



# **TOCUMWAL AERODROME MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Adopted 19/06/2013**

## **Background**

Tocumwal aerodrome was commissioned by the US Army Air Corps and constructed in 1942 as McIntyre Field heavy bomber base in preparation for defending Japanese attacks. It was a remarkable complex, the largest in the Commonwealth at that time. It had 450 buildings spread over 65 square kilometres with 114 km of roads interconnecting it all. There were four runways, each nearly 2 km in length. The project cost two million pounds and was substantially completed within four months, with planes using the airstrip within five weeks. American forces moved to Tocumwal but only briefly as the situation in the Pacific improved and they moved north to Queensland. The aerodrome then became the RAAF Station Headquarters for training Liberator bomber aircrews. There were 5500 men on the base in December 1944. It subsequently became an aircraft depot until the 1960s when thousands of planes were smelted down.

Following the RAAF role control of the aerodrome taken over by the Commonwealth Government and it became a public aerodrome.

After the aerodrome became a public aerodrome it has enjoyed an international reputation as one of the best gliding locations in the world with Sportavia Soaring Centre operating a world class gliding operation for over 30 years.

With the closure of Sportavia the aerodrome has seen two smaller gliding operations continue, one privately operated and the other a member based gliding club.

Since the RAAF years the aerodrome has serviced the general aviation industry with charter operations, flying schools, air ambulance, agricultural aviation and aviation engineering activities all being serviced.

The aerodrome ownership and management was transferred from the Commonwealth Government to Berrigan Shire Council in 1993 and since then it has been managed by a Council appointed Committee of Management or by the Council itself directly.

## **Current Activity Levels**

Tocumwal Aerodrome does not have Regular Public Transport operations. Records of other aircraft movements are not kept and therefore aircraft activity can only be estimated from observations of on site operators.

Aircraft activity for the past year has been estimated as:

Charter Flights	30
General Aviation	1300
Sports Aviation	1000
Air Ambulance	100

## **Forecast Activity Levels**

The population of Tocumwal and surrounds is insufficient to justify the introduction of RPT in the foreseeable future.

Indications from flying schools, gliding operations and aerobatic operators are that they will be increasing their activities over the next five years and this could result in doubling of the General Aviation and Sports Aviation activity.

Berrigan Shire Council is encouraging the development of further aviation businesses on the aerodrome by subdividing a further 12 lots for the construction of hangers and associated development. This could see further increases in the General Aviation and Sports Aviation activity.

## **Description of the Aerodrome.**

Tocumwal Aerodrome is situated 2.5km east of the Tocumwal town centre on 205.5ha of freehold land owned by the Berrigan Shire Council.

The elevation of the aerodrome is 372 feet (113m) and its main access is via Burma Road.

The layout of the aerodrome is shown on the attached Plan.

**Runway 09/27** is 1,200m long and 30m wide and is contained in a runway strip 1,320m Long and 90m wide. The runway consists of a sprayed bituminous seal over a 200mm deep gravel pavement. It does not have a PCN rating and is suitable for aircraft up to 5,700kg MTOW. The runway is equipped with a low intensity AFRU-PAALC lighting system.

**Runway 18/36** is 1,273m long and 30m wide and is contained in a runway strip 1,520m Long and 90m wide. The 18 approach has been displaced 130m from the original runway length of 1,400m. The runway consists of a sprayed bituminous seal over a 200mm deep gravel pavement. It does not have a PCN rating and is suitable for aircraft up to 5,700kg MTOW. These runways are also serviced by a significant underground drainage system.

**Grass Runways** around 80m wide run parallel to the sealed runways on the northern side of 09/27 and the western side of 18/36 and used by gliders and tugs and are available for aircraft equipped with tail skids.

**Taxiways** The main taxiway connects 09 to the apron areas and is 360m long and 15m wide and is equipped with sideline lighting. A second taxiway connects to this taxiway

and provides access to hangers constructed in Flight Place and it is 220m long and 8m wide. The third taxiway connects 36 to the SportsAviation hangers and the hardstand for loading agricultural operations aircraft. It is 270m long and 8m wide.

