Minutes – Essendon Fields Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group (CACG)

Meeting held Friday18 September 2026, at 11.00am
7 English Street, Essendon Fields by Videoconference/Boardroom

Members:
Ben Carroll MP; Rod Gurry (Office of Danny Pearson MP); Brendan Pihan (EAPL); Jason Rainbird (EAPL); Brad Evans (EAPL); Christine Campbell (Airservices Australia); Tim Gill (Airservices Australia); May Li Foong (Airservices Australia); and Erica Turner (Community Member).

Invited Guests:
Nadia Salajic (Essendon Fields); Hayden Grigg (Department of Infrastructure); Chris Simpson (Office of Ben Carroll MP); the Hon. Enver Erdogan MP (Member for Northern Metropolitan Region); and Elliot D'Angelo (Office of the Hon. Enver Erdogan MP).

Apologies:

- Jo Briskey MP (Federal Member for Maribyrnong)
- Justin Helman (Community Member)
- Cr Hamish Jones (Moonee Valley City Council)
- Danny Pearson (State Member for Essendon)
- Braden Hartcher (Department of Infrastructure)
- Representative of the Office of Peter Khalil MP
- Anthony Cianflone MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Community Safety

1. **Welcome**
   Rod Gurry welcomed members and attendees and declared the meeting open at 11.00 am.

2. **Items arising from previous CACG minutes (19 June 2026)**
   The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read and confirmed without amendment.

3. **Departmental Update**
   No departmental update was provided.

4. **Airservices Update**
   May Li Foong, Senior Advisor Community Engagement, and Tim Gill, both of Airservices Australia, provided an update on Noise Complaints and Information Service (NCIS) data for June–August 2026. Members were referred to the attached presentation.
   The presentation reported the following:
   - There were 22 individual complainants and 24 contacts during the reporting period, including contacts from 21 new complainants.

- Complaints were recorded across 20 suburbs. Essendon and Reservoir each recorded two complainants, while the remaining 18 suburbs each recorded one complainant.
- Helicopters accounted for 57 per cent of recorded issues. These comprised nine complaints about night-time emergency services operations, three complaints about daytime emergency services operations and one complaint about standard daytime operations.
- General aviation issues comprised three complaints about standard daytime operations, two complaints about night-time emergency services operations and one complaint about specialised aerial work.
- Curfew-related issues comprised two permitted movements and one emergency services movement.
- Members were advised that the Aircraft in Your Neighbourhood website allows users to enter their location, select “What flight disturbed me?” and access the NCIS complaints report.
- Airservices Australia will investigate and provide further information about complaints associated with standard operations.

5. Community Feedback/Concerns

- Prior to the meeting Cr Jones advised that he had not received any community concerns or feedback from constituents during the reporting period.
- Brad Evans advised that EAPL had received three enquiries from residents about non-aviation noise and local amenity in the Hart Precinct industrial area.
- An enquiry received on 28 August raised concerns about weekend noise and the duration and visual appearance of temporary storage associated with operations in the precinct.
- An enquiry received on 17 September raised concerns about reported night-time vehicle activity on Global Avenue and views of the operational area.
- A further concern related to activities commencing before 6.00 am. It was noted that the airport curfew applies to aircraft movements and does not directly regulate tenant operating hours. EAPL advised that tenant activities are expected to comply with applicable approvals and that reasonable measures should be taken to minimise off-site amenity impacts.

- The Essendon Fields website has been updated with current information about operations in the precinct.
- **Action:** EAPL will review the matters raised, liaise with the relevant tenants and provide responses to the residents following completion of those enquiries.

6. Aviation Operations (EAPL)

Essendon Fields aviation update

Jason Rainbird, General Manager Aviation, provided an overview of airport operations and noted the following:

- Essendon Fields Airport had recorded approximately 46,990 aircraft movements for the year to date. Annual activity has remained broadly consistent over the past eight years, at approximately 50,000 movements. In May, movements decreased by approximately 80–90 compared with the previous period.
- National aviation and general aviation activity trends were discussed. No specific figures were recorded in the minutes pending confirmation of the relevant data and reporting period.
- Essendon Fields Airport's share of larger aircraft movements, including business jets over seven tonnes, continues to grow year on year.
- An update on pavement works was provided with upcoming works to include the southern and eastern apron areas.
- Drainage upgrades are continuing. The next stage of works will improve the management of surface water flowing from the south to the north of the airfield.
- Sharp Airlines is recommencing services to King Island in October for a six-month period, supported by Tasmanian Government funding.
- Sharp Airlines' charter operations continue, including services supporting offshore oil and gas exploration.
- In response to a question about aerial firefighting operations, it was noted that approximately six helicopters may be based at Essendon Fields Airport during the forthcoming summer, including Black Hawk and Bell helicopters.
- The 2026 Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) surveillance audit identified three findings and nine observations. EAPL advised that it had responded to the matters raised and continued to work with CASA through the relevant compliance processes. EAPL had also commenced its annual assurance program. The obstacle survey was

undertaken during the week of the meeting, and the annual airport technical inspection was scheduled for October.

