



Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport

Noise Abatement Procedures

The new Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport (WSI) is set to open for domestic and international travellers as well as freight in 2026. Noise Abatement Procedures will be applied to aircraft operating out of the new airport.

Background

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (the Department) was responsible for the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the preliminary flight paths. Following extensive community and stakeholder engagement on the draft EIS between October 2023 and January 2024, the Department published the final EIS on 7 November 2024. The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, in consultation with the Minister for Environment, authorised the flight paths for WSI as presented in the EIS on 4 June 2025.

Following Airservices Australia's detailed design and community engagement of the authorised flight paths and the airspace around these, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) approved the Airspace Change Proposal on 27 November 2025.

Airservices is now working on implementing the airspace changes and the new flight paths for WSI, which will come into effect on 9 July 2026 ahead of the commencement of airport operations.

Noise Abatement Procedures

Noise Abatement Procedures (NAPs) are implemented by Air Traffic Control (ATC), airports or airport owners. They contain instructions for pilots and ATC for the runways, flight paths and procedures that should be followed, where safe, to minimise the impacts of aircraft noise on the community.

NAPs aim to reduce noise at the airport during ground operations and noise generated during the arrival and departure phases of flight.

For a major airport like WSI, NAPs typically evolve over time, with Airservices developing and reviewing the procedures in consultation with communities, airlines, the airport operator and Community Aviation Consultation Groups.

What are the NAPs for WSI?

Preferred runway modes of operation

Community feedback received during the EIS process was considered when determining preferred runway modes of operation, and when a particular runway mode of operation would be used to reduce the noise impact over residential areas.

During the day, Runway 23 (arrivals from the north-east and departures to the south-west) will be prioritised to minimise overflight of residential areas.

At night, the use of Reciprocal Runway Operations (RRO) (arrivals and departures to and from the south-west runway end) will be prioritised followed by Runway 23.

The table below provides an overview of the preferred runway mode of operation and the alternative selection, if the preferred mode can't be operated. The image below the table illustrates the direction of arrival and departure flights in each mode.

ATC nominates the runway for use depending on weather conditions such as temperature, wind, cloud cover, and rain, as well as time of day and traffic conditions. The preferred runway is used whenever conditions safely allow. Changing weather conditions often result in multiple changes of runway modes over the course of a day to ensure safe operations are maintained.

The use of night runway operating modes at WSI is dependent on transition to and from Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport's (KSA) curfew, so this means there may be variations from day to day to accommodate these transitions.

Priority	Landing	Take-off
Day/Evening (5.30am to 11pm)		
1	Runway 23	Runway 23
2	Runway 05	Runway 05
Night (11pm to 5.30am)		
1	Runway 05 (RRO)	Runway 23 (RRO)
2	Runway 23	Runway 23
3	Runway 05	Runway 05

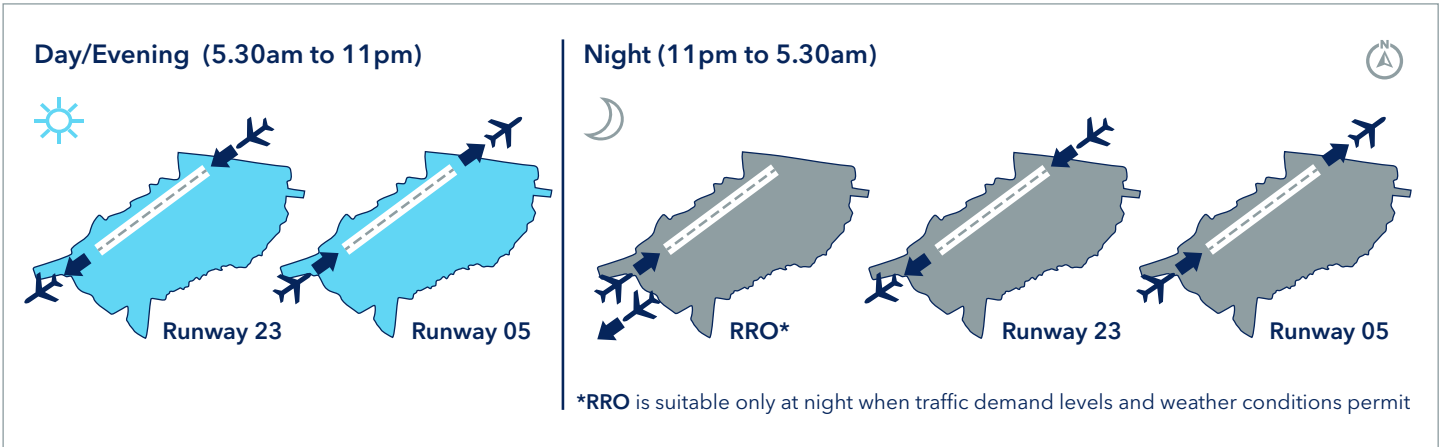


Figure 1: Runway modes of operation



Scan the QR code or click here to watch our runway mode explainer video

Noise preferential flight paths (day vs night)