All taxiways have a similar structural capacity to the runways.

**Apron.** The apron area provides for aircraft parking on hardstand as well as access to the refueling facility, terminal building, and 3 private hangers. It consists of 5,350m<sup>2</sup> of concrete paving and 8,800m<sup>2</sup> of tarmac of similar construction to the runways.

**Buildings.** There are only four buildings within the confines of the aerodrome and these are:

- Terminal building – brick veneer construction of 360m<sup>2</sup>.
- Business incubator building – transportable type office building of 120m<sup>2</sup>
- House – brick construction of 160m<sup>2</sup>.
- Storage shed – galvanized steel – 36m<sup>2</sup>.

### **Refueling Facility**

A refuelling facility is situated on aerodrome property and is leased to a private operator.

### **Bureau of Meteorology Weather Station**

A Bureau of Meteorology weather station is located at the aerodrome. Access to the weather station for maintenance requires closure of the aerodrome.

### **Land**

Land at the aerodrome that is not specifically required for aviation use or provides access to other assets is presently share farmed. This share farming produces a small, alternative revenue stream but importantly greatly reduces the Council's maintenance costs for what would otherwise be unused land.

## **ASSESSMENT OF FACILITIES**

The most recent Technical Report carried out on the Tocumwal Aerodrome indicates that the facilities are adequate for the current level of operations and require minimal maintenance and improvement.

A detailed technical assessment of the strength of the paved areas was carried out in the 1990's and this indicated that the runway subgrades were constructed of decomposing granite that was failing. Given the failing pavements significant improvements would be required if it was proposed to increase the aerodrome capability to service larger aircraft than the current 5,700kg MTOW limit. At the time of the assessment it was estimated that reconstruction of the runways would cost in the vicinity of \$4m. Importantly, while the existing runways have a significant remaining life if the 5,700kg MTOW is observed any usage by aircraft in excess of 5,700 MTOW will rapidly reduce this ie if a 20,000 MTOW was allowed the runways would fail within 12 months.

As indicated in the Aircraft Activity Forecast there is no obvious need for these limits to be increased other than for an occasional pavement concession.

The existing facilities are considered to be greatly underutilized and have the capacity to cope many times the existing movements of aircraft up to 5,700kg MTOW.

All other assets at the aerodrome are considered to be in good condition and fit for their intended purposes assuming continued routine maintenance occurs.

