

Sydney runway to remain open during safety upgrade

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Residents of Coogee, Eastlakes and Maroubra will cop 15 extra planes overhead per day during the upgrade of the east-west runway at Sydney Airport.

Under the former coalition government, the plan had been to close the east-west runway during the works, now scheduled to begin in October.

But Infrastructure Minister Anthony Albanese announced today that installation of a 'Jet Blaster Barrier' across the western end of the East-West runway will protect the worksite and allow the eastern end to be used for take-offs during the renovations.

"Keeping the eastern end of the runway open for take-offs will ensure that residents to the north, north-west and south of the Airport do not bear the full burden of aircraft noise during construction, and will get some respite when weather and operational conditions permit," Mr Albanese said.

"I know the residents of Sydney will be affected by the temporary changes in aircraft noise from this essential safety project, but every possible option has been examined in order to minimise the noise impact on surrounding communities."

Mr Albanese's spokesman said keeping the east-west runway open would mean about 15 extra planes per day for the eastern suburbs but it would be less than one an hour for the duration of the eight-month safety upgrade.

President of No Aircraft Noise party, Allan Rees, said the east-west runway take-offs would affect Coogee, Eastlakes and Maroubra but residents in Marrickville, Leichhardt and Drummoyne would still suffer extra noise during the construction period.

"They are only retaining take-offs to the east which can be done from the third runway anyway, so it's not really making any difference to people in the north and west," said Mr Rees.

However, Canada Bay mayor Angelo Tsirekas, said any reduction in airport noise for inner west residents would be appreciated.

"We are looking for any release we can get. We truly think it's appropriate to relieve inner west residents of aircraft noise," he said.

Waverley mayor, Ingrid Strewe, said she didn't get many complaints from residents about airport noise "but maybe I will in future."

Her fellow councillor, George Newhouse, said: "This is just more evidence that the long term operating plan for the airport is in a shambles."

The new plan will also see all airplanes land from the south, thereby crossing over Botany Bay.

The works, expected to cost Sydney Airport Cooperation \$80-\$100 million, are needed to meet

latest national and international safety standards.

The work is scheduled to be completed by May.

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