

Melbourne Airport's third runway timeline

Melbourne Airport's third runway will deliver much-needed aviation infrastructure capacity for Victoria, increase choice for consumers and support thousands of new jobs. This fact sheet outlines the key phases of the third runway project.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2030	2031
Runway approved	- Early works begin - Community Health Study draft Terms of Reference submitted to Federal Government - Consultation for Noise Amelioration Plan commences - Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Plan consultation commences	- Draft Noise Amelioration Plan submitted to Federal Government - Draft Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Plan submitted to Federal Government - Main construction works begin	- Community Health Study due to begin (pending Ministerial approval) - Noise Amelioration Program implementation (pending Ministerial approval)	Operational readiness and testing of the third runway	Runway opens

Major Development Plan for Melbourne Airport's third runway project and public consultation (2022-2024)

Melbourne Airport prepared a Major Development Plan for the third runway project in accordance with the Airports Act (1996). This plan was available for public consultation for 104 days between February and May 2022, which included face-to-face and online community engagement and an interactive online noise tool. More than 2,000 written submissions were received in response.

The draft Major Development Plan was submitted to the Commonwealth Government in February 2023, along with a Supplementary Report outlining how Melbourne Airport considered and processed all submissions received.

The Commonwealth Government approved the Third Runway Major Development Plan with conditions in September 2024.

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Procurement and detailed project design (2024–2025)

Contractors are appointed for the various works. Ahead of the main construction phase, early works include:

- installing and upgrading airport access roads, particularly from Sunbury Road in the north
- continuing environmental monitoring programs and conducting additional investigations to inform project designs
- mobilising and setting up contractor compounds
- installing construction fencing
- clearing sites, establishing stockpile locations and setting up temporary worker facilities.

Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Design (2024–2029)

Melbourne Airport will work with Airservices Australia on detailing the future structure and use of airspace around Melbourne. This is a complex process due to the:

- introduction of parallel runway operations at Melbourne Airport requiring new flight paths and changes to existing flight paths
- close proximity of Essendon Airport and critical airspace interactions with Melbourne Airport
- interaction with flight path access to Moorabbin Airport, RAAF Base Point Cook and Avalon Airport.

A range of aviation industry partners and stakeholders will work together to design, analyse and agree on principles and objectives for Melbourne's future airspace. This includes prioritising noise sharing and lessening noise outside of peak periods, revising noise modelling, and consulting the community to balance Melbourne Airport's growth with community impacts.

Community consultation will be ongoing throughout the process of developing, designing and refining flight paths, with opportunities to provide feedback.

Development of Noise Amelioration Plan (2024–2026)

Melbourne Airport will facilitate a noise amelioration plan for residential dwellings and public buildings (childcare, healthcare and education facilities) most impacted by noise from the third runway.

This plan will be developed in consultation with local councils, communities, the Melbourne Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group and government.

Community Health Study (2024 and ongoing for 20-plus years)

Melbourne Airport appointed independent community health experts to develop the draft terms of reference for an independent, long-term study into the impacts of aircraft noise associated with the operation of the third runway.

The draft terms of reference were developed in consultation with the Melbourne Airport Community

Aviation Consultation Group and submitted to the Commonwealth Government for approval in September 2025.

An independent and suitably qualified community health expert/s will be appointed to carry out the study in line with the terms of reference over 20-plus years.

Commercial negotiations with airlines (from 2024)

Major airports take a long-term view to capital investment programs and work constructively with airlines to fund infrastructure projects.

Melbourne Airport is working with all major domestic and international airlines to negotiate commercial terms for the delivery of the third runway.

Construction (2026–2031)

Melbourne Airport will undertake major earthworks to level the site for the runway and taxiways.

Temporary changes will be required to some airfield operations during construction phases to allow for the installation of connecting taxiways and runway crossing points, as well as changes to the east-west runway.

Any changes to existing runway use that alter the way flight paths are used will be communicated to the community and other stakeholders before they occur, as some communities will experience an increase or decrease in aircraft noise over the course of the project.

Eastern Extension Project

Construction of the third runway requires that the existing east-west runway is shortened at its western end by 346 metres. This shortening will be offset by an equivalent

extension at the runway's eastern end, through the Eastern Extension Project. This project will be governed by its own Major Development Plan process and approval.

Operational readiness of the third runway

Thorough preparation and technical testing of infrastructure, technology, systems and operational frameworks is required before the new runway can open.

This includes working with industry partners to commission the runway and associated changes to operations and airspace.

The size and complexity of the third runway project requires extensive testing and certification to ensure it is ready to use.

Opening of the third runway (2031)

The third runway is expected to open in 2031.

Post-opening reviews and completion (2031+)

Following the opening of the third runway, some works will continue to complete the project.

Post-implementation reviews will evaluate the success of the project and opportunities for improvement.

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