



Cessnock Airport Strategic Plan

GATEWAY TO THE HUNTER VALLEY

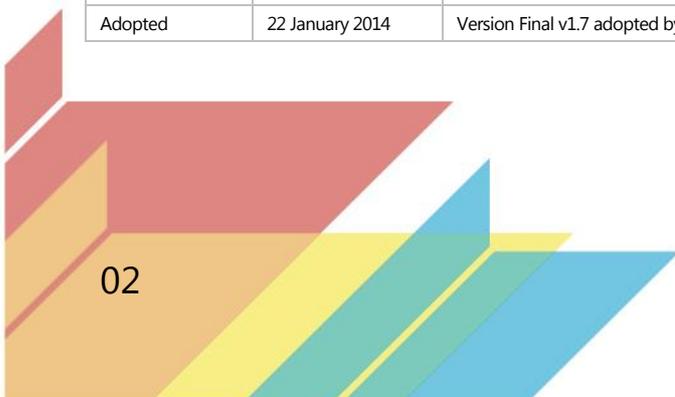


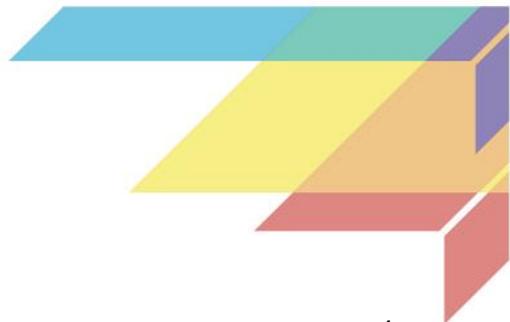


Airport Name	Cessnock
Call Sign	YCNK
State	NSW
Airport Location	S32deg 47.2 min E151deg 20.5 min 30 sec
Cessnock CTAF	CTAF frequency 122.65 MHz
Airport Chart	SYDNEY WAC 3456
Airport Elevation	211 ft AMSL
Runway Bearing	RWY 17/35 – 174 deg magnetic
Runway length & width	Tkof 17: Length 1097m x 30m wide Tkof 35: Length 1097m x 30m wide <i>Note: centre sealed section is on average 23 metres wide</i>
Slope	0.4% down to North.
Length of Clearway	150m Southern End.
Dimensions of Runway Strip	Length 1217m x 90m wide.
Pavement Surface/Strength	5700/450 (65 PSI)
Taxiway	10m wide, sealed 5,700 kg weight limit
Main apron	55m x 45m 60m Northern End.

VERSION CONTROL

VERSION	DATE	COMMENT	AUTHOR
Draft v.0.0	Feb 2012	Strategic Plan template and initial content	Bronwyn Rumbel
Draft v.0.1	April 2013	Revised template	Bronwyn Rumbel
Draft v1.0	9 May 2013	First draft	Bronwyn Rumbel
Draft v1.1	13 May 2013	Second draft	Bronwyn Rumbel
Draft v1.2	18 June 2013	Incorporating feedback from meetings and stakeholder workshops	Bronwyn Rumbel
Draft v1.3	20 June 2013	Third draft	Bronwyn Rumbel
Draft v1.4	27 June 2013	Incorporating feedback from Airport Consultative Committee	Bronwyn Rumbel
Draft v1.5	25 July 2013	Incorporating feedback from Leadership Group, Councillors and other meetings.	Bronwyn Rumbel
Draft v1.6	29 July 2013	Remove details of consultation (Section 12) and re-number contents.	Bronwyn Rumbel
Final v1.7	5 December 2013	Incorporating feedback from submissions and Airport Consultative Committee.	Bronwyn Rumbel
Adopted	22 January 2014	Version Final v1.7 adopted by Council	Bronwyn Rumbel





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I. Council Values

The Cessnock Airport Strategic Plan focuses on good stewardship of this community asset by establishing objectives, developing strategies, and formulating action plans consistent with realising the mission and vision for Cessnock Airport and the values of Cessnock City Council.

