



# Communication and consultation protocol

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Airservices Australia is committed to open and timely communication with our stakeholders and the community as outlined in this protocol.



## Foreword

Airservices Australia is responsible for more than 11 per cent of the world's airspace. Each year we provide civil air navigation services and aviation rescue and fire fighting services to more than three million flights carrying over 75 million passengers. We provide safe, efficient and environmentally responsible services to the aviation industry Australian community.

We recognise that the way we carry out activities is as important as what we do. Our success is reliant on how well we engage with stakeholders and understand the impact that our activities, and those of the aviation industry, may have on local communities.

We aim to minimise these impacts while ensuring we can provide the critical infrastructure required to support social and economic growth at a regional and national level.

We are committed to providing information to stakeholders and the community on significant changes that may affect them, and to incorporating feedback into our planning, decision-making and implementation processes.

This document outlines our approach to engagement with stakeholders, the value we place on it and the various consultation methods that we employ.

The communication and consultation protocol is not a static document. It is subject to regular review on the basis of our experience in implementing changes and in developing projects.



**Greg Russell**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Airservices Australia**

**18 August 2011**



## Purpose

This protocol describes our communication approach and various consultation methods. It provides a framework for engagement with the community.

The Government's Aviation White Paper 'Flight Path to the Future' released in December 2009, announced initiatives to improve transparency and the flow of information to the community. This included the creation of an Aircraft Noise Ombudsman and the establishment of Community Aviation Consultation Groups (CACGs) at many major airports.

The effective management of our services and delivery of our infrastructure program, including flight path design and the impact of aircraft noise, is a partnership with a number of stakeholders:

- aircraft operators, including airlines
- airport owners and operators
- federal, state and local governments
- communities around airports which may be impacted by infrastructure, aircraft noise or emissions
- state and local planning authorities who determine land use around existing airports.

The primary duty of Airservices is to ensure the safety of aircraft and passengers. We endeavour to achieve this while balancing cost, efficiency, noise and aircraft environmental emissions. We must also consider the impact of our operations on stakeholders and the community.





## When we consult

Airservices is committed to open and timely communication and consultation. Typically, we engage with the community in relation to a range of issues:

- our infrastructure projects
- our services (air traffic control and aviation rescue and fire fighting)
- our fees and charges
- flight path changes, particularly if residents are newly overflown
- airspace design
- managing and responding to safety and environmental issues.

Different forms of communication may be required depending on the type of change proposed. In some cases, such as changes to existing flight paths or in the development process of a major infrastructure project, we may need to consult widely. In other cases, more direct consultation with a focussed set of stakeholders may be required.

We seek to provide interested parties with the opportunity to learn and understand how a change may impact them, why it is necessary and to provide an opportunity for feedback.

We commit to:

- listen to stakeholders (including the community),
- acknowledge and consider feedback
- communicate decisions made and the reasons for them.

## Our obligations

Our legislative accountabilities are expressed in section 9 (2) of the Air Services Act 1995. This states the organisation is obliged to "... exercise its powers and perform its functions in a manner that ensures that, as far as is practicable, the environment is protected from... the effects of the operation and use of aircraft."

