



8 May 2009

Ms Kathy Aves
Canberra Airport
2 Brindabella Circuit
Brindabella Business Park ACT 2609

Dear Ms Aves,

Canberra Airport 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan

Qantas welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Canberra Airport 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan (the draft Master Plan). There are a number of critical challenges and decisions to be made at Canberra airport in the coming years and it is important that these issues are addressed and discussed. The draft Master Plan provides an excellent opportunity to discuss the major planning decisions that will arise in the next 20 years.

Qantas' detailed comments and feedback on the draft Master Plan are set out in the attached document. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues in greater detail with Canberra Airport at a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely

Rob Sharp
Head of Global Airport
Infrastructure & Services

Canberra Airport Master Plan – Preliminary Draft February 2009

Qantas Response

Introduction

Canberra Airport is the gateway to the National Capital catering for a significant volume of business travel and a growing leisure market. Canberra is, and will remain, a key Qantas route. It is critical to Qantas and Australia that Canberra Airport efficiently and effectively optimises available resources to handle predicted future passenger and freight growth. Careful planning is the key element in ensuring that this outcome is achieved.

Qantas welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Canberra Airport Master Plan - Preliminary Draft February 2009 (the draft Master Plan).

Qantas' comments on the proposed development strategy in the draft Master Plan are subject to the need for further detailed information being provided on the staging of the proposed development elements. In the absence of detailed staging plans many of the comments on the appropriateness of proposed developments are necessarily general.

In particular, Qantas is keen to ensure that there is an integrated plan for the development of the airfield, the terminals and the road systems. This will ensure an efficient use of capital and will prevent any one element becoming an operational and/or customer bottleneck as the demand on the facilities grows.

Draft Master Plan Assumptions

Qantas has reviewed the passenger growth assumptions and the aircraft movement assumptions that underpin the draft Master plan. In general terms Qantas agrees with the level of growth in passenger numbers and aircraft movements. This growth will necessitate careful planning to ensure that the appropriate aeronautical terminal and airfield services are available to facilitate this growth as and when they are required.

The draft Master Plan correctly makes the assumption that the mix of aircraft utilising the terminal will change with up-gauging of aircraft occurring. However, there is no further detail of the numbers of larger aircraft that it is assumed will be using the airport over the period of the draft Master Plan. Larger aircraft have the benefit of being able to transport higher passenger numbers and thereby increase the capacity of the airport. However, larger aircraft require significantly more airfield and terminal infrastructure. The assumptions surrounding aircraft mix are critical to ensure sufficient and appropriate infrastructure is available. If the planning assumptions are incorrect this will limit the ability of Canberra Airport to meet passenger demand forecasts and would also drive the need for adjustments in terminal design and airfield planning.

The construction of the new multi user terminal will be an important step in ensuring long term passenger and aircraft needs are adequately addressed and Qantas is working closely with Canberra Airport to ensure this is achieved.

Aircraft parking positions and gates

It is imperative that the timing of airfield infrastructure planning deliver sufficient apron space and terminal infrastructure when required to provide some buffer to the increased airfield and apron congestion. Construction of non-active positions should be ahead of demand so that pressure can be taken away from the terminals. As airspace traffic increases, further apron will be required for holding aircraft awaiting a departure slot or for a gate or position in order to reduce queuing on taxiways and other congested areas.

Qantas strongly supports the need for and immediate construction of the proposed additional three aircraft parking positions.

Airfield works

Qantas will work closely with Canberra Airport to ensure appropriate airfield infrastructure and technology are available as and when required. Due to the significant cost of additional airfield infrastructure it is critical that current infrastructure is efficiently used and maximised prior to the construction of new infrastructure.

Qantas does not foresee that there will be a need to further lengthen runway 17/35 within the timeframe of the 2009 Master Plan. The current length of the runway enables RPT passenger operations to safely operate. Based upon the likely aircraft mix operating to Canberra it is unlikely that a longer runway would be required.

Enhancement of navigational aids and flight procedures

Qantas supports the introduction of new technologies and improved navigational aids and flight procedures. Qantas supports the introduction of Required Navigational Performance (RNP) technology which provides both operational and environmental benefits. The introduction of technology to improve the ability of the airfield to cope with adverse weather and visibility conditions is also vitally important.

Qantas also considers it is prudent to review the Instrument Landing Surface (ILS) and placement of the runway threshold for Runway 35 to ensure that lower visibility operations can be more readily facilitated and that the full length of the runway can be utilised for takeoff and landing. However, in reviewing any such changes close discussion with airlines on the cost, timing and staging of new infrastructure and technological changes is imperative as many of these technologies require complimentary technology to be implemented in aircraft.

On and Off Airport Transport

The facilitation of passengers to and from the airport is paramount to the ability of the airport to meet projected passenger demands. The current road transport network is at times constrained and congested. The road works currently underway to improve access to Fairbairn Avenue and Pialligo Avenue, and the road works associated with the new terminal should significantly improve access to the airport. Qantas would support ongoing reviews of the road network and transit times to the airport following the completion of these works to ensure efficient road access to the airport is available.

Engineering facilities

Qantas maintains a significant engineering presence at Canberra airport and performs regular maintenance on Qantas and Qantaslink aircraft. Qantas intends to continue this engineering commitment into the future and the provisioning of appropriate engineering facilities in proximity to the terminal is an important planning parameter for the future.

Freight operations

Qantas maintains a significant freight operation in Canberra. The current terminal works will necessitate the demolition of the current Australian Air Express freight facility. A new dedicated freight facility is being constructed to ensure that efficient airfreight services are available to support the local Canberra and NSW communities.

Curfew free status

Qantas has no plans currently to make significant changes to its schedule or hours of operation for RPT flights to and from Canberra. Notwithstanding that, the curfew free status of the airport is critical to ensure that overnight freight services can continue to run efficiently back of clock. It is also essential as Qantas uses Canberra Airport as an alternate destination for international passenger and freight services in the event that the destination port is unavailable. Such diversions can occur outside Qantas' ordinary operating hours in Canberra and this flexibility is very important from an operational and safety perspective.

Aircraft noise

Qantas has for many years worked closely with the local Canberra and Queanbeyan communities to deliver substantial aircraft noise abatement solutions; some of which directed traffic away from existing residential areas in Queanbeyan towards vacant rural areas. In addition, Qantas continues to invest significantly in new generation aircraft. These new aircraft are substantially quieter than many current operating aircraft.

The proposed residential development at Tralee will have implications not only for the residents living under these flight paths, but also for thousands of other residents in Canberra's southern suburbs who over time will be subject to aircraft noise as noise sharing is necessitated. This land on which the development is proposed is the last remaining rural corridor to the south the airport. Any urban development on this land would not be prudent from an aircraft noise or aviation safety perspective. If the imposition of noise related restrictions were to arise as a result of poor planning decisions it would be unreasonable to expect airlines and airports to bear the increased operating costs that would arise.

Avoiding unsuitable land uses around Canberra Airport is also fundamental in ensuring that the Canberra airport can continue to operate curfew free. The Federal Government has recently expressed a desire in the National Aviation Policy Green Paper to preserve the curfew free status of those airports currently operating without such restrictions. To have a curfew or other restrictions imposed on Canberra Airport's operations would be detrimental to the local economy and the Canberra region and inconsistent with the National Aviation Policy strategy.