### **Management of the Aerodrome**

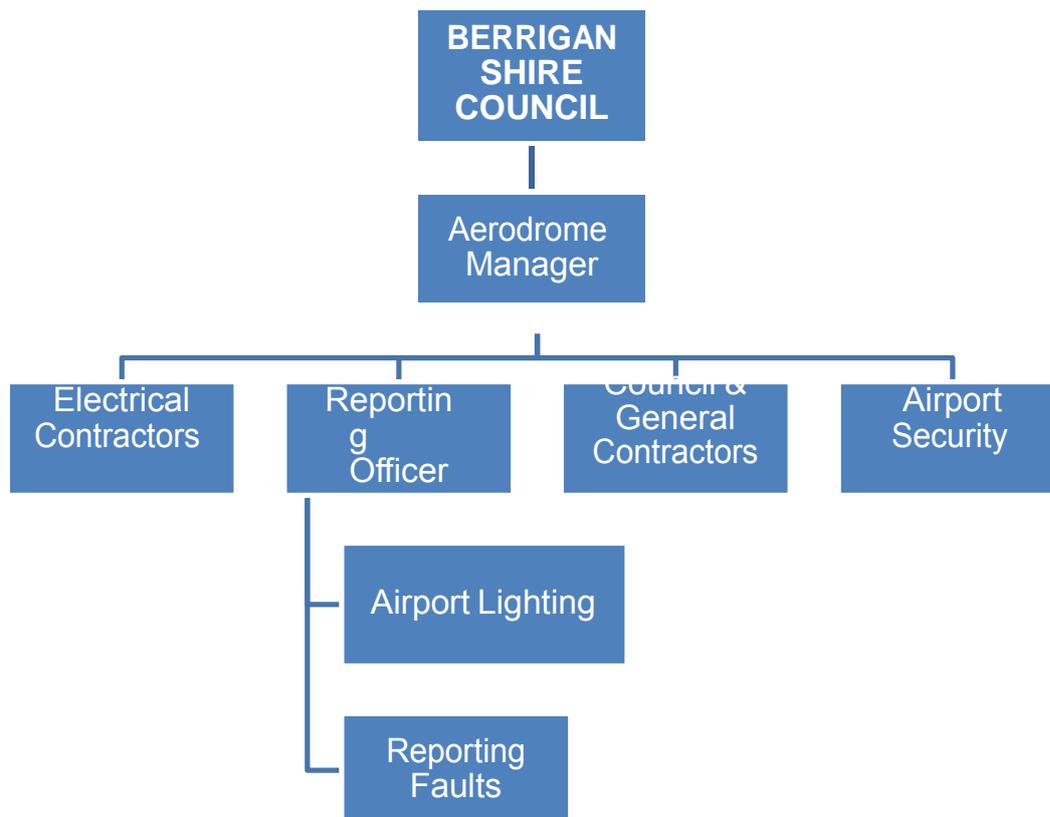
The Tocumwal Aerodrome is owned and managed by Berrigan Shire Council.

This management controls the physical, on ground assets and does not extend to aircraft or flight control.

Primarily the management of the Aerodrome is in accordance with the Tocumwal Aerodrome Manual and the Tocumwal Aerodrome Deed.

The Council is responsible for operating the aerodrome in accordance with the arrangements outlined in the Tocumwal Aerodrome Manual. The Aerodrome Manager is appointed by the Berrigan Shire Council.

The following chart represents the functions performed by the Berrigan Shire Council in the execution of its responsibilities outlined in the Tocumwal Aerodrome Manual.



The Aerodrome Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring that the airport complies with the CASA standards.

This document provides direction for the strategic development and management of Tocumwal aerodrome to maximize its benefits to stakeholders including users and the Berrigan Shire community and to assist in making it more financially sustainable.

The Tocumwal Aerodrome Deed was a Deed agreed to by the Council and the Commonwealth Government when the aerodrome was transferred to the control of the Council.

The primary issues of interest of the Deed that continue to relate to the aerodrome are:

- That, within reason, the Council continue to operate the aerodrome; and
- That the aerodrome continue to be available for public use, with such use not unnecessarily restricted. That is, all classes of aviation related uses should continue to have access to the aerodrome.

In addition to the above, there is a range of Federal and State legislation that regulated activities at and around the Aerodrome.

The Council, in its role as development control authority for the Shire, also has to manage the sometimes competing or potentially conflicting land use demands which includes the Tocumwal Aerodrome and potential conflicts with surrounding land uses and the impacts of other land uses upon the aerodrome ie bird attracting industries, traffic movements and dimensions etc.

The Council, as owner and operator of the Aerodrome, levies a range of annual charges related to use of and access to the Aerodrome.

### **Future Challenges**

The Tocumwal aerodrome is a significant but underutilized asset for the community. It provides for essential services such as air ambulance, commercial activities such as agriculture and mail services as well as a range of recreational and aviation training opportunities. In its present form it needs to either see increased utilization or reduction in its scale and scope to match the present levels of utilization.

If the form of the aerodrome and its utilization remains unchanged there is high risk that either the facility will decline or close due to a lack of either economic benefit or revenues to contribute to its maintenance.

The aerodrome presently has an annual nett cost of \$100,000 to ratepayers.

The Council presently considers its preferred future as being one where utilization is increased and the facility can continue in its present form.

