

# Forum on Western Sydney Airport

Update from the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 2 December 2022

## Chair's message



The Forum on Western Sydney Airport (FoWSA) held a virtual meeting on 2 December 2022. This was the third and final meeting for 2022 and the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting since the FoWSA's inception in 2017.

At the meeting, members were provided with an update on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for flight paths. Members were also briefed on the development of a new online aircraft overflight noise tool to visually show flight paths and noise impacts – similar to those used by Brisbane and Melbourne airports recently to demonstrate flight path changes. Work is also underway to develop a new online community portal to communicate the draft EIS.

FoWSA members were also updated on the outcomes of engagement activities to date, including community pop-ups, stakeholder briefings and the results of initial market research (these are discussed in more detail in this update).

The Western Sydney Airport Company provided members with an update on the significant construction activities currently underway onsite – with the bulk earthworks component of the project reaching conclusion, terminal and runway pavement works in full swing, and major works about to get underway on landside access roads and infrastructure.

Members also discussed the important role that FoWSA plays in linking the community, government and the airport operator during the airport's planning and construction. 2023 will be a pivotal year in the project's development and will see a great deal of community interest, and potentially concern, with the release of the flight path design and draft EIS.

All FoWSA members play an important role in communicating this information to the broader community – a role which will be of increasing value throughout 2023. With this in mind, I propose that our next meeting in late February be open to the general public, and have asked the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (the Department) to support this with a pop-up style engagement stall.

I thank you all for your work throughout 2022 and wish you, your families and communities a happy festive season.

**Lee de Winton**  
Independent Chair, Forum on Western Sydney Airport

## What's been happening?

### Community pop-up sessions

In October 2022 the Department commenced its engagement activities prior to the release of the draft EIS in mid-2023. This initial phase – '*Building Awareness*' – was aimed at building understanding of the flight path design process, timeframes and scope of consultation for the draft EIS. It included an extensive round of community engagement to inform communities and stakeholders about the flight path design process, timeframes and scope of consultation. Seventeen pop-up sessions were held at locations stretching from Katoomba to Parramatta. Approximately 2,800 people were directly engaged during these sessions, with over 300 feedback surveys completed.



The pop-ups, together with the survey, have provided the EIS team with feedback from the community on key matters of concern and interest. Community support for increased jobs and economic opportunities afforded by the new airport remains high. The surveys show that the main community concerns continue to be broader noise impacts of the flight paths, the implications of 24-hour airport operations, and potential impacts on the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

The next engagement phase – ‘*Prepare for Public Exhibition*’ – will see another round of community pop-ups in the first half of 2023 that will inform the community of the process for the EIS release and subsequent consultation processes. These sessions will also focus on building community knowledge and literacy on the range of complex topics that will be covered in the draft EIS, including the basics of flight path design, aircraft operations and the purpose of the EIS itself. A suite of new fact sheets and information materials will be available to members at our next meeting.

### **Stakeholder and community organisation briefings**

A key part of the ‘*Building Awareness and Consult*’ phase of the engagement strategy has also seen the Department undertake approximately 40 briefing sessions for NSW Members of Parliament, local government councilors and officials, industry groups and a range of community organisations, including local progress associations and environmental groups.

Feedback from these sessions has been very positive, with most participants appreciative of the opportunity to learn more about the airport and flight path design process, and also to ask questions and raise concerns first-hand with the Department.

Importantly, the WSP Australia EIS team has used the briefings to undertake a formalised Socio-Economic Impact Assessment interview with each of the stakeholders. Through targeted questioning, key issues of concern and importance relating to the flight paths have been identified, and the results used to inform the environmental impact analysis work underway.

A new round of stakeholder briefing sessions will commence in early 2023, focusing on environmental groups, tourism bodies, multicultural associations and other Western Sydney peak bodies.

## **What’s coming up?**

In 2023, the flight path design process team will step-up engagement activities, in order to:

- Strengthen key stakeholder relationships and maintain open lines of communication.
- Build project knowledge and community literacy in key flight path subject matters.
- Forecast what people can expect during public exhibition of the draft EIS, and the different ways people will be able to give feedback.

FoWSA members play a valuable role in sharing information on flight path design with their organisations and communities. To assist FoWSA members, the following activities in the lead-up to the release of the preliminary flight plans and draft EIS are planned:

- **Newly developed fact sheets for FoWSA members**
- **A public open FoWSA meeting in early 2023**
- **Initial release of the Online Community Portal website for flight paths**
- **More community pop-ups across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains**
- **Continued stakeholder and community briefings**

### **FoWSA forward meeting dates for 2023 (subject to confirmation):**

- 25 Feb 2023 – Open FoWSA meeting and community engagement stall
- Mid 2023 – FoWSA meeting ahead of preliminary flight path and draft EIS release
- Late 2023