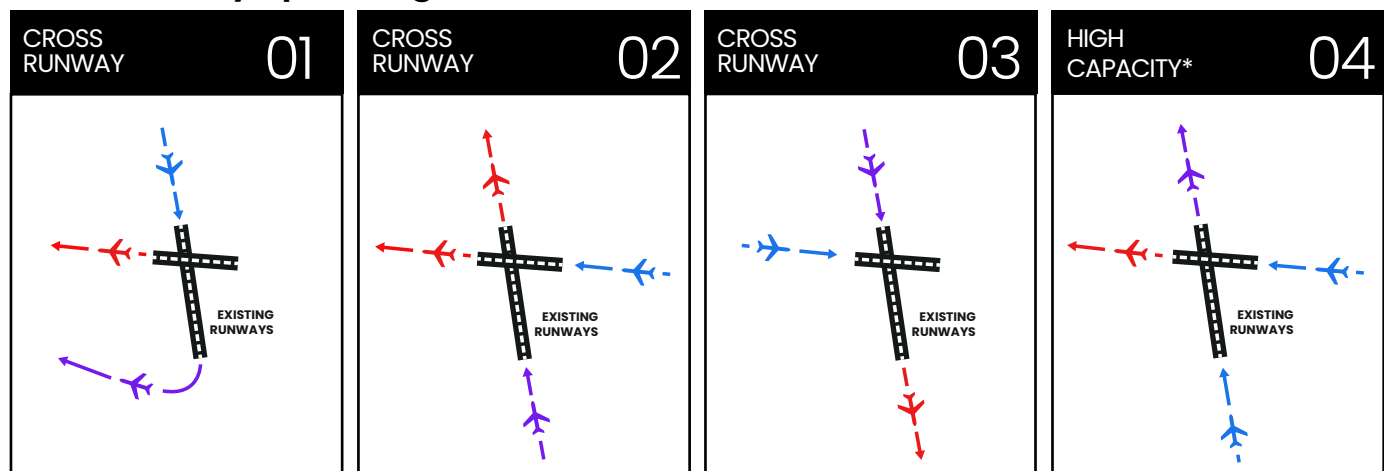
Runway operating modes explained

At airports, runways are not always used the same way all day. 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.

Current runway operating modes at Melbourne Airport

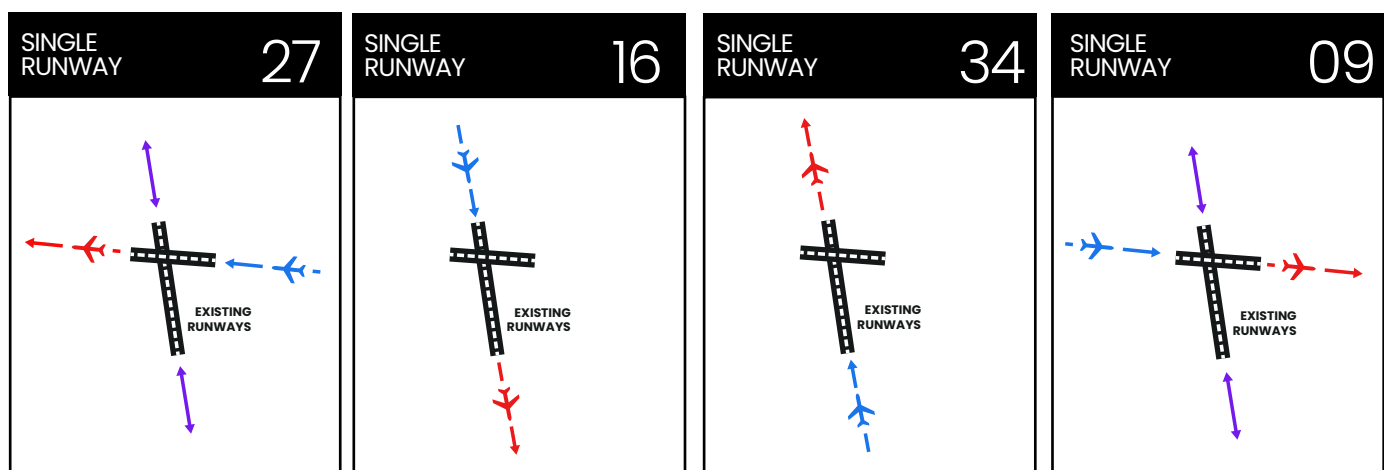
Melbourne Airport currently uses a combination of eight core runway operating modes. These include modes that use both the east-west (Runway 09/27) runway and north-south (Runway 16/34) runways (called cross runway mode) or use single runways. The selection of runway operating modes is determined by weather conditions, flight demand and priority order, resulting in certain modes being used more frequently than others.

Cross runway operating modes



* High capacity mode will no longer be in use once third runway is operational

Single runway operating modes



Legend

- ← Arrivals
- Departures
- ← Larger aircraft that require the long runway

The Major Development Plan introduced new runway operating modes

The Major Development Plan for Melbourne Airport introduced seven new runway operating modes that will become available once the third runway is built.