Significant investment has been made in the development of land for aviation related uses and the provision of a business incubator facility. Land previously developed has successfully attracted three new hangars to the site.

The Council proposes to develop a further 12 lots at the aerodrome with the aim of attracting aviation related businesses to the site or alternatively aviation/residential uses.

A further challenge that will be ongoing is the impact of the aerodrome on the residential population of Tocumwal due to its proximity to both the township itself and also to rural residential development that surround it. Some classes of aircraft are exempt from noise controls and operate in close proximity to the township area almost exclusively.

Where particular classes of users have greater impacts, on other land uses the Council will, in consultation with users and the community, seek to manage these to minimize

those impacts whilst allowing the utilization of the aerodrome to increase and economic benefits flow to the area. This will generally be achieved through time restrictions.

Competing aviation uses also has the potential to become an issue in the future, particularly if one class becomes the dominant use. This is seen as a low risk with no evidence of it historically being cause for concern. The Council's initial position is that with the goodwill of operators and users at the aerodrome this can be effectively managed into the future.

Given the large area of the Aerodrome there may be future demands for non aviation uses (including residential, industrial, transport logistics etc) at the site. The Council does not plan for such alternatives uses in a strategic sense other than that it will identify areas that could be considered for such uses.

### **Future Opportunities**

Despite the present underutilization of the aerodrome there are future opportunities to develop or expand the present levels of operation at the aerodrome.

Firstly, with increasing operational and cost pressures of operating at metropolitan aerodromes such as Bankstown or Moorabbin there may be an opportunity to attract business from those sites to operate at Tocumwal. Specific areas of interest would be in the areas of pilot training and aviation maintenance facilities.

Tocumwal is ideally suited to pilot training due to its ideal climate, dual runways, relatively low cost and the low level of surrounding development.

Secondly, is the opportunity to attract a greater range of events at the aerodrome such as fly ins, competitions (gliding and aerobatics) and those related to the heritage of the aerodrome. Such events will not significantly increase either revenue or utilization however these can contribute to the area economy and expose the aerodrome to potential investors.

Thirdly, there may be an opportunity to provide for aviation/residential uses such as has been developed at other rural aerodromes.

### **Aviation Zone – Land Use Strategy**

The Council will apply a range of development controls at the Aerodrome with the aim of promoting orderly and competent development and as set out below:

1. To control development standards at the aerodrome and to eliminate unnecessary impacts upon aviation, all buildings constructed on the land are to be constructed of new materials only and no relocatable buildings or transportable buildings are permitted to be placed on any lot, without the prior written approval of Council.
2. Aircraft related commercial or industrial uses are permitted subject to Council's Development consent being obtained. Generally, Council will not approve non-aviation related business activities that do not relate to the airports operation.
3. No domestic animals or rural livestock of any kind shall be allowed or kept on any lot.
4. No plant, machinery or vehicles or any conveyance (excluding an aircraft) having a tare weight in excess of 2 tonne shall be permitted on the taxiway unless approved by the Airport Manager.
5. No vehicles (excluding aircraft) shall be parked on any aircraft movement area. Suitable vehicles shall only be permitted on the taxiway for the purposes of aircraft or part delivery or in the case of an emergency.
6. To ensure the safe operation of aircraft in the environs of the aerodrome, an Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS) is to be observed. Accordingly no building or structure including masts or aials shall be erected on any lot having a height in excess of 8.5 metres without Council's consent first being obtained.
7. The registered proprietor for the time being shall not permit any tree or shrub grown on any lot to exceed the maximum heights referred to in Clause 10 hereof. Should any tree or shrub exceed the maximum height as aforementioned and notice is given by Berrigan Shire Council for the tree or shrub to be lopped to comply with this Plan and such notice is not complied with by the registered proprietor within 14 days of dispatch of that notice, then the Council shall be entitled to enter upon the lot to lop the tree or shrub and the cost of such work will be a charge against the registered proprietor.
8. No registered proprietor shall plant or permit to remain on any lot any fruiting or seeding tree, bush or plant which attracts birds or fruit bats.
9. The registered proprietor for the time being of all lots having actual notice that the land adjoining the lot is used for aerodrome activities giving rise to noise and vibration shall not be entitled to raise any requisition or claim compensation with respect to such activities or to seek any injunction or other Court Order to restrain or prohibit the existing or future activities or operations of the aerodrome.
10. No sanitary convenience shall be erected on any lot unless attached to and forming part of the main building and connected to Council's Airport Sewerage Mains System (Portable toilets during construction excepted).
11. No fence shall be erected on the lot or gateway inserted into any existing fence without the consent of Berrigan Shire Council. Such consent shall not be withheld if such fence is erected without cost to the Berrigan Shire Council, is constructed of materials approved by Berrigan Shire Council, and incorporates a locking mechanism approved by Berrigan Shire Council. A fencing layout plan shall be included with any Development Application submitted to Berrigan Shire Council with the primary objective of restricting access to the airport from external roads and residences erected on residential allotments.