Council's values are:

Respect

- Self-respect
- Respect between Councillors, staff and the community
- Respect for our differences
- Respect for the environment

Integrity

- Honesty between Councillors, staff and the community
- Integrity in our behaviour/conduct
- Integrity in our decision making

Innovation

- Being pro-active in community relations
- Innovation in policy and decision making

Fairness

- Treat all equally
- Include all views from across the whole LGA
- Consistency of decisions

Teamwork

- Work together as one team
- Loyalty to the Council organisation

Commitment

- Dedication and hard work
- Follow through on plans and policies





2. Strategic Planning Framework

The Cessnock Airport Strategic Plan proposes an airport that will satisfy the potential demand for aviation services in a way which is compatible with the environment, the local community and the rational development of facilities, yet maintains flexibility to cater for future changes in demand.

The Strategic Plan has been developed using the following strategic planning framework:

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

DIRECTION	VISION ▽ MISSION
△ ▽	▽
INTELLIGENCE	ENVIRONMENT CUSTOMER OPERATIONS
△ ▽	▽
PATH	OBJECTIVES ▽ STRATEGIES ▽ ACTION PLAN
△ ▽	▽
SURVEILLANCE	MONITORING ▽ REVIEW





3. Vision

Council is committed to:

A well-planned and serviced aerodrome facility managed in a manner that attracts environmentally responsible economic development opportunities to the Cessnock region.

This strategic plan is based on the assumption that Council wishes to retain an operating aerodrome on the current site.

It is consistent with the Vineyard Vision objective that: *The Vineyards District allows and fosters a mix of diverse business, accommodation and employment options – creating a balance between working vineyards, tourist uses, residential and visitor amenity.*



4. Mission

Cessnock Airport exists:

To productively use the aerodrome’s assets for the economic benefit of the residents of the Cessnock local government area.

Cessnock Airport was constructed by the Commonwealth Government during World War II as an emergency landing strip, a base for certain types of aircraft and a training facility for the Royal Australian Air Force.

Cessnock Airport was first issued a licence (registered) on 21 June 1968 (Licence No.1028).

In 1992 the Commonwealth Government handed over Cessnock Airport to Cessnock City Council.

Cessnock City Council continued to operate it as a licensed airport until the late 1980’s when the Council decided not to continue the licensing, but to operate the airport under the same conditions as a licensed airport.

In 1998 Council sought expressions of interest from parties with an interest in either managing the Aerodrome or in entering into a joint venture with Council for its development. This was followed in 1999 by Council calling for tenders for the management and development of Cessnock Aerodrome.

Council entered into an interim lease in 2004 and an agreement to lease in 2007 with Aviation & Leisure Corporation Pty Ltd for the management of the airport.

Council took back management of Cessnock Airport in December 2011.





5. Unique Value Proposition

A unique value proposition is a point of difference (something that others would find difficult to replicate).

The unique value proposition for Cessnock Airport is:

Gateway to the Hunter Valley

6. Strategic Assessment:

6.1 ENVIRONMENT

6.1.1 Socio-Economic

6.1.1.1 Demographics

The local government area of Cessnock has an estimated resident population of 52,493 (2011). In the 2011 ABS Census the local government area has a higher proportion of people in the age groups 0-17 years and 50-69 years than the NSW average.

29.5% of households within the local government area are in the lowest quartile of household incomes. However, the most significant change in Cessnock City between 2006 and 2011 was in the highest quartile of incomes which showed an increase of 722 households.

8,976 or 43% of Cessnock City's working residents travel outside of the local government area for work (with the most popular destinations being the Singleton and Maitland local government areas).

The Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of Census characteristics including income, educational attainment, unemployment and occupations. A score lower than 1,000 means a higher level of disadvantage. In 2006 the Cessnock local government area had a SEIFA of 936.4 (ranging from 868.8 in East Cessnock/Cessnock North to 1,089.1 in Allandale/Lovedale/Pokolbin/Mount View).