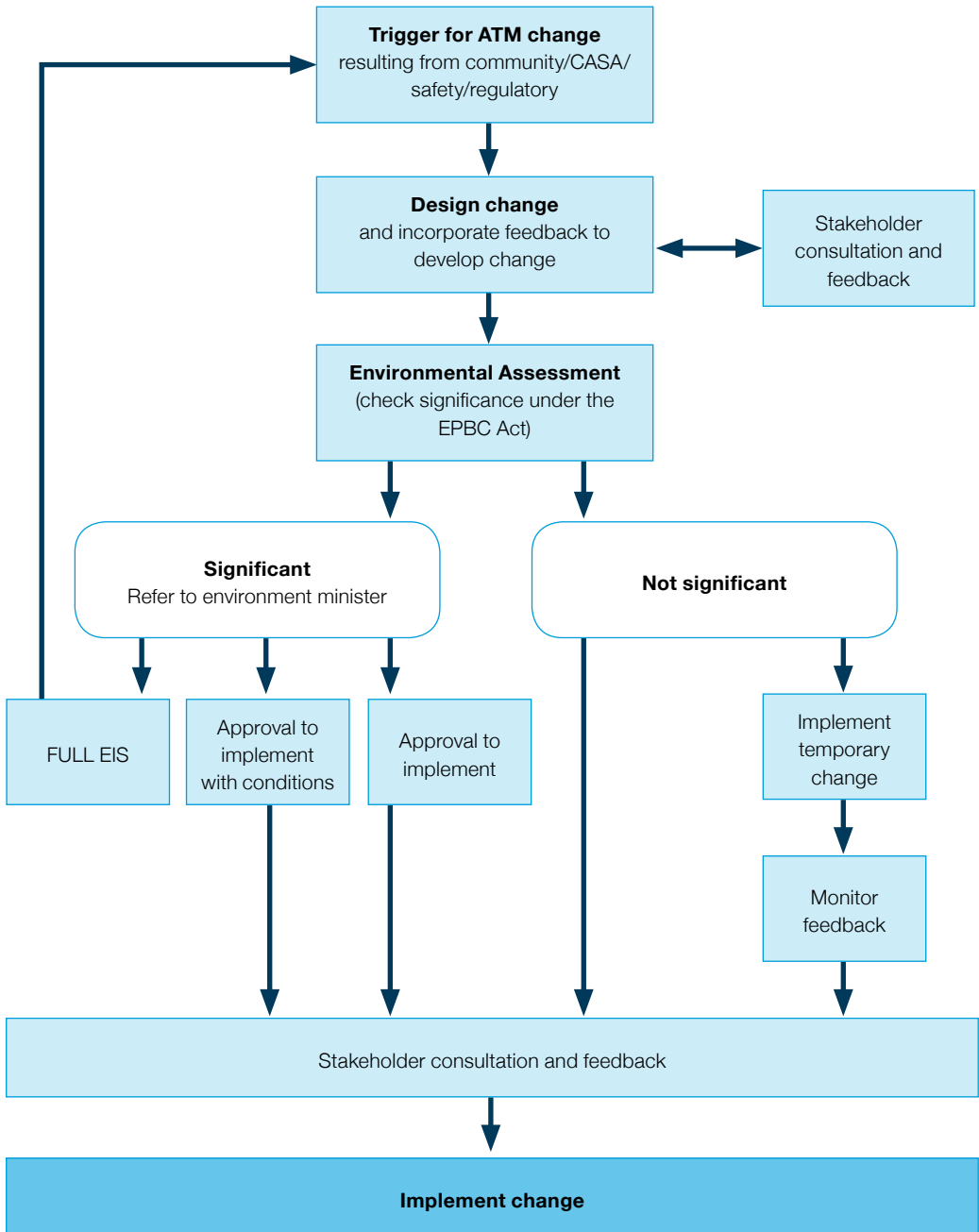
Section 10 further states that: "Airservices must, where appropriate, consult with government, commercial, industrial, consumer and other relevant bodies and organisations (including the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and bodies representing the aviation industry)."

Flight route changes or infrastructure projects with immediate safety implications, or those undertaken for national defence or security reasons, may be exempt from these provisions.

However, Airservices accepts a responsibility to inform the community of the reasons for such changes or projects wherever possible, and to provide an opportunity for feedback on their impact.

As shown in Figure 1, air traffic management operational changes are assessed using Airservices Environmental Principles and Procedures for Minimising Aircraft Noise ([www.airservicesaustralia.com/environment/noise](http://www.airservicesaustralia.com/environment/noise)). The assessment tests the proposal against 12 principles. Any intended change is classified as 'significant' or 'not significant'. A change considered 'significant' is referred to the Minister for the Environment as set out in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 section 160(2)(c). This requires Airservices to consider the advice from the Environment Minister before authorising the adoption or implementation of a plan for aviation airspace management.