12. Council reserves the right to re-acquire allotments (at cost price) if building works have not commenced within a period, mutually agreed to in the Sales Contract.
13. No fuel or chemicals are to be stored on any lot nor are any vehicles or aircraft which contain chemicals permitted to remain on any lot without approval of Berrigan Shire Council.
14. No jet aircraft or helicopter shall be permitted to operate from any lot without the prior approval of Berrigan Shire Council. Any such approval will include, but not be limited to, special procedures for movement between the lot and adjacent runways.
15. Any external lighting of structures erected shall be in strict compliance with Civil Aviation Regulation 94.
16. Berrigan Shire Council is empowered to release, vary or modify the Terms of Restriction firstly referred to in above-mentioned plan.
17. No dwelling shall be erected without an aircraft hangar being located on the same allotment.
18. Any dwelling to be constructed on any lot is to be designed and be constructed of materials to comply with the "Australian Standards" (AS2021) for dwellings erected on or near aerodromes, including :-  
The walls of dwelling shall consist of brick or brick veneer, glass, fibrolite or any combination thereof provided that no building shall be constructed wholly or substantially from fibrolite and provided that the roof and ceiling of any dwelling house are insulated and the windows of bedrooms are double glazed (or similar) and all walls are sound insulated.
19. An aircraft hangar may be constructed on any lot prior to the erection of a dwelling provided that no person shall be permitted to reside in that hangar;
20. Suitable fencing (See Clause 14 of Part A) incorporating an appropriate gate and locking mechanism, shall be erected to restrict access from any dwelling to the taxiway and ultimately the aerodrome complex itself. Pedestrian access gates shall be in accordance with Australian Standard AS-1926.1
21. Tourism Accommodation (including Motels, B & B's etc.) may only be approved in allotments zoned as "Aviation-Residential". These type of activities must be carried out in accordance with Councils Codes and Policies and require Councils prior written consent to be obtained.

### **Obstacle Limitation Surface**

Both runways have an Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS) that cannot be penetrated by an obstacle without effecting their operation.

The areas identified for development are situated in areas that will not impact on the OLS with height restrictions to 10m to be imposed for any development within these areas. A building line of 145m from the centre of runways 18/36 and 09/27 has been established.

Currently there is an issue with high vehicles moving along Burma Road obstructing the approach surface and this may require correction by displacing the threshold in the future.

### **Australian Noise Exposure Forecast**

In order to regulate development that may be sensitive to aircraft noise from establishing in the vicinity of runways a 15-35 ANEF (Australian Noise Exposure Forecast) overlay plan has been prepared for Tocumwal Aerodrome. A copy of the plan is attached.

The areas identified for development are generally situated outside the 15 ANEF contour although some of the land identified for non aviation use will be situated between the 15 and 20 ANEF contours.

