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Sydney Airport's East-West runway to stay open

All three runways at Sydney Airport will remain open while essential safety upgrades are made to the western end of its East-West runway – work which will ensure the runway meets international safety standards.

I have imposed 22 stringent conditions on the construction project, which include requiring Sydney Airport to install a 'Jet Blaster Barrier' across the western end of the East-West runway to protect the worksite.

The Jet Blaster Barrier will enable the eastern end of the East-West runway to be used for take-offs.

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.

Safety is paramount, which is why these works must occur.

Due to aviation safety regulations determined by the International Civil Aviation Organisation, the East-West runway would be shut permanently if the safety works are not undertaken.

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.

The key elements of my approval are:

- Aircraft will be able to depart off the eastern end of the East-West runway throughout the construction period;
- Full use of the East-West runway will be available at critical times after only 8 months, not the 15 months originally proposed. Work will take place 22 hours a day, 7 days a week. Some restrictions will continue for a further nine months;
- Ensuring a fair sharing of aircraft noise by introducing an additional

noise sharing mode (Mode 15) for the construction period which will allow planes to be directed off the shorter parallel runway to the east and north-east, providing relief to the residents to the north and north-west; and

- A total of 22 conditions have been set on the development to monitor construction progress, improve environmental and construction noise management, and improve community consultation.

The previous government chose to withhold information about these necessary works from the community in the lead up to the federal election.

In contrast, I have imposed conditions on Sydney Airport requiring them to consult with the community, Airservices Australia and my Department throughout the project, including monthly meetings with the Implementation and Monitoring Committee of the Sydney Airport Community Forum (SACF).

Under these conditions, Sydney Airport will also be required to maintain a community complaints service.

I would like to thank the SACF, Sydney Airport, Airservices Australia and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority for working with the Government to achieve real progress on this challenging issue.

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