

Airport Expansion



The Future of Kempsey Airport

Commercial passenger services ceased operating at Kempsey Airport in 2000 and since then primary users have been charter, recreational and emergency aircraft. Significant community representation to save the Airport saw Council make a commitment to secure and revitalise operations at Kempsey Airport.

In 2011 the Mid North Coast Regional Aviation Plan, identified an opportunity for Kempsey Airport to expand its operation as a general aviation facility, supporting nearby airports that have regular passenger services.

A \$2 million Federal Government grant enabled construction of the Aviation Business Park, opened in 2015. The investment aimed to improve infrastructure at the airport in order to attract businesses looking to relocate aviation services to Kempsey.

Australian International Aviation College began providing pilot training from Kempsey Airport in 2014. In June 2016 AIAC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Council to formally become tenants of the Aviation Business Park in order to expand its training operations.

In July 2016 Council accepted a state government grant of \$173,000 toward an automated fuel system at the Airport, an important addition for all airport users including the emergency services.

AIAC lodged a Development Application in late 2016 for construction and operation of an expanded Pilot Training Facility. The two stage development is valued at \$18 million and includes lecture rooms, recreation spaces, kitchen and dining rooms, dispatch and debriefing areas as well as hangers, aircraft maintenance space and carparking. Stage 1 will allow for a student population of 150 with Stage 2 expected by 2018-2019 increasing to a maximum capacity of 250 students and around 60 staff.

As Council is the landowner and the development is valued at more than \$5 million, the DA will be considered by the Joint Regional Planning Panel on 15 March 2017.

How is the Airport currently used?

An aircraft movement is defined as a flight where the plane takes off and lands. In the 2015-2016 financial year there were 2,679 aircraft movements which is consistent with the last five years.

Over this time frame five key user groups of the Airport accounted for 56% of all aircraft movements;

Australian International Aviation College	23%
Recreational Aircraft	14%
Kempsey Flying Club	9%
Professional Pilot Training	6%
Royal Flying Doctor Service	5%
Other	44%

Regulating Airports

The operations and regulations surrounding Airports are complex with no single authority looking after all factors.

Airport Operations	The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) is the safety regulator for civil air operations in Australia. Airservices Australia is responsible for airspace management, including impacts of air traffic such as aircraft noise.
Aircraft and Flight Numbers	Kempsey airport is classified as a 'registered Aerodrome' CASA only place limits on flight numbers for Airports if there are safety issues, such as approaches or difficult runways.
Aircraft Noise	A number of organisations are responsible for aircraft noise management. The Federal Government is responsible for overall policy and legislation. Airservices is responsible for flight paths, providing noise information and managing complaints. Aircraft operators ensure their aircraft are compliant with noise standards and implement noise reduction principles for flight operations. Airport owners develop noise management plans and manage local community engagement, while state and local governments manage land-use planning around airports.

Community Feedback

With use of the Airport increasing, Council has committed to working with aircraft operators, AIAC, relevant authorities and the community to develop a Fly Neighbourly Agreement.

The Agreement, a voluntary code of practice, will be part of the revised MoU to be negotiated with AIAC. It will seek to identify and reduce the impact of aircraft noise and flight paths as the College operation expands.

Council has sought guidance from Airservices Australia in developing the Agreement and will keep the community updated on how to have a say over coming months.

For more information and updates on community engagement go to kempsey.nsw.gov.au/projects/airport

Next Steps

In addition to any Development Approvals required, construction on any buildings in the Aviation Business Park will not commence until Council has formal agreements in place which may include lease, MoU or Fly Neighbourly Agreements.

Economic Impact of Aviation Business Park

AIAC are currently the primary tenants using the Business Park development.

Economic modelling data indicates that when the facility is operating at full capacity it will have a significant economic impact on the broader Kempsey community;

- Students will spend \$8.7 million per year locally on living expenses, entertainment etc during their training
- International visitors to the students will spend an estimated \$200,000 in the local community each year
- The College is expected to directly generate 58 full time equivalent jobs, with associated spending indirectly creating 226 full time equivalent jobs