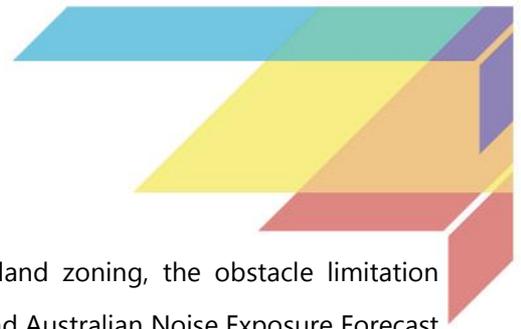
6.1.1.2 Economic Trends

The unemployment rate in the Cessnock local government area was 6.6% in December 2012 (compared with 5.1% for NSW and 5.2% for Australia).

The Westpac Melbourne Institute Index of Consumer Sentiment fell by 5.1% in April 2013 (from 110.5 in March to 104.9 in April). Consumer confidence is fragile despite the Reserve Bank cutting interest rates for more than 12 months.

Cessnock Council determined 805 development applications in 2011-12 (resulting in approvals valued at \$110m). This was an increase over the 751 determinations in the previous year.

The Wine Country area (where the airport is located) is a popular tourist destination. In 2012 the Hunter Region attracted 2.172 million domestic overnight



visitors, 5.278 million domestic day trippers and 113,400 international overnight visitors. In the year ended March 2012 the Hunter Tourism Region ranked 12th in Australia and 4th in NSW in terms of visitor expenditure

6.1.1.3 Regulations

Cessnock Airport operates under the national standards and advisory notes published by the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA). CASA administers the Civil Aviation Act (1988) through the accompanying Civil Aviation Regulations (CARs), Civil Aviation Orders (CAO), Civil Aviation Advisory Publication (CAAP), and the Manual of Standards (MOS).

In addition, Council has an Environment Protection Licence for helicopter activities at the airport.

Cessnock Airport operates the existing use provisions of S.109 of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* and is zoned SP2 – Infrastructure (Air Transport Facility) under the Cessnock LEP 2011.

The Cessnock Development Control Plan (2010) was adopted by Council on 15 September 2010 and came into force on 23 December 2011.

Part E: Specific Areas, Chapter 7: Cessnock Airport of DCP 2010 provides for an appropriate expansion of the facilities and use of Cessnock Airport and ensures that existing, surrounding development is not subject to adverse environmental impacts.

In addition to land zoning, the obstacle limitation surface (OLS) and Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF) provide a system to guide land use planning and development control in and around the Cessnock Airport.

The OLS are a series of reference surfaces that control the available airspace around the airport and define the desirable limits to which objects may project onto that airspace to ensure the safety of aircraft operations.

The ANEF provides a scientific measure of the aircraft noise exposure taking into account the frequency, intensity, time and duration of aircraft operations.

The OLS and ANEF have been mapped based on the maximum runway length at the airport, and Local Provisions 7.4 - Airspace operations and 7.5 - Development in areas subject to airport noise were adopted by Council with the Cessnock LEP 2011.

Council has an adopted policy with regards to the airport: the Cessnock Airport Operational Policy and User Guidelines. This policy was last updated in June 2012.

6.1.2 Market

The Federal Department of Infrastructure & Transport's General Aviation Survey 2010 found the number of aircraft covered by the survey increased by 2.7% in 2010 to 12,564.

The total hours flown by Australian VH registered aircraft in the general aviation and regional airline





sectors in 2010 were 2.1 million (an increase of 3.2% compared to 2009).

In addition the survey found an increasing trend in general aviation flying hours (including private, business, training, test & ferry, aerial work, agriculture, and charter) from 1,714 in 2000 to 1,847 in 2010.

6.1.3 Competitors

There are two airports (of a similar standard) within fifteen minutes flying time of Cessnock Airport:

- Maitland; and
- Warnervale.

These airports compete with Cessnock Airport for the basing of general aviation aircraft.

The future of both Maitland and Warnervale is limited as they are subject to residential and industrial development pressures within the next five-ten years.

There are also landing areas at Singleton and Luskintyre (both without sealed runways), and a former local airport at Belmont that is currently not operational.

