

COFFS HARBOUR AIRPORT CHANGES TO APPROACH PROCEDURES

Airservices will implement changes for aircraft arriving to Coffs Harbour Airport from 18 July 2019.

Background

Since 2007, the [International Civil Aviation Organization \(ICAO\)](#) has encouraged its members to implement approach procedures with vertical (straight up and down) guidance to improve safety for aircraft arriving to and landing at airports.

One way to do this is to make it possible for aircraft to use Baro-VNAV technology.

Baro-VNAV is a technology available on most modern aircraft. It allows aircraft to land more smoothly, without using ground based navigation equipment. It also reduces the workload for pilots and decreases their reliance on visual assessments, making landing safer.

Airservices has worked with the [Civil Aviation Safety Authority \(CASA\)](#) and identified more than 100 locations for the roll out of Baro-VNAV approach procedures across Australia.

Some of these locations require changes to their existing approach procedures in order for Baro-VNAV to be introduced.

What will change at Coffs Harbour Airport?

The introduction of Baro-VNAV requires two changes to existing procedures for the main runway (Runway 03/21) at Coffs Harbour Airport.

Runways can be used in two opposite directions, and each direction is named with a two digit number based on the two different directions they face on a compass. The main runway at Coffs Harbour is called Runway 03/21 because it runs between the northeast (at 30 degrees) and the southwest (at 205 degrees).

The changes will include:

1. Relocation of the “missed approach point”

A “missed approach point” is the latest safe point at which an aircraft can make a missed approach. A missed approach (also called an aborted landing), is a safe manoeuvre where an aircraft stops its approach to the runway when landing. It is most commonly used in poor weather conditions, such as strong winds. It can also be used to avoid debris on the runway, an aircraft (or vehicle) that has not yet left the runway or an aircraft that has been slow to take-off.

Currently the missed approach point is 550 metres from the runway threshold. The runway threshold is an area marked on the runway to show the start of where aircraft can land and take off. The introduction of Baro-VNAV means the missed approach point can be moved to the runway threshold.

If aircraft need to do a missed approach they will then turn and stay mainly over water. Moving the missed approach point will mean that aircraft doing missed approaches fly along a slightly different paths (**Figure 1 and 2**).

The altitude by which the pilot must be able to see the runway (and therefore decide if they need to do a missed approach) will also be reduced to approximately 520 feet (from 750 feet)

for Runway 03 (from the south) and to approximately 500 feet (from 680 feet) for Runway 21 (from the north).



Figure 1: Existing and proposed missed approach for Runway 03

Key: █ Existing missed approach █ Proposed Missed approach █ Runways

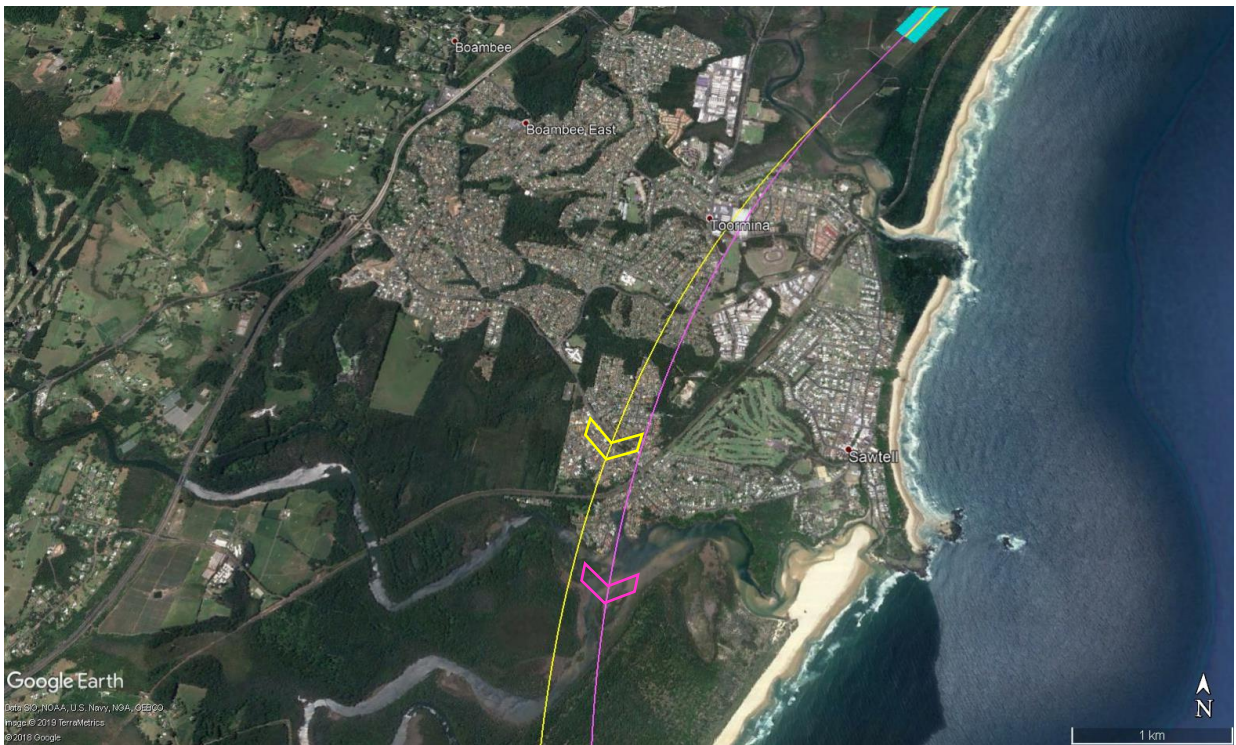


Figure 2: Existing and proposed missed approach for Runway 21

Key: █ Existing missed approach █ Proposed Missed approach █ Runways

2. Lowering of the “circling minima”

Each procedure includes a straight-in approach (aligned with the runway to land straight ahead) and a circling approach (flying within a set area above the airport). The “circling minima” is the lowest possible altitude by which the pilot must be able to see the runway when doing a circling approach.

