

# NASF Airport Public Safety Zones Guideline

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What

**Q: What is a Public Safety Zone (PSZ)?**

A: Public Safety Zones (PSZs) are designated areas of land at the end of airport runways within which certain planning restrictions may apply. These zones seek to limit land uses within the PSZ that increase the number of people living, working or congregating in the zone and the storage of hazardous materials in the zone. The approach to PSZs in Australia (through the National Airports Safeguarding Framework (NASF) Guideline) provides flexibility for state/territory governments to be proactive and identify and map PSZs at airports, or take a reactive approach and consider public safety risk on a case-by-case basis in response to development proposals in close proximity to airport runways.

**Q: What area does a PSZ cover?**

A: The size and shape of PSZs are dependent on each airport's unique set of operations. This means that for some airports the PSZ will be contained within the airport boundary, whereas for other airports the PSZ will cover a wider area extending to land outside of the airport. However, in all cases, a PSZ takes the shape of an elongated triangular or four-sided zone tapering away from the runway end. See **Attachment A** for an example from the current Queensland planning system.

**Q: How does it differ from a Runway End Safety Area (RESA)?**

A: PSZs are sometimes confused with RESAs, which are cleared ground areas extending from the end of the runway strip for the purpose of decelerating an aircraft if it overruns the runway. While a RESA seeks to address the risk to aircraft and passengers, the PSZ seeks to address the risk to the community around an airport. The application of PSZs occurs in addition to safety areas required by legislated safety standards, such as RESAs.

### Why

**Q: Why consider PSZs at airports?**

A: By enabling suitable developments to be properly located and preventing unsuitable new developments from going ahead, the use of PSZs reduces the already low risk of an air transport accident affecting people who live, work or travel in close proximity to airports.

Data collated by the International Civil Aviation Organization indicates that, while statistically very low, accidents that occur during the take-off or landing phase are most likely to occur within 1 km before the runway on landing or within 500m beyond the runway end on take-off.<sup>1</sup>

The United Kingdom, United States of America and some European countries already have policies in place to limit development near airport runway ends. However, Queensland is currently the only Australian jurisdiction to have in place an airport Public Safety Zone policy.

**Q: Why now?**

A: The National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group (NASAG), comprising of Commonwealth, State and Territory Government planning and transport officials, the Australian Government Department of Defence, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, Airservices Australia and the Australian Local Government Association, has been working collaboratively to develop a Guideline on PSZs. This new Guideline forms part of the National Airports Safeguarding Framework (NASF). The NASF is a national land-use planning framework that aims to ensure aviation safety requirements are recognised in land use planning decisions. It is the responsibility of each state and territory to implement the PSZ Guideline into their respective planning systems. While the Guideline informs a consistent approach to PSZs at Australian airports, it also allows for some flexibility in how states/territories choose to adopt PSZs.

**Q: Has something changed to make it less safe to live around the airport?**

A: The risk to those living, working or congregating in PSZs is the same as it always has been. The presence of a PSZ does not increase the risk of an aircraft crash. It is a very low risk compared with many other risks that most people encounter in their daily lives.

## Who

**Q: Who is responsible for implementing PSZs?**

A: Twenty-two Australian airports are under Commonwealth Government planning control administered under the *Airports Act 1996*. The Commonwealth is responsible for policy advice regarding public safety risks within the boundaries of these leased federal airports. State, territory and local governments [*or insert name of particular jurisdiction*] are responsible for land use and development assessment and approvals concerning land outside the boundaries of leased federal airports. Planning on and around other airports that are not leased federal airports is also the responsibility of state, territory and local governments [*or insert name of particular jurisdiction*] or private operators. This includes consideration of public safety risks in the vicinity of the ends of airport runways.

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland Government, 2016, *State Planning Policy—State interest guideline: Strategic airports and aviation facilities*, Brisbane Qld, p 27.

**Q: Who is affected by this change?**

A: PSZs vary by location. To find out if a particular house, business or any other structure is located within a PSZ you should contact the relevant airport, or your state/territory or local planning authority.