Although not direct competitors, there are three major regional airports (with regular passenger transport services) within thirty minutes flying time of Cessnock Airport:

- Newcastle;
- Taree; and
- Bankstown.

The proposed growth of Newcastle Airport (in terms of numbers of flights) may provide opportunities for smaller aviation operations to re-locate to Cessnock. Similarly, individuals and businesses forced out of Bankstown Airport may also consider re-locating to Cessnock.

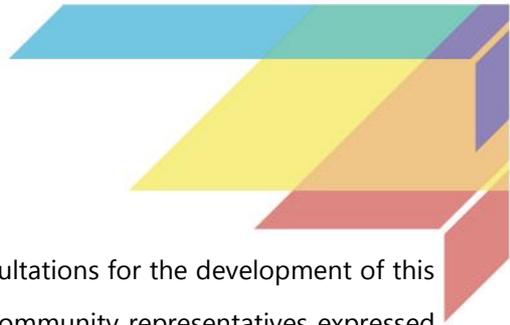
6.2 CUSTOMERS

In 2011-12 there were 40,376 movements at Cessnock Airport – with movements (including arrivals and departures) being calculated in line with the methodology used by Air Services Australia.

When Council took back management of the airport in December 2011, it distributed a feedback form to airport stakeholders (aircraft owners and aviation business operators) and the following suggestions were received:

- Revert to standard circuits
- Improve the overall appearance
- Improve the location of the windsock
- Improve access to the fuel facility
- Registration of the airport
- Instrument approach
- Runway extension
- Expansion of hangars and sealed taxiways
- Opportunities to service the tourism industry
- Opportunities for regular passenger transport





Council assessed these issues and addressed the most immediate priorities relating to safety and community amenity. This plan now identifies steps to undertake some of the of the medium-longer term initiatives.

Council has received positive feedback from stakeholders since it took back management of the airport (in December 2011) commenting on the *"positive difference"*, the *"vast improvement"*, and the *"happier, safer environment"*.

During the past twelve months (April 2012-March 2013) Air Services Australia reported no noise complaints regarding Cessnock Airport, while Council received nine complaints.

6.3 OPERATIONS

6.3.1 Operations

Cessnock Airport is currently an unregistered aerodrome, although it is operated by Cessnock City Council to the standard of a registered airport. On 5 June 2013 Council resolved to register the airport.

During daylight hours circuits are left-hand off both runways; while at night runway 35 has right hand circuits (due to the surrounding terrain) and runway 17 remains left hand.

Both fixed wing and helicopter aircraft operate from Cessnock Airport. The following activities are currently carried out at the airport: flying schools, adventure flights, scenic flights, charter flights, airport transfers, medical transfers, recreational flying, ballooning, and aircraft maintenance.

During the consultations for the development of this Strategic Plan, community representatives expressed a preference for not having parachuting operations located within 5Nm of the airport.



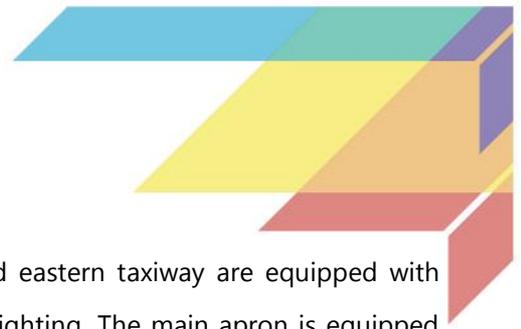
6.3.1.1 Location

Cessnock Airport is located 5km north of the city of Cessnock in the vineyard area and is owned and operated by Cessnock City Council.

Cessnock Airport is a site of approximately 78 hectares located at Lot 2 DP 1072432. There is capacity for future development on the site.

Cessnock City Council licenses the land for several privately-owned hangars located at Cessnock Airport. During the consultations for the development of this Strategic Plan, airport operators expressed a desire for freehold title of the land on which their hangars were located.





In the immediate future, Council will be retaining ownership of the site and may reconsider this issue once the development concept and financial analysis have been prepared.

