



## PLANNING SCHEME

# Information sheet

### Airport Environs

This information sheet provides information to raise awareness and to assist the reader in their understanding of:

- what strategic airports are and why they are important;
- how the planning scheme identifies strategic airports; and
- planning and development considerations in the vicinity of strategic airports.

#### What are Strategic Airports and why is their protection important?

A Strategic Airport is an airport that is considered to be essential to the national and state air transport network or the national defence system. Not all airports are Strategic Airports. Strategic Airports have a key role in the economy through tourism, trade, logistics, and business via the movement of people and freight.

#### Is the identification and protection of Strategic Airports a new planning requirement?

No. The Livingstone Shire Planning Scheme 2005 has regulated development in proximity to airports since October 2005. It is recognised as a state planning policy and is required to be expressed in local government planning schemes.

#### How does the planning scheme consider matters associated with Strategic Airports?

The Rockhampton airport, although physically located within the local government area of Rockhampton Regional Council, is identified by the State of Queensland as a Strategic Airport. As an adjoining local government area, Livingstone Shire Council must consider potential development impacts on this facility and its operations in the new planning scheme.

The planning scheme recognises the need to protect the Rockhampton airport from inappropriate development. It does this via the regulation of development in specific circumstances if it is located in an area affected by one of the various airport environs overlays used in the planning scheme.

The Airport Environs overlay maps contained in Schedule 2 of the planning scheme include the following overlays:

- Australian Noise Exposure Forecast overlay;
- Lighting area overlay;
- Wildlife hazard buffer zone overlay;
- Light restriction zone overlay; and
- Obstacle limitation surface overlay.

## What is the purpose of the Australian Noise Exposure Forecast overlay?

Aircraft noise can cause high levels of annoyance due to its tone, pitch and repetitiveness, aircraft operations can be constrained (particularly the potential for future expansion) due to public complaints. It is important that the development of sensitive land use in the vicinity of airports is appropriately managed.

The Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF) is a system which is used as the primary measure of aircraft noise exposure levels (measured in decibels) in the vicinity of airports. The ANEF system is used to assist with regulating development in the vicinity of airports. This helps to minimise potential land use conflict that might arise due to noise.

The ANEF system assists with the following:

- delineating where and what type of development can take place in proximity to airports (via development assessment processes);
- determining which buildings must be designed to meet the Australian Standards AS2021 Acoustics Aircraft Noise Intrusion – Building Siting and Construction;
- providing information to the public on noise exposure patterns in proximity to airports.

ANEF contours are mapped and included in the planning scheme as overlays. These overlays may trigger specific types of development for assessment.



Figure 1: Example ANEF overlay

## Operational airspace

Airports need airspace around them to enable aircraft to take off, land, or manoeuvre safely and efficiently. This airspace is termed operational airspace. It is very important that operational airspace remains clear of any obstacles or activities that could distract or interfere with the operation of aircraft.

Livingstone planning scheme measures used to protect operational airspace include overlays associated with the following:

- light restriction zones;
- wildlife hazard buffer zones; and
- obstacle limitation surfaces.

## What is the purpose of light restriction zone overlays?

Pilots are reliant on the specific patterns of aeronautical ground lights (that is, runway lights and approach lights) to safely approach and land aircraft during night time and during weather events where visibility can be limited. It is therefore important that lighting associated with development in the vicinity of airports is configured in a manner which does not have adverse effects on operational airspace by causing confusion, distractions, or interference to pilots. Lighting restriction zones are included in the planning scheme as an overlay on the distance to runway overlays map. Specific development may trigger a development application in areas affected by the wildlife hazard buffers.

## What is the purpose of wildlife hazard buffers?

Wildlife on or around an airport should be regarded as a potential hazard to aircraft safety. Most wildlife strikes occur on land in the vicinity of airports, where aircraft fly at lower elevations. Of particular concern are flying vertebrates such as birds or bats. The risk of a wildlife strike by an aircraft is relative to the level and form of wildlife activity within and surrounding airports.

Specific land uses can also attract wildlife which then migrates onto the airport or across flight paths, increasing the risk of strikes. It is important that the introduction of land use which is likely to attract hazardous wildlife is avoided or that risks are mitigated and continually managed. Wildlife hazard buffer zones are included in the planning scheme as an overlay on the distance to runway overlays map. Specific development may trigger a development application in areas affected by the wildlife hazard buffer zones.