**Q. My house or business is within the PSZ. What does that mean for me?**

A: PSZs are not applied to existing development and many types of future development – such as extensions to existing houses – may still be allowed. For more information, you should contact your state/territory or local council/planning authority.

**Q: How will the introduction of a PSZ affect the value of my property?**

A: The risk to those living in or near a PSZ is the same as it has always been. Therefore, the introduction of a PSZ should not affect the value of properties located around the airport.

Although focused on the impact of aircraft noise rather than PSZs, studies<sup>2</sup> have found that, houses in aircraft noise affected locations, have achieved similar or higher prices and capital growth than non-affected locations. The decision to purchase a house has also been shown to be based on a range of factors such as proximity to schools, work and services.

**Q: Will any properties have to be vacated, demolished, or modified as a result of the introduction of PSZs?**

A: No. The introduction of a PSZ will not have any impact upon existing residential, commercial or industrial properties.

**Q: How is the community being consulted/informed about PSZs?**

A: General information about the NASF PSZ Guideline can be found exhibited:

- on the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities website; or
- through links on your state/territory planning department website.

Consultations will also be undertaken through Community Aviation Consultative Groups (CACGs)<sup>3</sup> and Planning Coordination Forums (PCFs)<sup>4</sup> in each state/territory.

Since the new Guideline allows for flexibility in how states/territories choose to adopt PSZs, detailed community consultation is a matter for individual jurisdictions and will depend on the approach taken. For example, some states choosing to adopt a planning-led approach may provide additional community information sessions and/or airport specific information through local councils.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, a Queensland University of Technology study of 180,000 house sales between 1988 and 2013 found that property prices had grown faster in some suburbs under flight paths than in similar regions with no aircraft noise. A similar study for Melbourne Airport's proposed Runway Development Program, conducted by RMIT, concluded that price and performance of property value is more closely linked to socio-economic status than aircraft noise impact.

<sup>3</sup> All federally leased airports operate CACGs, with membership usually by invitation only and generally consisting of representatives from the airport, federal and state governments, Airservices Australia, and local communities.

<sup>4</sup> All major capital city airports and some secondary airports operate PCFs. These forums provide for consultation between airport operators and senior local, state and federal government authorities responsible for town planning, transport and infrastructure investment. Membership is by invitation and generally consists of representatives from the airport, federal, state and local governments, and Airservices Australia.

# Where

## **Q: Which airports will have PSZs?**

A: All leased federal airports will be expected to consider public safety risk on airports. It is up to each state/territory and local government to decide how best to implement the new NASF PSZ Guideline into their planning schemes. A PSZ will not necessarily be introduced at all airports. For more information on which airports will be introducing PSZs, please contact the relevant airport, or your state/territory or local planning authority.

## **Q: How are PSZs determined?**

A: The PSZ boundary identifies the area within which, any person living or working for a period of a year, has approximately a 1 in 100,000 chance per year of being fatally injured as a result of an aircraft accident. As discussed below, compared to other risks we take every day, this risk is very low.

## **Q: How does this risk compare to other risks in daily life?**

A: The 1 in 100,000 individual risk associated with living or working within a PSZ is actually a low level of risk compared with many other risks that most people encounter in their daily lives. For example, with an annual road toll of around 1,200 deaths, the risk to an individual of being fatally injured in a road accident in Australia is about 5 in 100,000.

# When

## **Q: When will PSZs be introduced?**

A: Following the completion of public consultation, NASAG will incorporate feedback and then present the finalised Guideline to the Transport and Infrastructure Council<sup>5</sup> (the Council) for endorsement. As the NASF PSZ Guideline allows for state/territory governments to choose how they can best address PSZs, once the Guideline has been endorsed by the Council, it is a matter for each individual approval body to determine the timeframe and approach for the introduction of PSZs. For more information, please contact the relevant airport, or state/territory or council/local planning authority.