A separate "landlocked" site (surrounded by Lot 2 DP 2072432) has a development approval for a hotel. The owner of this site has indicated that he does not currently intend to proceed with the hotel development but to instead construct hangars for aviation uses.

6.3.1.2 Infrastructure

The current runway length of 1,097m (and width of 30m with a centre sealed section of 23m) limits the size of aircraft that can use the airport. The current runway strength of 5,700/450 (65 PSI) also limits the size of airport that can use the airport, although pavement concessions can be issued for larger aircraft that can land and take off using the available runway.

There is a full-length parallel taxiway (with a 10m wide sealed pavement) on the western side of the runway with four connecting taxiways to the runway, as well as an eastern taxiway connecting the runway to the main apron.

The main apron on the eastern side (55m x 45m sealed) services the terminal area.

There are a number of unsealed and natural surface aprons used by general aviation aircraft.

The runway and eastern taxiway are equipped with pilot activated lighting. The main apron is equipped with flood lighting.

An Automatic Weather Station is located at the south-western end of the airport.

An aircraft fuelling facility is located on the north-eastern end of the site.

A terminal facility is located on the eastern side of the runway. The terminal is serviced by adequate car parking facilities.

A tourist information centre and public toilet and shower facilities are on the eastern side of the site with access from Wine Country Drive.

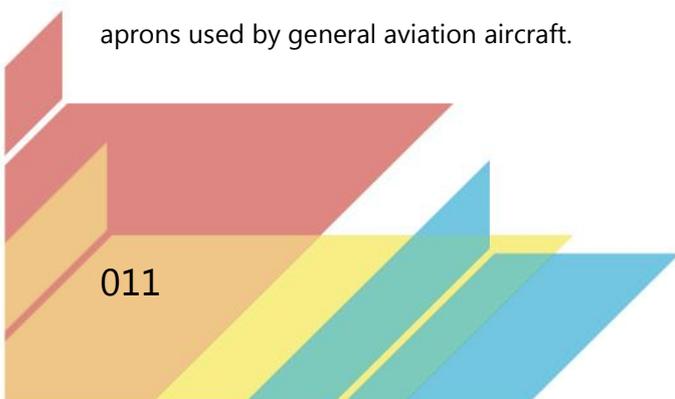
There is one privately-owned hangar on the eastern side of the site and several privately-owned hangars on the western side of the site.

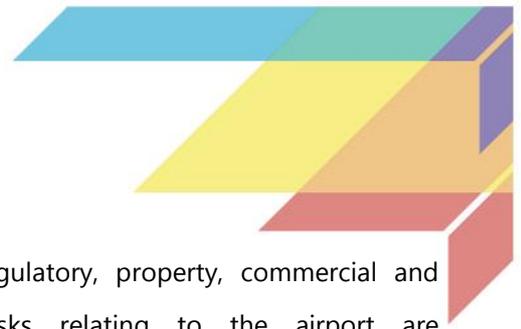
Council owns a hangar, two sheds and a building on the western side of the site.

Site drainage is largely facilitated by two creeks which cross the site and a large creek on the southern boundary. Large open drains have been constructed along the western taxiway to facilitate drainage from that area.

Power and water supply are provided through the local utility companies.

Sewerage is available on the eastern side of the site, while on the western side sewage is treated through individual on-site sewage management systems.





6.3.2 Financial

The most recent adopted budgets for Cessnock Airport are summarised in the table below:

<i>Item</i>	<i>2011-12 Revised budget</i>	<i>2012-13 Adopted budget</i>	<i>2013-14 Adopted budget</i>
Maintenance & Operations	24,210	41,515	85,000
Employee Costs	10,000	120,000	106,000
Major Works	200,750	73,000	195,000
Administration	244,000	0	40,000
Utilities	68,367	74,600	78,150
Other	8,982	0	0
Sub-Total Expenditure	556,309	309,115	504,150
Fees & Charges	(33,300)	(73,200)	(91,000)
Licences	(20,000)	(29,000)	(30,000)
Rentals	(72,200)	(96,000)	(92,000)
Restricted Assets	(323,881)	0	0
Sub-Total Income	(449,381)	(198,200)	(213,000)
Net Cost/ (Return)	106,928	110,915	291,150

The 2011-12 and 2012-13 budget include additional remedial maintenance works that were undertaken when Council took back management of the airport.

