



Master Plan Amendments - Guidelines

Airports Act 1996

s71(2)(ga)

s71(2)(gb)

s71(2)(gc)

s71(2)(h)

s71(3)(ga)

s71(3)(gb)

s71(3)(gc)

s71(3)(h)



INTRODUCTION

An airport master plan is the principle blueprint for the future coordinated development of the airport and should establish the strategic vision for the economic and efficient use of the airport over the planning period. In December 2010 amendments to the *Airports Act 1996* (the Act) that were foreshadowed in the December 2009 National Aviation Policy White Paper came into force. These amendments strengthen the requirements of airport master plans.

The Government recognises that airport lessee companies are now well experienced in drafting master plans and that the basic concepts and requirements for master plans are well established and understood by airport lessee companies. Most airports have now been through three master plan cycles under the Act requirements.

These guidelines have been drafted to assist airport lessee companies in addressing the new requirements for a master plan in accordance with the amendments to the Act. They outline the objectives of the master plan amendments and explain how the changes to airport master planning complement other airport planning initiatives and legislative requirements stemming from the National Aviation Policy White Paper. These guidelines relate only to the implementation of subsections 71(2)(ga); 71(2)(gb); 71(2)(gc); 71(2)(h); 71(3)(ga); 71(3)(gb); 71(3)(gc); and 71(3)(h) of the *Airports Act 1996* (the Act).

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are designed to provide operators of the leased federal airports (including joint user airports) with guidance on meeting the requirements of the Airports Act for master plans, particularly in relation to the following:

- a ground transport plan;
- more detailed information on proposed developments for the next 5-year cycle;
- analysis of 'fit' with planning schemes adjacent to the airport; and
- incorporation of an environment strategy.

Given the diversity in size and operation of leased federal airports, the level of detail required to address the requirements for a master plan will vary. A judgement will need to be made about the level of detail required, taking into consideration the scale of activity at the airport, local and regional circumstances, and the extent to which airport activity affects the community.

Airport lessee companies are advised to commence the master planning process and consultation early. This should include consultation with agencies that provide specialised input or advice into the master planning process such as the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), Airservices Australia (Airservices) and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC). Early commencement will provide for a reasonable time for any issues arising during consultation to be addressed and ensure the master plan is submitted within the timeframe required by the statutory provisions of the Act.

The key objectives for the amendments include:

- facilitating integration between on- and off-airport networks and planning;
- providing greater clarity for the community and airport stakeholders around development and operation intentions;
- greater alignment between the environment strategy and airport planning; and
- complementing the Government's initiative to enhance engagement between the leased federal airports and relevant stakeholders.

The amendments also support the existing role of a master plan as set out in s70(2) of the Act, that is:

- establishing a strategic direction for the airport;
- providing for the development of the airport site;
- indicating to the public the intended uses of the site;
- reducing potential conflicts between uses of the site; and
- ensuring that uses of the site are compatible with areas surrounding the airport.

CONSULTATION

Leased federal airports are required to undertake regular and ongoing consultation with airport users, state/territory governments, local authorities, and the community to improve information sharing and strengthen planning and development outcomes.

The Government expects that airport lessee companies will engage with state/territory governments and local authorities in determining future planning. This engagement is fundamental to the successful long-term development of the airport.

Airport lessee companies are responsible for facilitating and managing consultations in relation to activities on airport land and the requirements of the regulatory framework. The Government expects that airport consultation groups such as the Community Aviation Consultation Groups and Planning Coordination Forums will provide a useful forum for discussion on proposed developments on the airport site and any likely community impacts. The Community Aviation Consultation Group in particular is one mechanism that can be used to engage with the community on airport planning, operations and related issues, such as aircraft noise during the master plan process and an ongoing basis. However, Community Aviation Consultation Groups and Planning Coordination Forums do not have a formal role in the master plan process and do not replace broader public consultation as required in the regulatory framework.

GROUND TRANSPORT PLAN

Sections 71(2)(ga) and 71(3)(ga) of the Act provides that a ground transport plan should include details of :

- a road network plan; and

- facilities for moving people (including passengers, employees and other airport users) and freight at the airport (these facilities would include the airport's road infrastructure, road connections, car parking facilities, public transport services, and facilities for taxis and private coach or shuttle services); and
- linkages between the road network and public transport system at the airport and the road network and public transport system outside the airport; and
- the arrangements for working with State or local authorities or other bodies responsible for the road network and ground transport system ('Other bodies' may include private companies operating public transport services connecting the airport to off-airport transport system); and
- the capacity of the ground transport system to support airport operations and other airport activities; and
- the likely effect of the proposed developments set out in the master plan on the ground transport system and traffic flows at and surrounding the airport.

The ground transport plan is to outline how it is proposed to maximise the efficient movement of people (employees, passengers and other airport users) and freight at the airport over the next five years.