- **Women in Aviation:** Hangar 14 Airservices will host an event featuring approximately 26 exhibitors and 200 attendees to promote aviation opportunities for young women.
- In response to a question from Rod Gurry about prospective new airport operators, EAPL advised that options continued to be considered; however, there were no confirmed announcements at that stage.

7. Development Update (EAPL)

Brad Evans, Planning & Environment Manager, provided an update on planned developments across the airport.

Key projects under development include:

- **Building 77 –** Construction is underway north of the existing airport terminal building. The facility is proposed to accommodate a gymnasium and the relocation of the airport's long-standing Animal Referral Hospital to a purpose-built facility. EAPL advised that the relevant approvals required for the construction works had been obtained and that the shed previously occupying the site had been demolished. Completion is targeted for May 2027.
- **99 Bulla Road –** Redevelopment of the existing retail site is underway to accommodate a land use consistent with the surrounding precinct.
- **Lebanon Street screen wall and landscaping –** Construction of the screen wall has been completed. Associated landscaping works include the planting of 172 evergreen bay laurel trees in front of the new fencing, to be hedged and maintained at approximately three metres; maintenance of existing pear trees; new star jasmine groundcover and mulch; hydroseeding of the swale to assist with dust management; and new supporting infrastructure and drainage.
- **Detention basin –** An enlarged on-site detention system is planned within the Hart Precinct to support stormwater management for the business park. Works are expected to commence in November 2026 and be completed by April 2027. EAPL will manage potential amenity impacts, including noise and dust, during construction.

- **Modular storage –** Project-related activities have commenced within the designated storage area on the northern side of Global Avenue. The activities include temporary assembly of modular building components and installation of a display suite for industry stakeholders and project partners. EAPL advised that the activities are required to comply with applicable planning, environmental and aviation safety requirements.
- **Closure of jet crossing –** EAPL advised that Hangars 9, 10, 11 and 12 were vacant and that environmental assessments had been completed in accordance with applicable requirements. EAPL noted that the proposed changes were intended to support the longer-term transition of the area to commercial land uses identified in the 2013 Master Plan Land Use Plan. EAPL further advised that the closure of the jet crossing is a component of the planned consolidation of aviation activities and future land-use arrangements.
- **Potential residential land use –** The Airport Lease includes vacant allotments in Strathmore, east of the airport, that were formerly occupied by aviation approach-lighting infrastructure. EAPL advised that it had written to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government seeking approval to prepare and submit a Major Development Plan for potential residential use of the allotments, which may include social and affordable housing. Any proposal would be subject to the applicable Ministerial approval, statutory assessment and consultation processes. No update on the status of the request was provided by the Department at the meeting.

8. EF Master Plan (Planning Matters)

Brad Evans, Planning & Environment Manager, provided an overview of and update on the Airport Master Plan.

- The Essendon Fields Airport Master Plan is due to be submitted to the Department by 29 July 2027, following the extension granted by Minister King on 11 May 2026.
- The Master Plan will address land use planning, the airport environment strategy and aircraft noise.
- Community consultation is expected to commence in the first quarter of 2027.
- EAPL will continue to monitor the program closely and communicate with stakeholders throughout the process.

9. Community Events and Initiatives

Nadia Salajic, General Manager Marketing, provided an overview of EAPL's community events and initiatives.

- **June – Moonee Valley Women in Business Lunch:** Essendon Fields hosted two tables at the annual Council event at Hyatt Place, supporting engagement with tenants, local businesses and other stakeholders. The event attracted more than 350 attendees.
- **June – Thank a First Responder Day:** Essendon Fields provided complimentary coffee for emergency services personnel at The Landing Place, recognising the role of first responders and the precinct's connection with emergency services aviation.
- **June – Airport User Group:** The event attracted 52 attendees and was hosted at the new Textron hangar. It included an update on investment in aviation facilities.
- **July – The Little Long Walk:** The annual event attracted more than 170 attendees from precinct tenants, the local community and local government, supporting community participation and First Nations recognition and reconciliation.
- **August – 74–76 Hargrave Avenue commencement event:** An event marked the commencement of the development. The project is planned to include health and wellbeing facilities, including specialist veterinary care, fitness, recovery and allied health services, and is expected to provide local employment opportunities.
- **September – Business Building Breakfast:** Essendon Fields delivered the annual event in partnership with Business Northwest. The event attracted 300 attendees from the regional business community and focused on the future of AI-enabled business.
- **Ongoing – Community activities:** Free weekly Pilates classes continue for airport tenants and members of the local community.
- **October – Airport User Group:** The next meeting will be held at the Leonardo Helicopters hangar and will focus on operational updates, precinct investment and upcoming airport activity.

10. Essendon Fields Planning Coordination Forum

- EAPL will host the next Planning Coordination Forum between late October and mid-November, with a focus on the Master Plan.

11. General Business

No matters were raised.

Meeting closed at 12.05 pm

The next CACG meeting will be held on 11 December 2026.