



UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL

SCONE AERODROME SAFETY INSPECTION

FEBRUARY 2016



SCONE AERODROME

AERODROME SAFETY INSPECTION

February 2016

prepared for

UPPER HUNTER SHIRE COUNCIL

by

AIRPORTS PLUS PTY LTD

ACN 090 604 425

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1 CERTIFICATION

Mr Tom Griffiths, Airports Plus Pty Ltd, conducted an Aerodrome Safety Inspection (ASI) of Scone Aerodrome in accordance with the Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR)139.315 (4)(a) on 3 and 4 February 2016.

Mr Griffiths is approved by CASA under CASR 139.320 to conduct Aerodrome Safety Inspections; my CASA Approval Number is A014

I hereby certify:

- that the published aerodrome data is generally correct;
- that the aerodrome operating procedures need to be documented;
- that the Aerodrome Reporting Officer may be competent; and
- that the aerodrome facilities and equipment will meet the applicable standards when the identified recommendations are undertaken.

There was nothing found that would indicate that Scone Aerodrome is not suitable for the Air Transport Operations to continue.



Tom Griffiths
Director/CASA Approved Person (Approval No A014)
29 April 2016

2 INTRODUCTION

Airports Plus Pty Ltd was commissioned to carry out an Aerodrome Safety Inspection (ASI) of Scone Aerodrome by the Upper Hunter Shire Council (the aerodrome operator).

The Inspection was the ASI of Scone Aerodrome under CASR 139.315 (4)(a) and was required because there were regular Charter operations with aircraft up to Falcon 900 that have a capacity of greater than 9 passengers. The charter operations are associated with the horse breeding and training activities in the region.

The Upper Hunter Shire Council has recently appointed a new Aerodrome Reporting Officer who has experience as a RAAF Fire Fighter and has occupied similar position in Canada.

Scone Aerodrome is a Registered Aerodrome under CASR 139.265.

Generally the Scone Aerodrome is maintained in a manner that is not unsafe for aircraft operations. However, the risk of an accident is increased due to the lack of current documented procedures.

The draft 2015 Safety Inspection contained a large number of "Issues"; these "Issues" have not been addressed in this report as the previous report appears to still be a draft without any signature.

This Aerodrome Safety Inspection contains 12 Recommendations.

3 DETAILS OF THE AERODROME

3.1 Information Published in the AIP- ERSA

AIP-ERSA and Runway Distances Supplement dated 12 November 2015 was checked. Various other AIP documents were also checked and the date of each document is listed below.

NOTAM C36/15 and C38/15 were also reviewed as they contained amendments to the published information.

3.1.1 Location

The aerodrome coordinates, published in ERSA, were correct.

3.1.2 Name and Address of the aerodrome operator

The aerodrome operator's details and the telephone numbers published were correct.

3.1.3 Handling Services and Facilities

The information published was correct.

3.1.4 Passenger Facilities

The information published was correct.

3.1.5 Details of the movement area

The information published in ERSA for runways 11/29 was correct.

3.1.6 Details of runway distances available

The information published in the Runway Distance Supplement has been amended by NOTAM C36/15.

3.1.7 Details of the aerodrome lighting

Details of the aerodrome lighting published in ERSA was correct.

3.1.8 Additional information

The information published in ERSA appeared to be correct and current.

3.1.9 Other comments

The AIP – DAP Aerodrome Chart, dated 13 November 2014, was checked and was correct.

4 AERODROME OPERATING PROCEDURES

There were no Aerodrome Operating Procedures issued for Scone Aerodrome. There is a draft procedure, however it is considered to be excessive in that it is based on the requirements for a Certified Aerodrome which is proscribed by legislation. The requirement for a Registered Aerodrome is contained in the Manual of Standards Part 139 – Aerodromes (the "MOS"), Chapter 12, sub-section 12.1.1.5 which states "Although formal documentation of all facets of aerodrome operations are not required, it is in the interest of the operator of a registered aerodrome to be able to demonstrate that he or she is discharging the duty of care in providing a safe facility for aircraft operations. To avoid confusion and misunderstanding, all arrangements regarding aerodrome safety functions must be in writing." Furthermore, sub-section 12.1.1.2A requires all non-compliant facilities to be listed in "... an appropriate manual ..." together with its date of commissioning and the standard with which the facility complies.