The airport generates approximately half its revenues from landing fees and annual operating fees and the other half from licence fees and rentals.

Significant infrastructure investment could be funded from grants or loans.

6.3.3 Organisation

Council employs a qualified Airport Operations Coordinator.

A range of regulatory, property, commercial and operational tasks relating to the airport are undertaken by Council staff.

Aerodrome engineering and technical inspections are carried out by Council engineering staff or consultants.

Maintenance is carried out by Council maintenance staff and contractors.

The Airport Reporting Officer role is currently outsourced.

Landing charges are recorded and processed by a specialist aviation billing contractor (Avdata).





6.4 SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Public ownership with freehold title
- Strategic location
- Availability of land for expansion
- Access

Weaknesses

- Current runway length limits use of the airport by commuter and transport category aircraft
- Currently operating at a loss
- Financial capacity of Council to invest out of its discretionary funds
- Lack of water infrastructure on the western side of the airport
- Terrain approximately 8km to the West and Southwest of the current runway has the potential to impact on general airport operations. (This risk has been mitigated by the circuit procedures listed in the ERSA.)
- Noise and other negative amenity impacts on neighbouring residents (these need to be balanced against any proposed development activities)

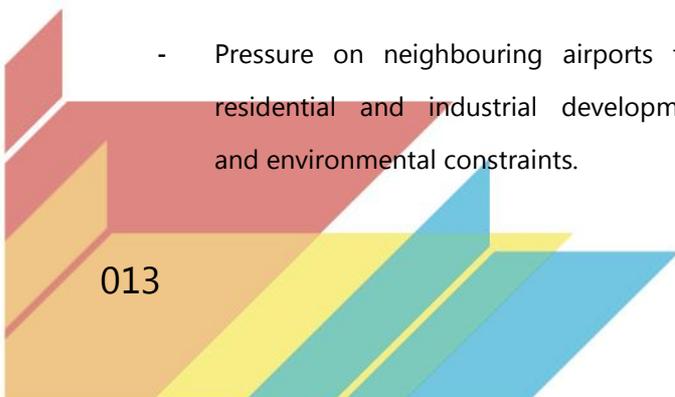
Opportunities

- Pressure on neighbouring airports from residential and industrial developments and environmental constraints.

- Proposed growth of Newcastle Airport.
- The ongoing investment in tourism developments and events in the vineyards area
- Improved accessibility by road from Sydney (e.g. Hunter Expressway)
- The need for the Hunter to develop new industries in light of declining employment opportunities in the coal mining and steel industries
- Demand for pilots and flying training
- Aviation-related industry development
- Base for aerial work (e.g. surveys)
- Growth in sports aviation
- Interest in short-stay high activity level holidays
- Regular passenger transport (RPT) services
- Charter services (fly-in fly-out and charter tours)

Threats

- Development of competitor airports
- Improvements in the access, efficiency and convenience of road transport
- High Australian dollar leading to a loss of markets for overseas students for flight training
- Possible incompatibility of various types of aviation activities at the airport





Cessnock Airport



Date Produced : 3/12/2013
Designed By : Cessnock City Council
Scale : 1 : 9,000
Reference : Airport Map_A4_031213

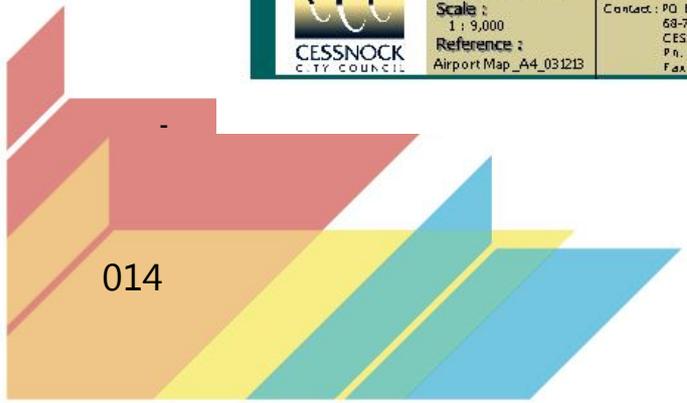
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7. Objectives

The following objectives have been identified to achieve the vision and mission for Cessnock Airport.