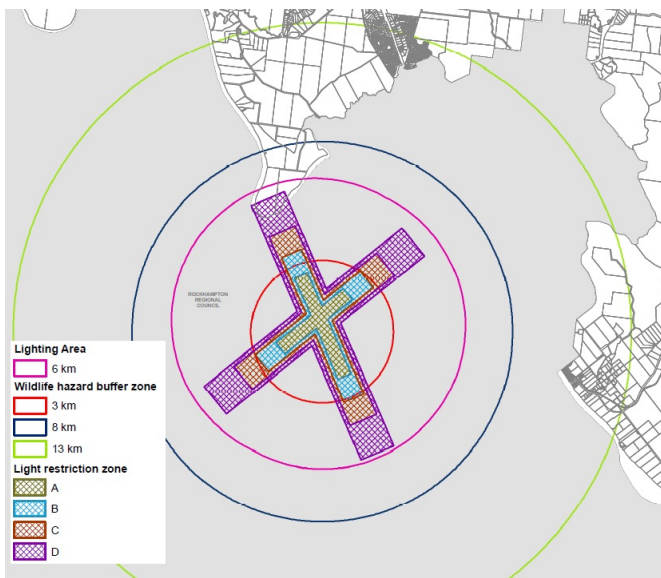


Figure 2: Example of distance to runway overlays (includes lighting restriction zones and wildlife hazard buffer zones)

### What is the purpose of the obstacle limitation surface overlays?

The obstacle limitation surface (OLS) for an airport is a surface which defines the operational airspace that should be kept free of obstacles for aircraft operations. Potential obstacles could be a result of temporary or permanent emissions (e.g., high velocity gaseous plumes or airborne particulates) or physical objects (e.g., buildings or structures).

The OLS is included in the planning scheme as an overlay. In the planning scheme there are specific circumstances where development that enters into the operational airspace (development and associated activities above the mapped OLS contour levels) may require a development application.

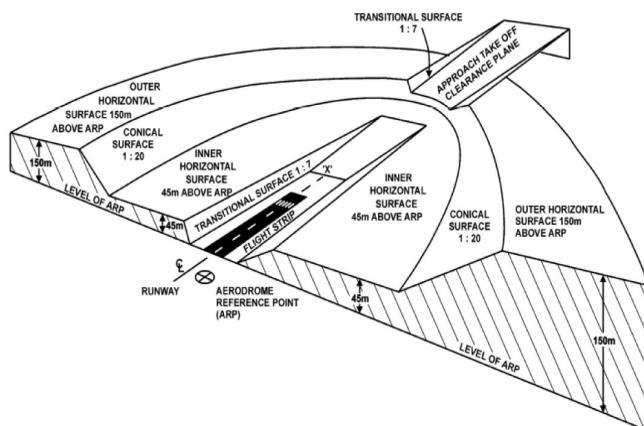


Figure 3: Example isometric view of obstacle limitation surfaces

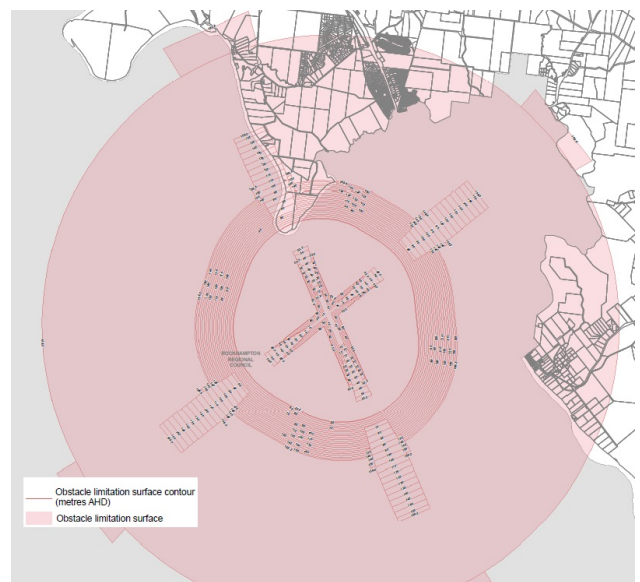


Figure 4: Example of obstacle limitation surface overlays

The aim of requiring a development application for specific development which enters operational airspace is to ensure that obstacles that encroach into OLS airspace can be identified and assessed by the assessment manager with assistance from the relevant airport manager, CASA and/or Airservices Australia for their potential impact upon the safety and efficiency of airport operations. The assessment will determine whether the encroachment is permissible and if so, whether any risk mitigation requirements (e.g. lighting) need to be imposed to protect operational safety.

### What happens if a lot is affected by an airport environs overlay?

Having an overlay situated over a lot may or may not trigger a development assessment under the planning scheme. The overlay maps are to be used in conjunction with the Tables of Assessment contained within Part 5 of the planning scheme. The Tables of Assessment determines the circumstances whether or not an overlay applies, the categories of development and assessment for development if the lot is affected by an overlay, and also the assessment benchmarks to be used for any development assessment. If a development application is required under Part 5 of the planning scheme as a result of an overlay, in most instances the Airport Environs Overlay Code will be triggered as an assessment benchmark.

### What happens if development is not consistent with the airport environs overlay code?

A development proposal that is assessed as not complying with the Airport Environs overlay code means that Council can refuse the development proposal or impose conditions if it is considered that the conditions will be suitable for ensuring that the development can comply with the Overlay Code. There will likely be instances where Council will refer development applications to the airport manager and other relevant authorities for their assessment of the potential impacts of development and its suitability.

*Disclaimer: The content of this information sheet is a summary and has been prepared to assist the reader to understand the Planning Scheme. This advice given does not bind or fetter the Council in any way in exercising its statutory responsibilities in assessing any development application which might be made to the Council. Please refer to the full Livingstone Planning Scheme 2018 document on Council's website for further detail.*