

Minutes – Essendon Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group

Special Meeting held 9:00am, Monday 27 February, 2017 @ Essendon Fields House

Members: Danny Pearson MP, Cr Narelle Sharpe (MVCC), Hasan Erdogan (representing Peter Khalil MP) (Frank Manti (Community Representative), Kevin Walsh (Community Representative), Chris Cowan (EAPL), Phillip Cash (EAPL).

Invited Guests: Rory Kennedy (EAPL).

1. Welcome – Chris Cowan (Chair) the Chairperson welcomed the members to the special meeting and introduced Phillip Cash, General Manager - Aviation.

2. Incident Briefing, 21 February 2017

Chris Cowan gave a briefing regarding the tragic incident involving a Beechcraft King Air aircraft which crashed shortly after departing from Runway 17, killing the five people on board.

- i. It is not yet known what caused the incident. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) is expected to release its interim report in 28 days.
- ii. Essendon Airport's obstacle limitation surfaces comply with CASA standards.
- iii. The legacy of Essendon Airport's past role as Melbourne's International Airport is that it is designed to a safety standard that accommodates large jet aircraft. The maximum take-off weight prescribed in the *Air Navigation (Essendon Airport) Regulations 2001* however restricts operations to aircraft with MTOW below 45,000 kg.
- iv. The DFO Development was approved in 2004 by the Minister after a public Major Development Plan consultation process, including consultation with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).
- v. Essendon Airport has an Airport Emergency Plan (AEP) which was activated for the incident. The AEP provides for State emergency services to respond to (under the Victorian Emergency Management Framework) emergencies at the Airport. Further, local standby (a suspected or known defect unlikely to affect an aircraft's landing) are not uncommon and are managed under the Airport Emergency Plan.
- vi. The ATSB cleared the Airport to re-open at 2pm on the day of the incident. However, Essendon Airport chose to only allow emergency services to operate until 23/2/2017 to allow time for investigations and out of respect to the families of the deceased.
- vii. The aviation fuel provider quarantined and tested its fuel after the incident. Tests came back with no exceptions.
- viii. No foreign object debris (FOD) was found on the runway during inspections before and after the incident.
- ix. The types of aircraft operating at Essendon are generally at the safer end of the aviation spectrum including passenger services, corporate jets, charters and Emergency services.

- x. Regarding a speculated relocation to Avalon Airport, this is not viable for many operators. Furthermore, Victoria's emergency services need to be located at Essendon.
- xi. Frank Manti noted that community feedback is that the emergency services response was very quick. Mr Manti's impressions from the residents he has spoken with is that there is no pressure for the Airport to close.
- xii. Hasan Erdogan stated that Peter Khalil's electoral office has not been contacted by residents advocating closure in response to the incident.
- xiii. Cr Narelle Sharpe noted buildings previously existed on the DFO site and that local residents remember these buildings. Cr Sharp worked in a building which occupied the site prior to the DFO buildings.
- xiv. Counselling and support has been offered to staff and members of the community affected by the tragedy.
- xv. Chris Cowan advised that he has spoken with the widow of the pilot. The families of the deceased Americans have declined direct contact. However, Essendon Airport has offered support for their stay and for a permanent memorial.
- xvi. Other investigations will be conducted by the Victorian Coroner, Police and also by CASA.
- xvii. The processes around planning & building control on Federal Airports are generally more rigorous than the equivalent state requirements.

3. Other matters

Chris Cowan provided an update regarding the proposed hospital development, which has slowed due to market conditions in the private health sector. A draft Major Development Plan is therefore not likely to be released this year.

Meeting Closed 9:45am

**Next Meeting will be held Friday March 10, 2017 @ 10.30am
(Chair – Peter Khalil MP)**