**Figure 1 – Air Traffic Management Operational Change**





## How we consult

Airservices adopts a wide range of consultation tools and processes based on individual situations and operational need. Our consultation may range from one-way communication (for example, notification of a change via Public Notices in newspapers or direct mail to residents) through to more comprehensive, interactive discussions and participation by stakeholders in the project planning and design process.

Typically, for significant changes or major projects, we will develop a Stakeholder Identification and Communication Plan to guide how we will:

- set the scope for the consultation process
- identify key stakeholders involved
- inform stakeholders, including the community
- provide an opportunity for further information to be obtained
- make information accessible and easily understood
- invite feedback
- consider feedback before making a final decision
- communicate our decisions to stakeholders and the community affected.

Whatever method is used, consultation will be undertaken in a transparent and accessible manner.

Objectives will be clearly stated so that stakeholders understand the scope and aims of the process, how to get involved, and how their feedback will be considered.

The methods of consultation used will be appropriate and proportional to the change being proposed or project being undertaken, the

number of stakeholders involved and the available time and resources.

Consultation will generally be tailored using some or all of the following methods:

**Method 1:** Stakeholder briefings and/or correspondence

Depending on the type of project or change proposed, Airservices conducts industry briefings and makes direct contact with key industry stakeholders such as airlines, airports, Commonwealth, state and/ or territory government agencies, councils and local members, and Federal ministers, members of parliament and senators.

**Method 2:** Community Aviation Consultation Groups (CACG)

As outlined in the Government's Aviation Policy White Paper, all major airports are in the process of establishing Community Aviation Consultation Groups (CACG). The groups address planning and development issues as well as operational matters such as aircraft noise which may affect airport relations with their neighbours. They also provide an opportunity for communication and consultation, although they may not be public forums.

Airservices is represented at each of the CACGs. We will provide information to, and seek feedback from the groups on issues of interest. Community input to the CACG process may occur via each group's dedicated community representative or by attending in person if the CACG is a public meeting.

**Method 3:** Information on Airservices website

We make available on our website information in a form that is easy to understand and addresses the nature of the change or project to be undertaken. Information on how to provide feedback is also included.

**Method 4:** Press advertising and media releases

Advertisements in local and/or national newspapers may be arranged to advise the community about a change or project affecting their area. The advertisements advise where to obtain more information and how to provide feedback (generally via our website).

Airservices also issues media releases announcing major changes or projects.

**Method 5:** Direct mail to residents

Airservices and other key stakeholders, such as an individual airport or airline, may write to residents directly affected to outline the nature and scope of the proposed changes or project. Residents will be invited to provide feedback.

**Method 6:** Information kit

An information kit may be developed and made available to the media and/or community including:

- reason for the change or project
- a fact sheet outlining the change or project
- frequently asked questions
- maps or images as required
- information on feedback processes.

**Method 7:** Face-to-face communication

In the case of significant changes or a major project, Airservices may seek to engage the community face-to-face in an information session or other discussion. This could take several forms.

Airservices may conduct a public information session at a local community venue, through Community Aviation Consultation Groups if these are public forums, or through displays at public spaces in the community such as a shopping centre or town hall. These smaller gathering allow groups of people to meet with Airservices staff for meaningful face-to-face discussion about the project.

For public information sessions, notices will be published in local newspapers at least seven days before any session. A media release may also be issued and notification provided via relevant CACGs or local councils.

**Method 8:** Validation of a trial

Where a minor change in air traffic management procedures or processes may provide improvements to noise outcomes, a full Stakeholder Identification and Communication Plan may not be required.

In the case of a minor procedural change or the introduction of new technology to achieve these goals, a short term trial may be undertaken for a defined period as part of the design process of a project.

The community will be informed and feedback considered as part of reviews of the effectiveness of the trial.

## More information

Airservices is committed to open and timely communication and consultation with our stakeholders, including the community. For further information, please contact Airservices Community Relations branch: [community.relations@airservicesaustralia.com](mailto:community.relations@airservicesaustralia.com)



  
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