



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications

WESTERN SYDNEY Fact Sheet



Western Sydney International Airport and the Greater Blue Mountains Area

The impact of Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) was assessed in the *Western Sydney Airport Environmental Impact Statement 2016* (EIS). The EIS found that the construction and operation of the airport would not have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of the Greater Blue Mountains Area or result in attributes of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage (GBMWA) being lost or damaged.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of protecting the GBMWA and its outstanding universal value.

World Heritage values and integrity

The GBMWA site covers 1.03 million hectares of Australian landscape and is noted for its outstanding and diverse range of eucalyptus trees and habitats. At its closest point, it is approximately seven kilometres from the airport site.

To ensure the ongoing integrity of the GBMWA, detailed planning and design for the airport will take into account the NSW Government's GBMWA Strategic Plan, which provides a framework for integrated management, protection, interpretation and monitoring of the World Heritage Area.

The EIS considered attributes identified in the GBMWA's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value and the complementary values of the areas as defined in the GBMWA Strategic Plan. The assessment considered noise, air emissions and amenity impacts from overflight of aircraft. The EIS found that construction of the airport will have no direct impacts on the GBMWA or its World Heritage values. The EIS also assessed possible indirect impacts from aircraft overflights and found that the majority of key tourism and recreational attractions would not be affected, as the height of aircraft from ground level would mean they would not be visually intrusive.

Air quality

Air emissions and greenhouse gas emissions from Western Sydney International are not expected to be significant in the context of emissions produced from other sources in the region. Fuel jettisoning is a very rare event and has been assessed as very unlikely to impact on the GBMWA. In 2014 there were only 10 instances of civilian aircraft jettisoning fuel in Australia (of 730,201 air traffic movements), representing approximately 0.001% of all aircraft movements in Australia. If such a rare event does occur, strict regulations are enforced by Airservices Australia governing where it must take place. Any jettisoned fuel vaporises rapidly and disperses widely, meaning it is unlikely to reach the ground.

The Air Quality Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) ensures that impacts associated with air quality are managed within permitted air quality criteria. The Air Quality CEMP also requires that best practice controls and procedures are implemented during construction activities to maintain air quality at acceptable levels at sensitive receivers surrounding the Airport Site and minimise the risk of dust and odour.

Flight paths

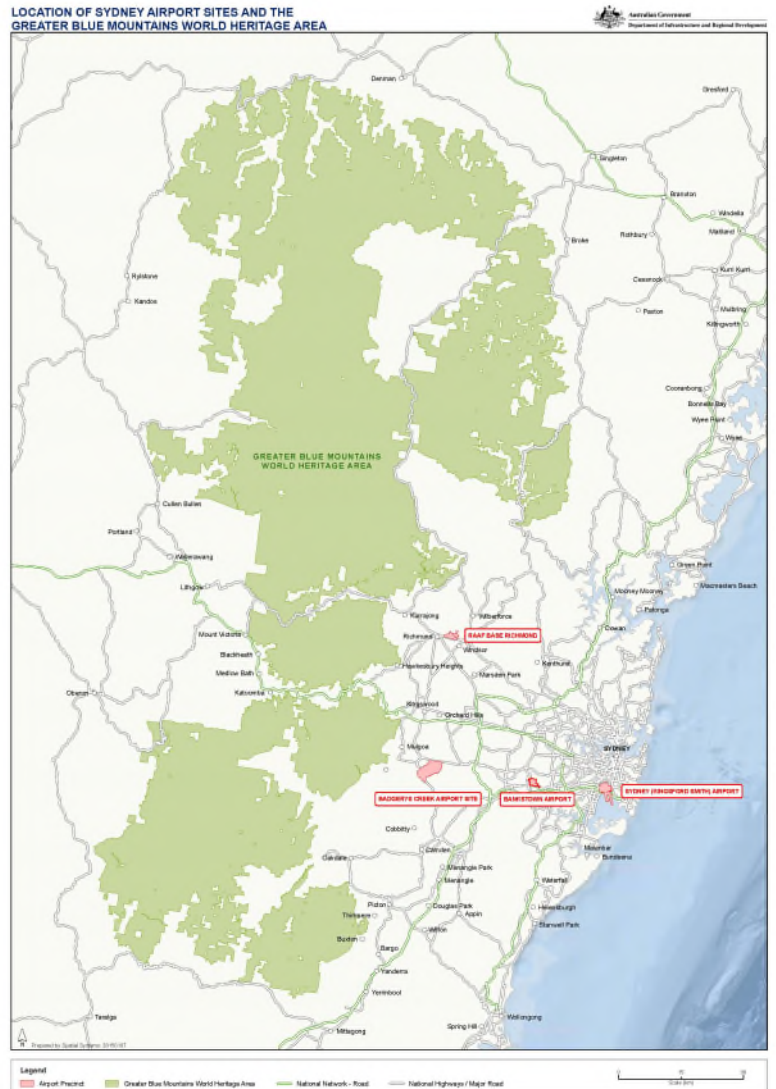
Indicative flight paths were included in the EIS to assess impacts and demonstrate that the airport could operate safely within the Sydney basin airspace.

Finalising the flight paths for the airport is a long and complex process. The comprehensive airspace planning and design process is ongoing.

The *Western Sydney Airport Plan 2016* includes conditions that have been informed by the EIS. The conditions in the Airport Plan include key principles for the airspace and flight path design to minimise to the extent practicable the impact of the noise from aircraft flying over wilderness and other areas of the GBMWA.

Overhead aircraft

For those areas of the GBMWA directly under the indicative flight paths, the EIS found that potential noise and visual impacts would not be significant due to the high altitude of operating aircraft. Under the indicative flight paths, aircraft would be expected to be higher than 5,000 feet, and flying more than 10,000 feet above sea level when passing over wilderness areas of the GBMWA. Taking into account topography and aircraft height above ground level, the EIS found that noise impacts at sensitive locations would be below 55 decibels (less than the noise level of an average conversation).



Western Sydney International and aerial firefighting

Western Sydney International can operate safely in the vicinity of aerial firefighting and hazard reduction services over the Blue Mountains and in the Sydney basin.

Emergency services aircraft and commercial air traffic routinely operate safely and efficiently throughout Australia, allowing aerial firefighting to occur alongside the operation of existing airports.

Fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters conduct firefighting operations at altitudes well below those of regular commercial airline operations. Any passenger aircraft using Western Sydney International would operate at much higher altitudes in the vicinity of the Blue Mountains, well away from those performing water drops.