- Be a safe and complying airport facility that minimises negative impacts on residential amenity
- Promote economic and tourism development across the LGA
- Provide a sustainable revenue stream

7.1 Be a safe and complying facility that minimises negative impacts on residential amenity

- Complying with all Civil Aviation Safety Authority requirements.
- Continual monitoring, review and enforcement of noise abatement procedures.

7.2 Promote economic and tourism development across the LGA

- Building an attractive investment proposition for businesses
- Promoting the airport as part of the local government area's tourism and business development

7.3 Provide a sustainable revenue stream

- Providing a return on the community's investment
- Implementing equitable, user-pays charging regimes

In order to meet these objectives a suite of development guidelines for the airport will be required.

These guidelines will include, but are not limited to: an indicative layout plan, a detailed masterplan, staging plans, an infrastructure plan and associated amendments to the development control plan. This process should consider the context of the site including its relationship with adjoining lands.

Feedback from the consultations during the development of this Strategic Plan agreed that, in general terms, the entrance to the airport should be retained (and enhanced with tourism and related retail services) on the eastern side of the site, while the western side should cater for development of aviation-related businesses and industries (taking advantage of the existing road frontages) and general aviation activities and hangarage.



8. Measures:

The following primary targets have been established for Cessnock Airport:

- **Compliance with CASA Regulations**
 - Definition: The number non-complying of incidences reported in scheduled and unscheduled inspections of the airport by CASA.
 - Current: N/A
 - Target: Nil
 - Comment: Once the airport is registered, CASA will undertake scheduled inspections on a regular basis as well as unscheduled inspections.
- **Satisfaction of Airport Stakeholders**
 - Definition: The number of instances of positive feedback (verbal or written) from airport stakeholders.
 - Current: 6 (2012)
 - Target: 2 per annum
- **Minimisation of Complaints**
 - Definition: The number of substantiated complaints regarding airport operations received by Council.
 - Current: 2 (2013)
 - Target: No greater than 12 per annum.

- **Employment generated by airport operations**

- Definition: The number of full-time jobs generated by businesses located at Cessnock Airport.
- Current: 33 (November 2013)
- Target: 40 within 3 years

- **Net Result of Airport Operations**

- Definition: The amount of income generated by Cessnock Airport net of operating expenses and loan repayments.
- Current: (\$291,150) (2013-14 budget)
- Short-term Target: >(\$300,000)
- Medium-term Target: Breakeven





9. Strategies

The following strategies have been identified to progress the objectives for Cessnock Airport.

- Build a reputation as a well-operated airport
- Provide certainty to the community and airport operators
- Develop the asset
- Market the asset
- Optimise revenues

9.1 Build a reputation as a well-operated airport

- Compliance with all Civil Aviation Safety Authority requirements.
- Maintenance of the infrastructure.

9.2 Provide certainty to the community and airport operators

- Monitoring, review and enforcement of local operating guidelines and Fly Neighbourly Policy (to minimise negative impacts on residential amenity)
- Indicative layout plan and site masterplan
- Up-to-date planning instruments
- Consistency in property administration