### **Restrictions**

#### **Gliders**

- Gliders are generally required to operate only from the grass strips. The Aerodrome Manager may vary this requirement upon request.
- Gliders and trailers may not be parked on the main apron area.
- Support vehicle may only access glider strip via approved routes after obtaining consent from the Council for access to the aerodrome property.
- Gliders and trailers should be parked and assembled in the designated area (see attached plan for designated area)

#### **Flying Schools**

Pilot training may occur at any time with the following exceptions

- Monday – Wednesday incl – circuit flying from 7.00 pm
- Thursday – Sunday Incl – circuit flying to cease by 11.00 pm

#### **Agricultural Aircraft**

- Access by support vehicles is only via approved routes. (see attached plan for approved access routes)
- Loading of agricultural aircraft to be carried out in designated areas (see attached plan for designated access areas).

## EVENTS

- Application for use of Tocumwal Aerodrome for an event is required when there is a reasonable expectation of increased usage from the activity proposed. All applications to be prepared using the Tocumwal Aerodrome Event Application Form, all questions must be addressed the application must be received by Council at least 3 months prior to the event. All applications for events will be posted on Council's website at the earliest opportunity and members of the public will be able to subscribe to receive electronic advice when there are new postings.
- As aviation events are inherently dependant on weather conditions the Aerodrome Manager may make variations to the timing of approved events without the need for further notification
- **Aerobatic Events** – Aerodrome to be available for practice of participants during the 5 days prior to the event between the hours of 9.00am and 6.00pm. A map has also been produced that shows 'fly neighbourly' areas (attached) where pilots will be required to avoid flying where possible and if they must fly over them to do so in a way that reduces noise impact (ie. At lower revs) and with no aerobatic activity to occur in the 'fly neighbourly' areas.
- **Application Fees** – A fee shall be paid upon lodgment of applications for events to cover the administrative costs of processing. The fee amount shall be determined on an annual basis and included in the Berrigan Shire Council Schedule of Fees and Charges.

## AEROBATIC PRACTICE

- Other than for training associated with events being run on the aerodrome aerobatic practice sessions are to be limited to a maximum of three consecutive days per week and only on non-consecutive weekends between the hours of 9.00am and 6.00pm.
- A map has also been produced that shows 'fly neighbourly' areas where pilots will be required to avoid flying where possible and if they must fly over them to do so in a way that reduces noise impact (ie. At lower revs) and with no aerobatic activity to occur in the 'fly neighbourly' areas. To co-ordinate aerobatic practice outside events use of the aerodrome by aerobatic aircraft is to be booked with the Aerodrome Manager at least 7 days prior to such use. All bookings for aerobatic operations will be posted on Council's website at the earliest opportunity and members of the public will be able to subscribe to receive electronic advice when there are new postings.

- The Aerodrome Manager is able to vary booked use to cater for prevailing weather conditions. Only one aircraft is permitted to be practising aerobatics over Tocumwal airfield at any time.
- **Booking Fees** – A fee shall be paid upon lodgment of bookings to cover the administrative costs of processing. The fee amount shall be determined on an annual basis and included in the Berrigan Shire Council Schedule of Fees and Charges.

### **AIRFREIGHT & REFUELLING FACILITY**

- Access for support vehicles to be via approved routes only(see attached plan for approved access routes).
- Loading of aircraft to be carried out in designated areas only(see attached plan for designated access areas).
- Freight that includes dangerous goods that require closure of the aerodrome will attract a surcharge fee to cover administration and inconvenience.

### **CHARTER OPERATIONS**

- No general requirements

### **SERVICE INDUSTRIES**

- No general requirements

### **OVERWEIGHT AIRCRAFT**

- Permits for movements of overweight aircraft will only be granted, by the Aerodrome Manager in exceptional circumstance.
- Any application for an overweight aircraft permit must be received at least 24 hours before the intended movement.

### **Review**

The plan, once adopted, will not be static,, but a flexible plan that can be amended by Council resolution if it is necessary to 'tweek' it to take account of changed circumstances or unintended outcomes from its implementation. Following this initial review the plan shall be reviewed on a 4 yearly cycle.