The discussion in a ground transport plan might include:

- the rationale for the plan,
- any changes to previous ground transport plans and the rationale for these changes;
- the airport's vision for the development of the network over time;
- and an explanation of how the elements of the plan work together in an overall strategy.

The ground transport plan should be prepared with regard to the airport's development proposals and in particular should address any transport network upgrades or changes required to meet the pattern of developments proposed over the next five years.

The primary focus of the ground transport plan is on the network and facilities on the airport site, but the plan must also indicate how these link with the network and facilities outside the airport. The plan must also demonstrate the airport's arrangements for working with relevant state or local authorities. This does not require the airport to take on any responsibilities in relation to funding or undertaking any work outside the airport, but should provide the basis for coordinated planning for the work necessary to address the needs of both the airport and the surrounding areas.

Schematic maps and diagrams will be important to illustrate the future ground transport plan for the airport.

The extent of the analysis and description expected in a ground transport plan will depend on the scale of activity at the airport and its implications for the transport network. A major airport with high numbers of passenger movements and freight activity will clearly have more extensive impacts and generate greater challenges for transport planning than a secondary airport with predominantly

general aviation uses. Even at the secondary airports however, other commercial developments on the airport may have transport implications.

Airports should work with state/territory authorities to ascertain the best information that can be provided in the master plan about proposals for future development of the transport network around the airport. If there is no agreement from the state/territory authorities to provide more updated information, the airport would be expected to work from documents already in the public domain. Airport consultation groups such as the Planning Coordination Forums and to a lesser extent, Community Aviation Consultation Groups, are a mechanism for airports and state/territory representatives to discuss ground transport issues and on-and-off airport networks.

GREATER DETAIL ON DEVELOPMENTS

Subsection 71(2)(gb) of the Act requires the inclusion of detailed information in relation to proposed developments not related to airport services for the first five years of a master plan. Subsection 71(2)(gc) requires the inclusion of information about the likely effect of the developments proposed in the master plan on employment levels at the airport, the local and regional economy and the community. These provisions have been introduced to give the community a better basis to assess and respond to the proposed master plan.

Other sections of the master plan address a 20-year planning horizon. It is accepted that the airport will not be able to give a clear forecast of the scale nature and timing of development over that period. In the absence of some clear indication of proposed development however, it would be difficult for the community to make informed responses to the master plan. It is more realistic to expect the airport to set out with some clarity the development it proposes for the next five years. The picture of proposed development can then be updated in accordance with the normal five-year cycle for master planning.

To meet the requirements, it may be useful for the airport to set out plans for each precinct to be used for non-aviation purposes.

The precinct plan could for example include:

- an indication of the nature of key developments for the precinct;
- any supporting developments, including parking and other developments to support employees such as childcare, recreational, and food and beverage facilities;
- the scale of proposed development;
- and the number of employees or customers who would be expected to attend the precinct.

If necessary, an upper envelope might be described for the scale of development, employees and visitors. It may also be useful to set out a range of uses that would not be permitted in the precinct eg major retail. This sort of information would allow the community and stakeholders to make a more informed assessment of the impacts of the proposed development and its alignment with planning for the surrounding areas. It may also assist in future consideration of whether an MDP

would be required for developments likely to have a significant impact on the local or regional community.

Individual airports will need to determine the appropriate level of detail required to address the requirements, taking into consideration the scale of the activity at the airport, local and regional circumstances, and the extent to which airport activity affects the community. The extent of detail provided under this subsection may also be relevant to the Minister's consideration of a request under subsection 92(2B)(b) of the Act to shorten the consultation period for a major development plan.

ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

Section 71(2)(h) of the Act outlines the detail required in an environment strategy. It is crucial that airport lessee companies take account of the environmental values of the site and their environmental responsibilities under their lease agreement with the Commonwealth in planning for land uses in the airport master plan.

The Act requires that the airport lessee company provide an assessment of the environmental issues associated with implementing the master plan and its plan for dealing with those environmental issues (s71(2)(g)). This is expected to be a higher level assessment and discussion for the life of the master plan, leaving the specific detail to the contents of the environment strategy.

The environment strategy should be incorporated into the master plan as an annexed document. This will allow for the environment strategy to be provided to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities for comment.

The environment strategy should set identifiable and measurable goals for the first 5 years of the master plan and outline how these goals will be measured. The Department assesses progress with the implementation of the airport environment strategies through annual environment reports provided to the Secretary by airport lessee companies.

CONTACT DETAILS

For further information on these guidelines, or other issues relating to the leased federal airports, please contact the Airports Branch, Department of Infrastructure and Transport on (02) 6274 7111 or www.infrastructure.gov.au. The Department encourages airport lessee companies to contact the Department to seek review and comment on an exposure draft of the draft master plan.