

Safety & Technical Update

► By the Safety & Technical Team

The Safety and Technical (S&T) Team continues to participate in many forums and undertake activities to ensure that high safety standards are maintained in Australia and, through IFALPA, globally. The following is a brief outline of some of the current issues with which your Safety and Technical Committee has been engaged.

ACCIDENT ANALYSIS AND PREVENTION (AAP)

AIPA Representation

AIPA has assisted members involved in two incidents since March.

Remember if you are involved in an incident or accident, call the AIPA 24-hour Accident/Incident Hotline on +61 (0)2 8307 7788 for advice.

AERODROME AND GROUND ENVIRONMENT (AGE)

Local Runway Safety Teams (LRSTs)

AusALPA representatives continue to be involved in LRSTs around the country. Most recently at Canberra Airport, the primary safety concern was in relations to incidents involving the incorrect use or misunderstanding of Stop Bar procedures, largely attributed to airline operators. To pass through a Stop Bar, it must be turned off AND an ATC clearance must be received.

In Brisbane, their current focus is on Runway Safety Data, stop bars, the decommissioning of RW14/32, the new parallel runway, and aeronautical ground lighting testing and commissioning.

LIDAR Trial at Sydney Airport

AusALPA has been actively involved in the LIDAR trial at Sydney Airport (SYD) which has now been installed and calibrated. The results, though limited due to the significant reduction in traffic, are impressive and demonstrates the equipment's ability to deliver its objectives. AusALPA made recommendations to amend graphs to a more "user friendly" format for its end-users. The Association also emphasised that the purpose of Phase 1 was to determine the vortices' effects on 34R (strength and duration) and under what conditions these occur (climatic, wind, and aircraft type).

Due to the reduced levels of traffic however, SYD plans to put the trial on hold until traffic levels improve. AusALPA stressed that, whilst understanding fully the commercial considerations and supporting a six-month delay, it would be immensely useful to gather data during strong westerly wind conditions.

Brisbane Airspace & New Parallel Runway

AusALPA, along with other stakeholders, attended a webinar on changes to airspace and procedures as a result of Brisbane Airport's New Parallel Runway (NPR). For RPT operations, the Simultaneous Opposite Direction Parallel Runway Operations (SODPROPS) will be used whenever the weather/runway conditions permit and especially between 2200-0600 LT (landing 19 and departing 01 so operations are over the water). A "Finals" monitor will be introduced to provide alerts, deviation advice, and break out instructions noting that a "dual frequency PRM" is not required, because of the 2000m spacing between the parallel runways. This will be a different procedure to Sydney.



Sunshine Coast Airport Expansion Project

Airservices Australia ran a webinar to provide information relating to changes to the Sunshine Coast Airport and associated airspace and procedures. Due to the different orientation of the new runway (13/31), there will be a significant alteration to both the architecture of the airspace and the instrument approach procedures. There has been consideration for VFR operations to be allowed in the north/south OCTA egress west of the airport control zone, which utilises the prominent visual feature of the Bruce Highway. The webinar was attended by 38 people, including several Airservices staff, local GA stakeholders, RAAus, and AusALPA.

CASA Manual of Standards Part 139 - Aerodromes

A significant number of changes have been incorporated into the final version of the revised MOS 139 which have not been agreed to or proposed in the Technical Working Group meetings, in which AusALPA has been actively involved in. In some cases, the whole intent of a standard has been altered, while in others, agreed amendments have been omitted and lastly, new standards have been included without consultation. A meeting was called to highlight some of these inconsistencies so that feedback could be provided to CASA and to seek a mechanism to revert back to the agreed changes or to provide further opportunities for consultation and subsequent consensus on any changes. The Australian Airport Association is preparing a letter to be sent to CASA on behalf of the 139 TWG. AusALPA will continue to monitor this situation.

COVID-19 and Wildlife

The Australian Aviation Wildlife Hazard Group (AAWHG) Executive, of which AusALPA is an active member, has highlighted to the industry that one of the unintended consequences of COVID-19 is that wildlife may proliferate, causing a greater risk for aircraft that are flying due to the standing down of airport operations staff, including those directly involved in wildlife management and control.

AGE Representatives have disseminated the information sheet produced by the AAWHG to their local airports and operators which recommends that activities to manage and control wildlife continue to be undertaken or maintained during the COVID-19 downturn. Not to do so, not only increases the risk to the aircraft still flying but will make it harder (and potentially more costly) to return to the pre-COVID-19 level of wildlife hazard management.

HUMAN PERFORMANCE (HUPER)

Qantas Aircraft Cleaning

AIPA wrote to QF expressing concerns about the risk of exposure to COVID-19 to pilots while at work, specifically, exposure of operating crew on the flight deck and deadheading crew in the cabin.

AIPA highlighted the need for crew to access appropriate sanitisers and protective equipment supplies outside of base operating hours as well as aircraft cleaning.

COVID-19 Special Operations Fatigue Safety Case

AIPA, like Qantas, sees significant benefits in maintaining as much flying as possible. AIPA, however, considers

“Fatigue Risk Management is a tripartite exercise that should involve the regulator, the operator, and the flight crew.”

it essential to ensure that safety is not degraded to an unreasonable level when conducting these special operations. AIPA has provided feedback to Qantas on their COVID-19 Special Operations Fatigue Safety Case and raised a number of issues and concerns with the proposed operations including crew accommodation, crew composition, and separation requirement between all flight crew and other crew members and passengers. AIPA has expressed its disappointment that once again, the Association's involvement was sought only after the assessment had been completed and a response then requested in a short time.

AIPA has also written to CASA regarding this issue and reiterated the fact that fatigue risk management is a tripartite exercise that should involve the regulator, the operator, and the flight crew. AIPA believes that the best decisions will come from CASA if they are apprised of all relevant viewpoints and considerations. AIPA has also pointed out that these flights, while socially and politically important, are still commercial air transport operations required to meet the same safety outcomes that is normally expected. CASA has been requested to consider AIPA's response prior to making its decision on the Qantas application for variations to the FRMS that will permit the requested operations.

OTHER BUSINESS

IFALPA Asia Pacific Committee Meeting

AusALPA continues to be involved in discussions with IFALPA Member Associations (MAs) within the Asia Pacific region regarding the current COVID-19 situation. It is not surprising that similar issues are being faced by pilots around the region, including exemptions to flight and duty periods, which in some cases, are pushed to extreme limits. IFALPA has established an Industrial Response Team which provides assistance to MAs globally to deal with their government and other industry players.

Our industry continues to operate in a challenging environment influenced by many factors which can alter the balance between profitability and safety standards. Nonetheless, as this year progresses, AusALPA will remain dedicated to preserving and advancing standards of safety domestically and internationally. If you have any concerns or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact our office via office@ausalpa.org.au. ■