Noise preferential flight paths are used to direct aircraft away from residential areas, where possible. This includes the use of different flight paths between 11pm and 5.30am, when additional airspace flexibility is available because of the curfew at (KSA). For more information on the different flight paths including maps, refer to the [Final flight paths and airspace factsheet](#).

NAP for RRO

WSI is expected to use RRO as its preferred runway mode between 11pm and 5.30am with an aim to provide the best noise minimisation outcomes for the surrounding communities.

RRO will concentrate arrival and departure flight paths over the lesser populated areas to the immediate south-west of WSI. The availability of RRO is dependent on suitable weather conditions, the location of arriving traffic to enable clear airspace and when air traffic volumes are low enough to permit safe operations. The number of movements per hour under RRO will decrease over time as the airport's traffic volume grows.

A NAP for RRO has been developed to further minimise these impacts by tactically directing aircraft off the designated flight paths and around communities when lower traffic volumes allow. Aircraft departing to the north or west will continue straight for approximately 5 nautical miles (9.3km) rather than immediately turning. From this point, ATC will tactically direct aircraft to remain south of the Great Western Highway avoiding communities until they join the published flight path over the National Park west of Katoomba (see blue shaded area in **Figure 2**).

When night-time traffic volumes are higher, ATC will cancel the NAP and will select the runway mode best suited to manage the traffic.

Following community feedback received during detailed design engagement, the area in which aircraft will be tactically directed (called a vectoring area) was slightly adjusted to reduce impacts on the Megalong Valley.

More information about community feedback on NAPs and the revised vectoring area can be found in the [Feedback Summary and Assessment Report](#).