9.3 Develop the asset

- Encourage economic development
- Return on the community's investment

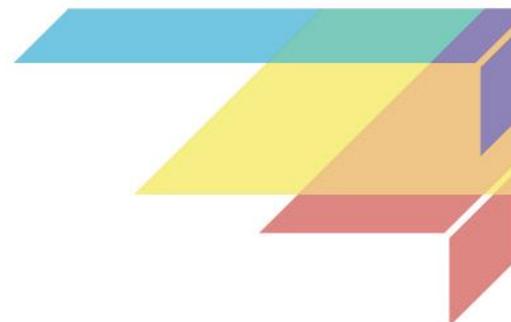
9.4 Market the asset

- Promotion and marketing of Cessnock Airport

9.5 Optimise revenues

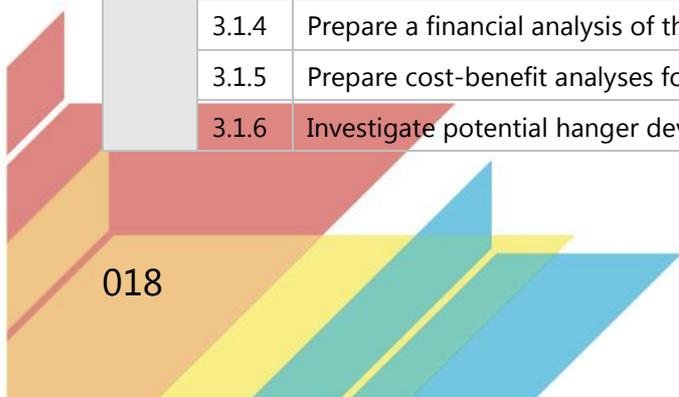
- Contain costs
- Identify alternative revenue streams





10. Actions

No.	Action	
1	Objective: Be a safe and complying airport facility that minimises negative impacts on residential amenity	
1.1	Strategy: Build a reputation as a well-operated airport	
	1.1.1	Register the Airport.
	1.1.2	Install an instrument approach.
	1.1.3	Improve access to the fuel facility.
1.2	Strategy: Provide certainty to the community and airport operators	
	1.2.1	Regularly review the Cessnock Airport Operational Policy & User Guidelines
1.3	Strategy: Develop the asset	
	1.3.1	Prepare an infrastructure development plan for the airport.
	1.3.2	Prepare an asset management plan for the airport.
2	Objective: Promote economic and tourism development across the LGA	
2.1	Strategy: Provide certainty to the community and airport operators	
	2.1.1	Update the Development Control Plan.
	2.1.2	Standardise the property (leasing and licensing) arrangements.
2.2	Strategy: Develop the asset	
	2.2.1	Confirm maximum possible runway length.
	2.2.2	Prepare an indicative layout plan for the site (providing for future expansion).
	2.2.3	Prepare a detailed masterplan (including potential staging).
2.3	Strategy: Market the asset	
	2.3.1	Develop a website.
	2.3.2	Review and improve airport signage.
3	Objective: Provide a sustainable revenue stream	
3.1	Strategy: Optimise revenues	
	3.1.1	Prepare an airport signage procedure.
	3.1.2	Formalise aircraft parking procedures.
	3.1.3	Prepare a commercial business plan.
	3.1.4	Prepare a financial analysis of the development concept.
	3.1.5	Prepare cost-benefit analyses for specific infrastructure investment projects.
	3.1.6	Investigate potential hanger development (and financing thereof).



II. Summary

*** RESPECT *** INTEGRITY *** INNOVATION *** FAIRNESS *** TEAMWORK *** COMMITMENT ***

GATEWAY TO THE HUNTER VALLEY

Direction	Objectives	Strategies	Measures
<p>VISION: A well-planned and serviced aerodrome facility managed in a manner that attracts environmentally responsible economic development opportunities to the Cessnock region.</p> <p>MISSION To productively use the aerodrome's assets for the economic benefit of the residents of the Cessnock local government area.</p>	Be a safe and complying facility that minimises negative impacts on residential amenity	<p>Build a reputation as a well-operated airport</p> <p>Provide certainty to the community and airport operators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance with CASA regulations - Satisfaction of airport stakeholders - Minimisation of complaints
	Promote economic and tourism development across the LGA	<p>Develop the asset</p> <p>Market the asset</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment generated by airport operations
	Provide a sustainable revenue stream	Optimise revenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Net Return on airport operations



12. Bibliography

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