# What else

## **Q: What other types of PSZs exist?**

A: The consideration of public safety risks is not unique to airports. These risks are also considered for developments and emergency management in the vicinity of a range of existing or proposed industrial sites that can give rise to adverse public safety outcomes. Examples of legislation,

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<sup>5</sup> The Transport and Infrastructure Council brings together Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for transport and infrastructure issues, as well as the Australian Local Government Association.

regulation and planning documents that prescribe buffer zones and non-aviation PSZs include those for the nuclear research facility in Lucas Heights, NSW and the protection of World Heritage sites.

**Q: What other measures are in place to minimise the risk to public safety near airport runways?**

A: Safety at aerodromes is enhanced in a variety of ways and is governed by Australia's Aviation State Safety Programme (SSP), as required by the International Civil Aviation Organization. The SSP sets out Australia's arrangements for maintaining and improving aviation safety. Under the umbrella of the SSP, Australia's aviation agencies and the aviation industry have significant roles to play in delivering quality safety outcomes. For example, runway safety is enhanced by airport operators through investment in infrastructure such as longer, wider landing strips; Runway End Safety Areas; dual taxi lanes on aprons; installation of runway stop bars; and upgraded approach lighting.

Australia's Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) also plays a key role in aviation safety through regulatory oversight of such functions as pilot licencing, aircraft operations and maintenance, and through safety education and training while Airservices Australia contributes to the safety of aircraft operations at and near airports through the provision of a range of air traffic management and advisory services. It is also important to note that airports around Australia already take into consideration aircraft crash risks and general public safety through their airport master planning processes.

**Q: How do I find out more?**

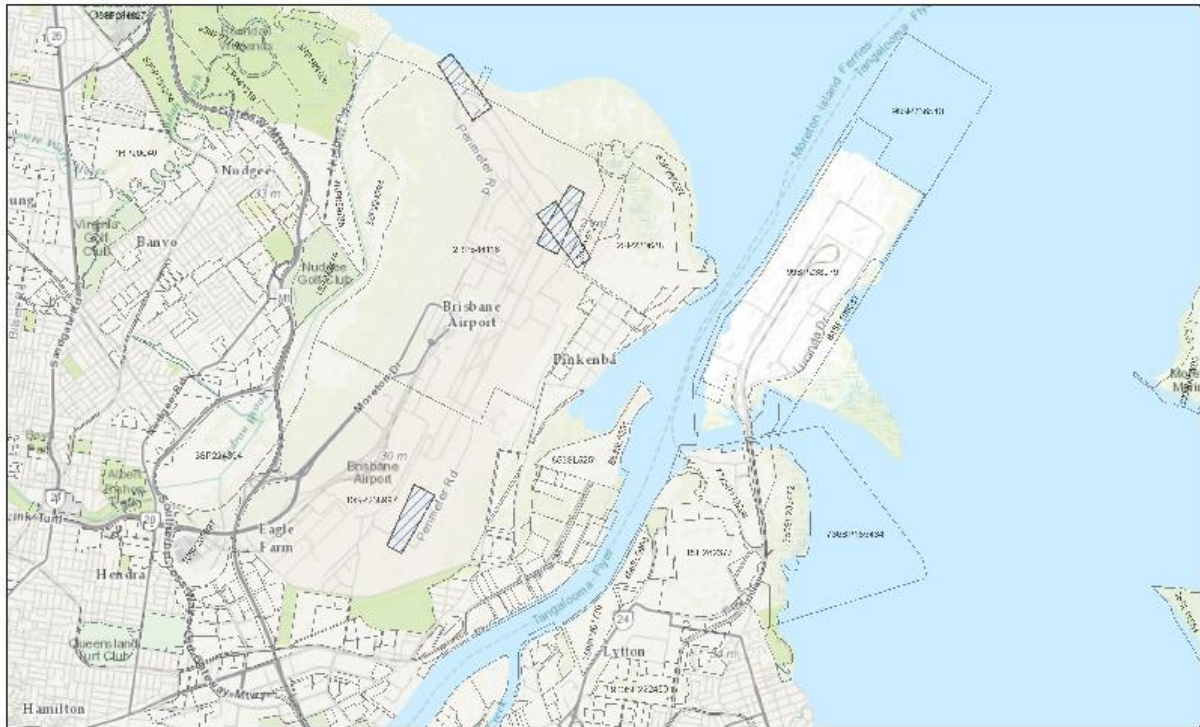
A: General enquiries regarding the NASF may be directed to the General Manager, Aviation Environment Branch, Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development or by email to [safeguarding@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:safeguarding@infrastructure.gov.au).