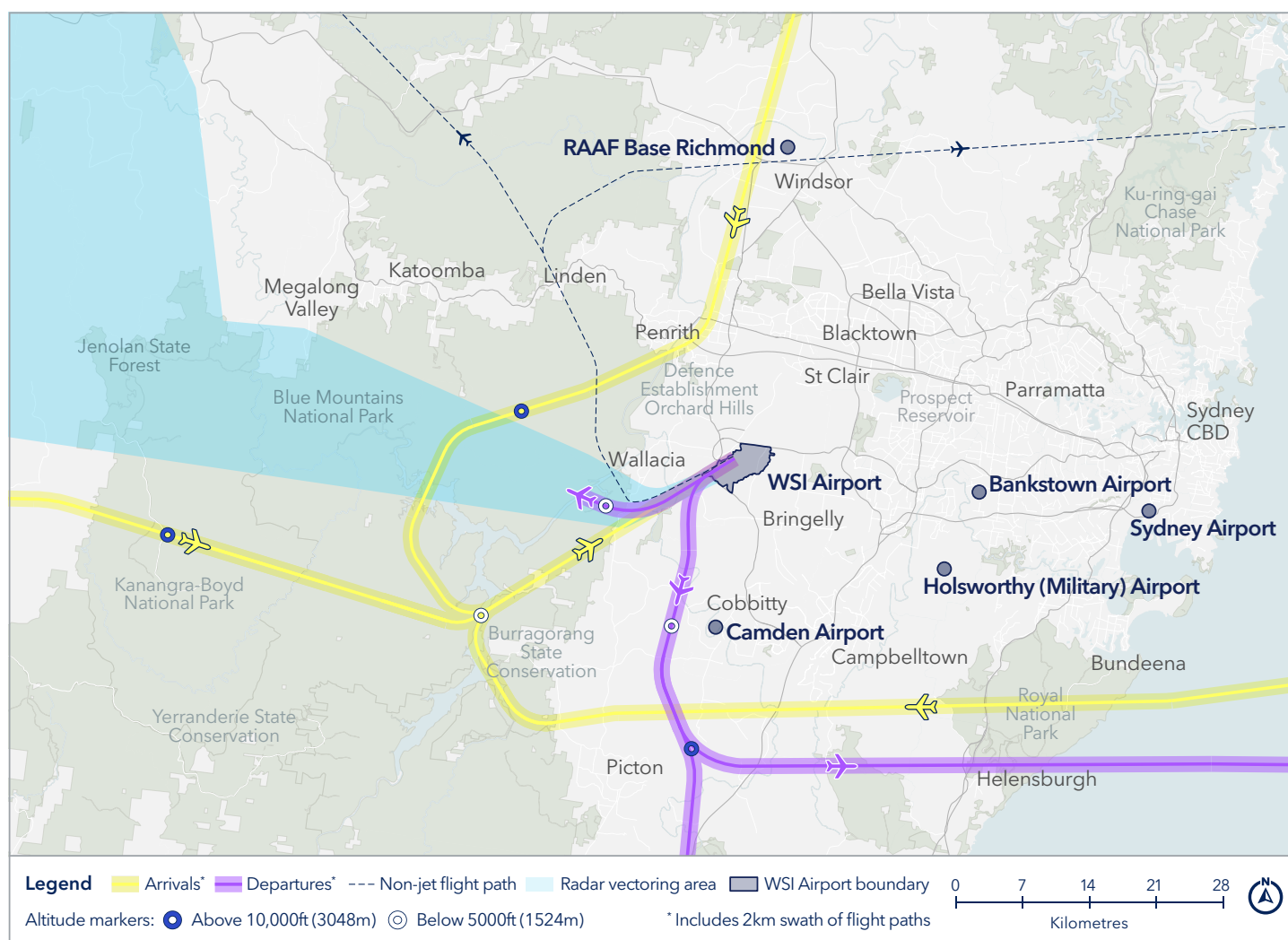


Figure 2: Map of RRO-NAP

Noise Abatement Departure Procedures (NADPs)

When applied by pilots NADPs can reduce the noise impact during departure. The noise reduction outcome depends on the type of aircraft, engine type, thrust required, and the height at which thrust is reduced.

At Australia's major airports, NADPs are generally required over residential areas to reduce aircraft overflight noise in the first 20km of flight.

There are two types of NADPs:

- NADP 1 is used to reduce residential noise around and over the runway end by prioritising gaining height. After take-off engines are initially set to high power, creating more noise. In NADP 1 thrust is reduced between 800ft and 1500ft, decreasing the drag, which makes the aircraft accelerate quicker. The flap retraction is delayed until the aircraft is above 3000ft. Retracting flaps reduces the lift, the wings return to a more aerodynamic shape, and drag is further reduced, enabling a faster, steeper climb. The combined effect of thrust reduction and flap retraction reduces noise over communities, improves climb efficiency and allows the aircraft to transition from take-off configuration to normal flight. This procedure reduces noise over communities close to the airport where aircraft are at lower altitudes in the initial stage of flight.

- NADP 2 is used to reduce noise over areas more distant from the runway end by prioritising increasing forward speed after take-off. Thrust is reduced at 800ft and flaps are retracted between 800ft and 3000ft to slow down the climb, keeping aircraft lower closer to the airport. At 3000ft the aircraft will accelerate and increase its angle to gain height, so they can rapidly gain altitude to be higher over communities further from the airport.

Community feedback identified a preference for NADP2, which reduces noise over areas further from the airport. As a result, pilots will be asked to prioritise NADP2 where possible.

For more information about community feedback on NADPs, please refer to the [*Feedback Summary and Assessment Report*](#).

