

Western Victoria Aviation Precinct Ballarat

Project Cost

- Stage 2 of runway 18/36 upgrade (reconstruction of the existing 1,250 metre section): \$11.7 million

Investment Needed

- Stage 2 of runway 18/36 upgrade: Up to \$11.7 million

City of Ballarat Investment

- Runway Upgrade subject to Council budget processes

Project Description

Runway Upgrade

The Ballarat Airport Strategy and Master Plan (STAMP) identifies a series of priority actions to upgrade Ballarat Airport’s capability and the services it can provide to Ballarat and the region.

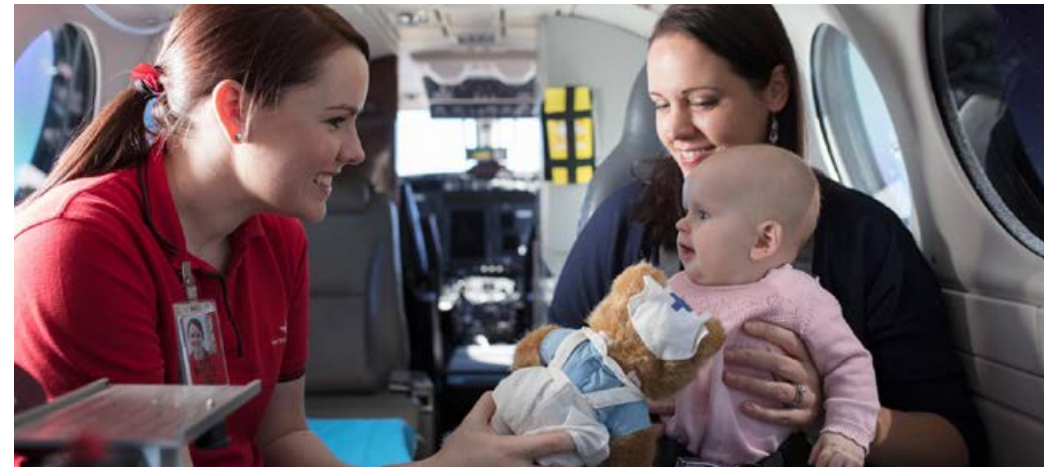
The highest priority action from the STAMP is stage 2 of the runway upgrade, which involves reconstruction of the existing 1,250 metre section of the airport’s main runway.

This section – which was built at the start of World War 2 – is at the end of its operational life and needs replacement. The present runway strength only allows light aircraft to take off or land.

This upgrade will ensure regulatory compliance and create an efficient connection between the airport’s landside areas (accessible to the public) and airside areas (accessible only to airport staff and passengers).

The ageing infrastructure at the airport needs to be upgraded so the full suite of medical transport services can continue to be provided to residents living in western Victoria.

Images: Indicative only



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Why should Governments invest in this project?

Essential services – medical transport services

The ageing infrastructure at the airport needs to be upgraded so the full suite of medical transport services can continue to be provided to residents living in western Victoria.

These services include Air Ambulance neonatal and paediatric patient transfers to Melbourne, and non-emergency patient transfers. Without upgrades, the risk is some patients will have to be transferred by road or wait longer for a smaller aircraft to become available.

A Royal Flying Doctor Service pilot made these observations about the Ballarat Airport main runway:

Of all the runways we go to in Victoria, this is the roughest and causes the most damage to aircraft. If it continues as it is, we won't be able to fly into Ballarat.

Essential services – bushfire response

An upgraded runway will enable most aircraft types operated within Australia to fly in and out of Ballarat Airport. This may mean having the large aerial tanker (LAT) fleet based in Ballarat, much closer to fire risk areas than where these aircraft are currently based.

This would greatly reduce the time it takes for LATs to reach bushfires in the Central Highlands and Western Victoria, areas which are often at risk of major bushfires for many months each year.

Investment attraction

Completing the upgrade to the remaining runway would allow further exploration of the opportunity to attract a passenger service in and out of Ballarat. This is supported by data showing that there is currently between 1,200-1,600 people from the wider Ballarat catchment flying out of Melbourne Airport (Tullamarine) each day. Ballarat is presently the 17th largest city in Australia – but is one of few places in the top 50 by population without a regular airline service.

Economic benefits

The evidence from localities around Australia indicates that regional aviation positively impacts on the local economy, in particular the earnings of local residents.

The benefits of aviation and airports to the local economy show up in many ways:

- Lower costs of doing business because of the ease of travel over distances that would be onerous by road
- Greater competition due to readier access to alternative markets and suppliers
- Improved ability to bring in and send out specialised personnel
- Increased investment: a fly in-fly out option improves capacity for investors to effortlessly visit Ballarat to familiarise themselves with the city and to meet prospective clients and business partners
- Potential to attract passenger service stimulating tourism visitation and business travel
- Improved transport access for Ballarat residents contributing to an enhanced quality of life and destination attraction for potential new residents.

Location

- Ballarat Airport, Airport Road, Mitchell Park

Status

- The recommendations and objectives set out in the STAMP are currently being reviewed by the City of Ballarat and – where revenue-generating or minimal cost – are being implemented
- Funding opportunities for the significant infrastructure projects in the STAMP are being explored while existing projects are completed.

Timeline and next steps

- Liberator Drive construction completed
- Runway upgrade stage 2 subject to external funding and Council budget processes

Note: All project costs are subject to inflationary pressures leading to cost escalations

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CITY OF
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