For specific information on how PSZs may be applied in your state or territory please contact the relevant airport, or follow the link below to find contact information for your jurisdiction:

[https://infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/environmental/airport\\_safeguarding/nasf/](https://infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/environmental/airport_safeguarding/nasf/)



**Attachment A: Example Public Safety Zone maps – Queensland State Planning Policy**

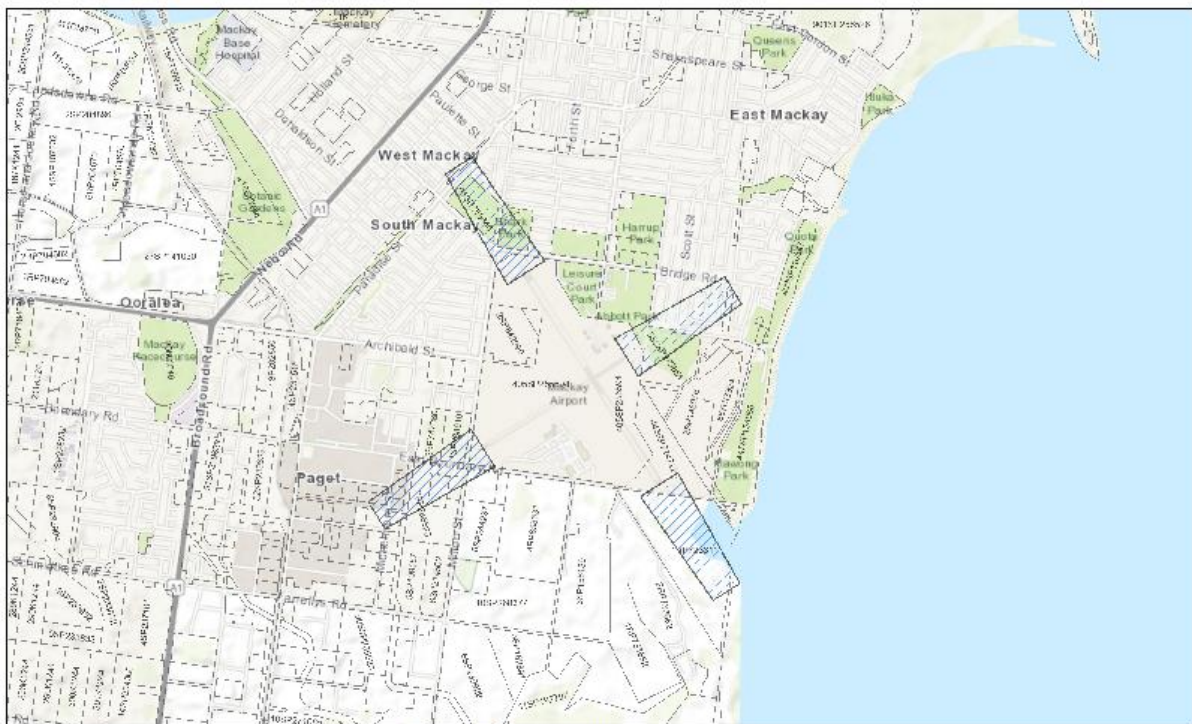


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**State Planning Policy**  
Making or amending a local planning instrument  
and designating land for community infrastructure

0 1,100 2,200 3,300 4,400  
Metres

Date: 06/03/2016  
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**State Planning Policy**  
Making or amending a local planning instrument  
and designating land for community infrastructure

0 580 1,160 1,740 2,320  
Metres

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