

Chapter D4

Social Impact



Summary of key findings:

The social impacts of Melbourne's Airport's Third Runway (M3R) will vary for different people and communities and may change over time. Although the project will deliver significant economic benefits and positive social outcomes, these will not be directly or evenly shared by all individuals across the community.

Commissioning of the third runway is forecast to provide a \$4.6 billion boost to Victoria's economy by 2046, with the creation of 3,200 jobs on-site and another 37,000 state-wide.

Some of the negative impacts of the airport's operation, such as aircraft noise, will decrease in some areas and increase in others. Modelling has identified a substantial number of homes that will be newly affected by aircraft noise, but also a substantial (although smaller) number that will experience less noise.

The degree of impact experienced, both positive and negative, will depend heavily on individual circumstances. Generally, those to the east and west will see and hear reduced impacts from the airport while those to the north and south will experience increased impacts.

Although the negative effects of M3R will not be shared evenly between communities, the parallel runways do provide greater flexibility by allowing the use of alternative flight paths that can distribute aircraft noise differently. Even without the new runway there would still be a significant increase in aircraft noise as the airport approaches capacity, but with virtually no flexibility in how that noise could be managed.

Night-time noise for those homes and properties that are currently impacted would likely be reduced by utilising the increased capacity for flexible operating modes enabled by the third runway. However, there will also be some homes that are newly affected by aircraft noise at night. The options available for alternative flight paths provide distinctly different possible noise outcomes and Melbourne Airport will consider input from community consultation when determining the preferred option.

On opening of the new runway there will be no immediate increase in the number of aircraft using the airport. However, a significant portion of the existing traffic will be shifted away from those affected by the current east/west runway to those north and south of the airport. Those newly affected will be much more likely to notice the negative impacts than those likely to benefit from the decrease in aircraft noise.

The No Build scenario would also result in some negative social impacts caused by the growth in air traffic reaching the capacity limits of the current two runways. There would be increased impacts from delays, resulting in additional noise, emissions and significant economic cost. The No Build scenario also denies the opportunity to implement beneficial noise-mitigation modes of operation such as the Simultaneous Opposite Direction Parallel Runway Operations (SODPROPS), which seeks to direct all arriving and departing traffic over the northern "green wedge" at times of low traffic (between 11am and 6pm) in amenable weather conditions.