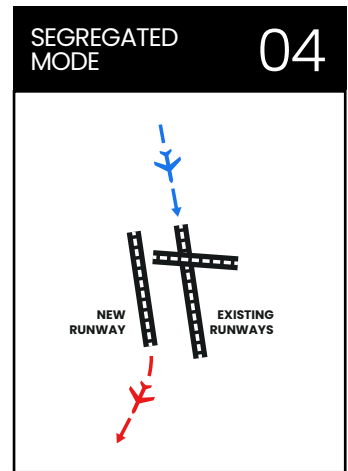
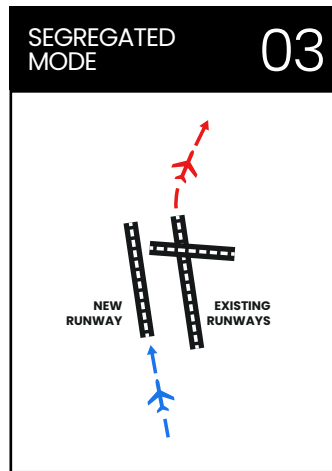
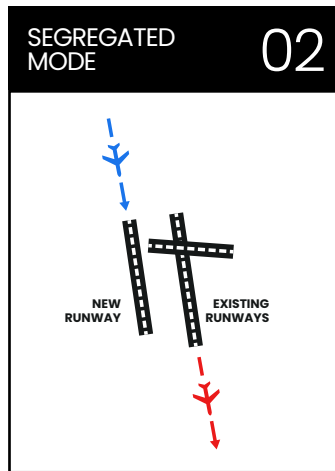
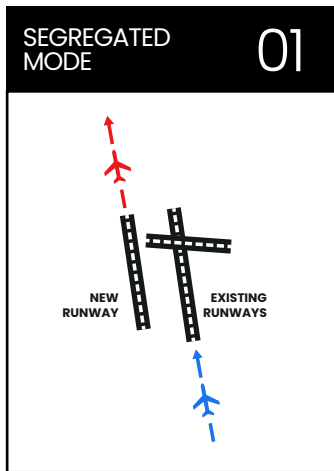
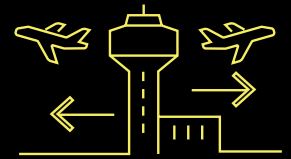
Since the high capacity mode will no longer be used when the third runway is operational, this will result in a total of 14 runway operating modes. Having more runway operating modes means the airport will have more opportunity to share aircraft noise across different parts of Melbourne, helping to provide greater periods of relief for local communities.

Segregated runway operating mode

Where one runway is used just for departures (take-offs). The other runway is used just for arrivals (landings).

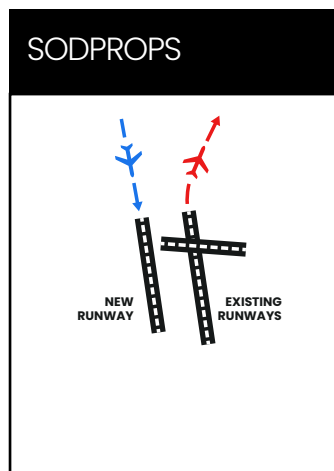
Runway Operating Modes

have increased from 8 to 14 to provide more noise sharing opportunities



SODPROPS

Simultaneous Opposite Direction Parallel Runway Operations

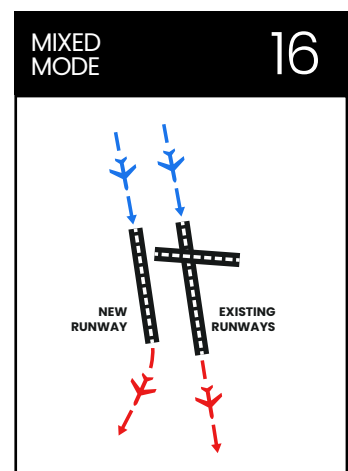
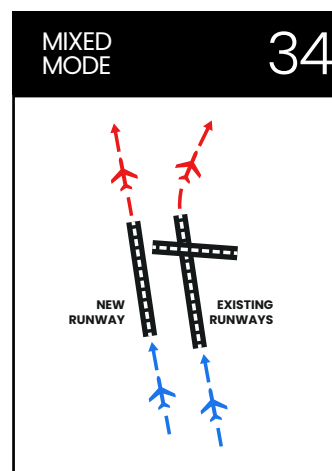


Where one runway is used for landings from the north, while the other runway is used for departures to the north at the same time.

At Melbourne Airport, this mode would be mainly used during quiet periods at night, when conditions allow.

Mixed runway operating mode

Both runways are used for arrivals and departures. This means planes can take off and land on either runway, rather than having one dedicated to each.



Noise sharing and runway operating modes

Outside of busy periods and when conditions allow, different runway operating modes may be used to manage the impact of aircraft noise on communities surrounding the airport, including providing communities with periods of relief from aircraft noise.

To develop the noise sharing plan, additional modes will be examined to help distribute noise more evenly during low demand. The outcome will be published in the Draft Noise Sharing Plan expected mid to late 2026.

Air traffic and noise sharing



Using runway operating modes to share noise

Deliberately alternating between runway operating modes outside of busy periods and when weather conditions allow, helps share aircraft noise:

- At certain times during the day
- On alternate days of the week
- Over a longer period of time, for example alternating runway modes on a week-by-week or month-by-month basis.

Further assessment work will need to be undertaken by Airservices Australia to determine operational feasibility of preferred mode alternation methods.

Noise sharing benefits of new runway operating modes

More modes mean more ways to share noise

Additional runway operating modes help manage aircraft noise. When demand and weather conditions allow, these give Air Traffic Controllers the flexibility to switch modes, so no single area gets all the aircraft noise.

More options help spread noise more equitably

The combination of existing runway operating modes and the additional modes introduced in the Major Development Plan offers more options. In the short term, the main runway operating modes will continue, providing consistency for local residents and airport operations. Over time, these new options will help share noise more widely, supporting the Noise Sharing Plan goals.

Alternating runway operating modes gives communities a break from noise

Alternating runway operating modes result in the use of different flight paths depending on the mode in use, to share aircraft noise across different areas. This approach helps Melbourne Airport balance its operational needs with the needs of the community.

Supporting growth

The proposed additional runway operating modes help Melbourne Airport to grow while also considering the impact on nearby communities. By combining smart planning with noise sharing, Melbourne Airport can grow responsibly.



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