The altitude by which the pilot must be able to see the runway for a circling approach will reduce to approximately 800 feet (from 900 feet), depending on the type, or category, of aircraft (**Figure 3**).

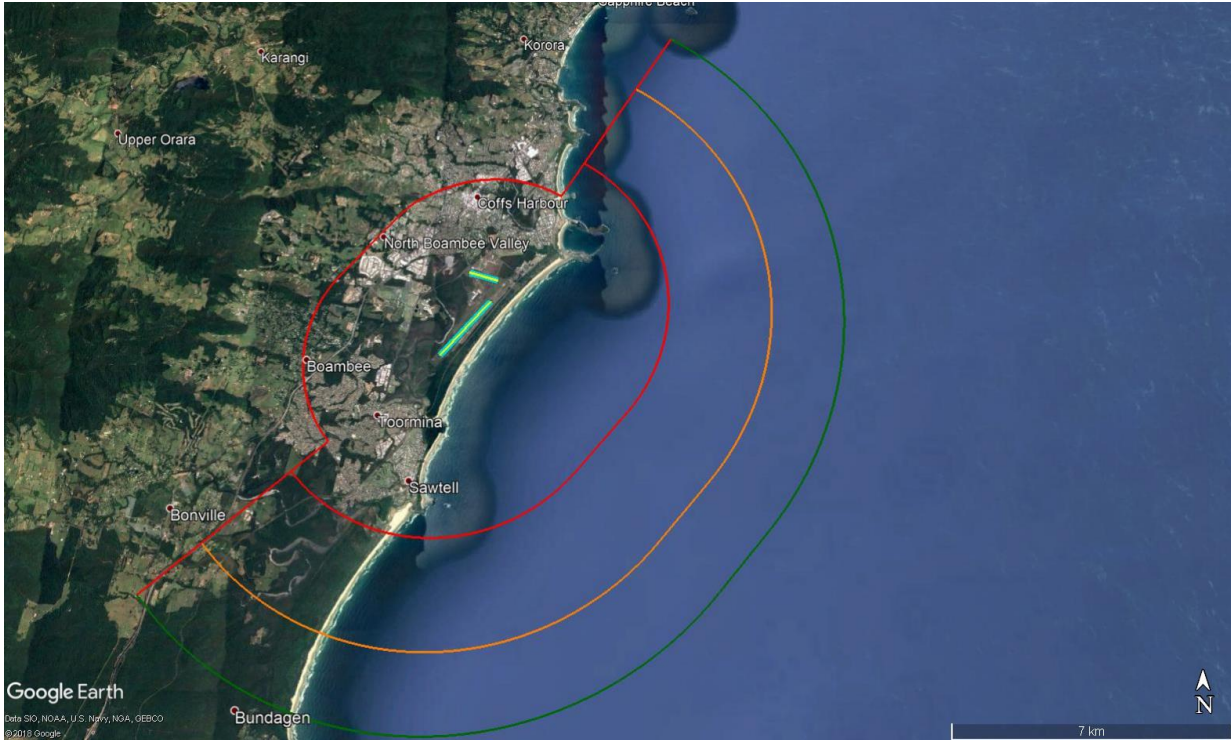


Figure 3: Circling areas at Coffs Harbour Airport

Key: ● ● ● Circling areas — Runways

Baro-VNAV approaches will reduce the frequency of an aircraft needing to either circle or complete a missed approach as they give pilots greater accuracy.

There will be no change to flight paths for most arrivals and departures, the number of aircraft movements or aircraft types at Coffs Harbour Airport as a result of these changes.

What will I see and hear?

Residents in the Coffs Harbour, Sawtell, Boambee, North Boambee Valley, Boambee East and Toormina areas may notice aircraft that use the circling areas flying at slightly lower altitudes, while remaining above 800 feet. Aircraft at these lower altitudes may increase noise levels by approximately 1.9 decibels (dB(A)), however a change of this size is not considered to be noticeable by the human ear.

Residents in rural properties south of Sawtell and north of Bundagen may notice aircraft that use the circling area flying at slightly lower altitudes of above 890 feet. This may increase noise levels by approximately 1 decibels (dB(A)), however a change of this size is not considered to be noticeable by the human ear.

Residents in the Coffs Harbour, Sawtell and Toormina areas may notice a slight change in position of up to 300 metres on occasions when the missed approach point is used by arriving aircraft. These aircraft will be at slightly lower altitudes than during current missed approaches of over 500 feet (to the north) and 600 feet (to the south).

Missed approaches occur infrequently and communities may expect to see approximately 1 missed approach per month due to poor weather. They are also used for pilot training and residents may expect to see at least weekly usage for pilot training.

How can I get more information?

For general information on flight path changes, contact the Noise Complaints and Information Service (NCIS) on:

- 1800 802 584 (free call)
- 131 450 (interpreter service)



General feedback can be provided:

- Via online form at: <https://feedback.emsbk.com/asa>
- Mail to Feedback c/o Noise Complaints and Information Service, PO BOX 211 Mascot NSW 1460