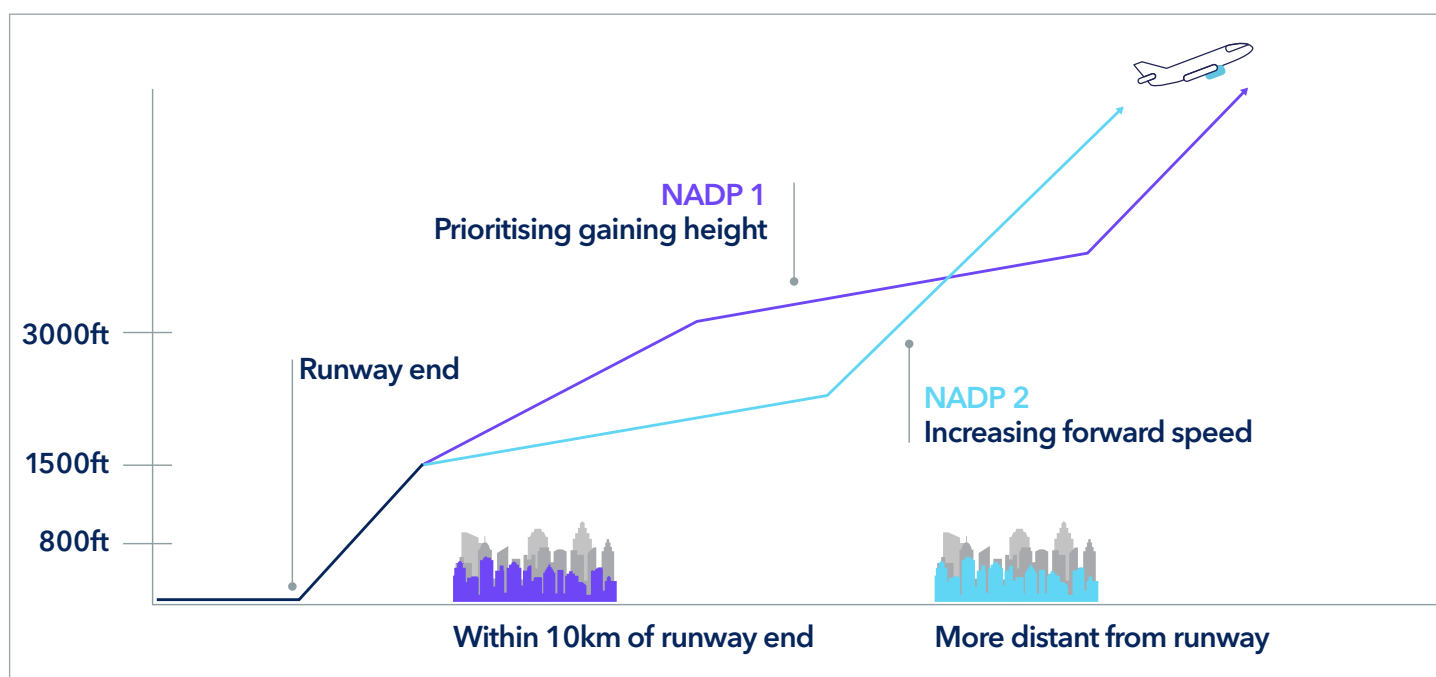


Figure 3: Noise Abatement Departure Procedures



Image 1: Aerial view of the new WSI Airport terminal and runway. Image credit: WSACo.

Altitude restrictions

ATC generally manages aircraft using the published flight paths. In some situations, limited changes may be made to ensure safe and efficient operations.

During the day, when required to manage traffic efficiently, ATC may direct arriving aircraft off their assigned arrival flight paths into WSI. If this occurs, aircraft must rejoin their designated flight paths at or above 5,000ft. Departing aircraft may also be directed off their assigned departure flight paths once they are above 5,000ft.

At night, arriving aircraft are required to remain on their assigned arrival flight paths. Where practical, aircraft will stay at or above 5,000ft when flying over residential areas. Departing aircraft are required to remain on their assigned flight paths.

An exception applies under NAP for RRO. Under this procedure, aircraft departing to the north and west may be directed off their assigned flight paths and radar-vectorised over less populated areas of the Blue Mountains, as shown in **Figure 2**.

Minimising the use of reverse thrust

In some instances, pilots need to use reverse thrust during landing. This is because it helps slow down the aircraft for landing, and supports safe and efficient runway exits, which enable the smooth flow of traffic on the airfield. Even though the airfield and adjacent land-use plans are designed to minimise the effect of on-runway noise to neighbouring communities, the use of reverse thrust increases the noise made by aircraft once they are on the ground.

Between 10pm and 6am, pilots will be requested to minimise the use of reverse thrust where operationally acceptable.

Limitations of NAPs

NAPs are not mandatory. They are applied when operating conditions make it safe to do so.

ATC may instruct pilots to leave the published flight path for various reasons. This can include to avoid storm activity, to maintain separation from other aircraft or to more efficiently operate the airspace. These are all valid exemptions to the use of the NAP but will be applied only where necessary.

NAPs may not be applied when their use would generate delays or congestion, which can result in increased noise and emission impacts from aircraft holding or other operations.

ATC or pilots may also not be able to use NAPs in certain situations, for example due to weather conditions, traffic volume or emergency operations.

Ultimately, the pilot in command of the aircraft is responsible for the safe operation of that aircraft, and a requirement to fly a different procedure to the NAP cannot be overruled by ATC. Exceptions also apply for emergencies, rescue flights, or urgent medical operations.

NAP reporting

Airservices monitors and reports on the use of NAPs and conducts reviews to monitor the effectiveness of NAPs. Our **Aircraft In Your Neighbourhood** site provides information on aircraft operations across several major Australian airports. This site will include WSI once operations commence. NAP reporting is provided on this site.

Engage Airservices

Visit our Engage Airservices project page to stay informed about the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport airspace and flight path changes. Engage Airservices will be the central source for project information.

You can also subscribe to receive emails on project updates and engagement opportunities. Scan the QR code to stay informed and enter your email address to subscribe.



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