
DARWIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – RUNWAY RESURFACING

On Saturday 21st July 2007, Darwin International Airport and the Department of Defence will commence resurfacing of the main runway at a cost of \$12 million. The airport is operated under a Joint User Deed where maintenance costs are shared. This project has been months in planning and requires great cooperation between the Department of Defence, Darwin International Airport, Air Traffic Control and Airlines.

Runway 11/29 is 3354 metres long and 60 metres wide. It was constructed by No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron RAAF in 1958 and was last resurfaced in 1994 using a HIPAR (Hot In Place Asphalt Recycling) process. The resulting surface did not last as long as conventional asphalt, therefore intermediate spray treatments, patching and crack sealing have served to maintain a serviceable runway until now.

The work will consist of profiling the existing material to a depth of 60 mm and replacing with dense graded asphaltic concrete.

Pioneer Road Services are the contractor and have established a portable asphalt plant on the RAAF Base. The plant, known as 'The Hulk' was transported from Queensland on 14 semi-trailers and has the capacity to produce 300 tonnes of asphalt per hour. In this project approximately 30,000 tonnes of asphalt will be laid using 30 pieces of plant and equipment. Bitumen for the asphalt is coming from Brisbane by rail while aggregates are brought in from quarries at Mount Bundey. Asphalt workers consist of local staff boosted by counterparts from QLD and WA for a total workforce of 60.

Consulting and supervising services are being supplied by Sinclair Knight Merz with Works Safety Officers provided by Darwin International Airport.

Sections of the work will be completed by closing either end of the runway and establishing a displaced threshold with special markings and lighting. These will be in place 7 days/ 24 hours until each section is complete. The distance remaining is adequate for airline and military aircraft operations and will not affect current schedules. Runway 18/36, the cross runway is too short for jet operations. To allow a greater construction period, airlines have agreed to reschedule some flights to allow a six hour construction period 0600 to 1200 between 31 July and 22 August. Full runway length will be available outside of this window and there are no works on Fridays.

Flights affected are:

QF 1943	Gove/ Cairns	Departs 0500 Mon – Sat; Sun 0645
QF 1945	Alice Springs/ Perth	Departs 0520 Mon – Sat; Sun 0700
QF 801	Cairns	Departs 0545 Daily
GA 711	Bali	Departs 0555 Mon, Fri 0730

The asphalt replacement is due for completion on 13 September and following a three week break, works recommence to cut grooves across the runway. These grooves serve to displace water from under aircraft tyres during wet weather operations. Grooving will be carried out daily and is less restrictive to jet aircraft operations with an estimated completion date of 9 November.

For further information **or opportunities to film/photograph the project**, please contact Bob Calaby on 08 8920 1851 during business hours.