Recommendation 1 *An Aerodrome Manual should be prepared containing those procedures that Council determines are necessary for Council to ensure the safety of aircraft operations at Scone Aerodrome.*

4.1.1 Recording of Aerodrome Inspections

The serviceability inspections are being recorded on the inspection checklist and are stored at the aerodrome and in the Council office. The Checklist has been developed over time and could be reviewed to determine if it is appropriate. For example, it does not contain a requirement to check that the pilot activated airport lighting is operational even though this is a key facility provided for the safe and efficient operation of the aerodrome, and is published in the AIP as being available.

The records indicate that the inspections are being completed at least twice each week.

The records indicate that the lighting is not inspected during every inspection and there are blank squares on the completed Checklist without any accompanying explanation. There is, also, a lack of details regarding actions taken whenever a defect is found.

Recommendation 2 *The Aerodrome Serviceability Inspection Checklist should be fully completed for each inspection or reasons for not inspecting a facility should be included. The reports should also include details of any actions taken to rectify any defects.*

4.1.2 Recording of NOTAM's

There no records available of any NOTAM requested in the previous 12 months.

4.1.3 Recording of Aerodrome Works

There were no records of any works performed on the aerodrome, other than the Aerodrome Reporting Officer's time sheets.

All works conducted during the year were reportedly conducted as Time Limited Works, without causing any reported delays to aircraft operations. The works parties always contained the Aerodrome Reporting Officer who is based full time at the aerodrome.

4.1.4 Aerodrome Emergency Plan

There was no Aerodrome Emergency for Scone Aerodrome.

A properly developed and exercise Aerodrome Emergency Plan will ensure a co-ordinated and effective response to any incident on the aerodrome by the local emergency services and the aerodrome community.

Recommendation 3 *An Aerodrome Emergency Plan could be developed and implemented with the local emergency services and the aerodrome community to ensure a co-ordinated and effective response to any incident on the aerodrome.*

5 REPORTING OFFICER

5.1.1 Competency of Reporting Officers

There are 2 Aerodrome Reporting Officers appointed by Council.

A review of the inspection logs and the previous NOTAM indicted that the Reporting Officers are competent in performing those parts of their functions. However, there was no evidence available to demonstrate that they had received any training, or that they were deemed competent by a responsible Council manager.

The serviceability inspection reports viewed indicated that the runway lights were serviceable, whereas a number of lighting facilities were not serviceable (or on outage), including the Pilot Activated Lighting system. There were no current NOTAM advising of the unserviceable facilities. See section 6.4 below.

While it is not possible to state that the Reporting Officers are not competent on the available evidence, it is equally not possible to state that they are competent, especially since there was no evidence of any training provided.

Recommendation 4 *The Aerodrome Reporting Officers should attend an appropriate training course.*

5.1.2 Names of the Reporting Officers

The current Reporting Officers are:

-) Bradley Benson (duty Aerodrome Reporting Officer); and
-) Joanne McLaughlin

5.1.3 Access to Standards

The Aerodrome Reporting Officers have ready access to the internet which provides access to all relevant legislation. There is also a printed copy of the Scone entry in the AIP-ERSA and the CASA Manual of Standards Part 139 – Aerodromes available in the Reporting Officer's office at the aerodrome.

6 MOVEMENT AREA DETAILS

6.1 Runway

6.1.1 Runway 11/29

Runway 11/29 was measured at 1408 m long and 30 m wide. It is located in a runway strip that is 150 m wide, with a marked 90 m wide graded section and is marked at only 1528 m long.

The runway surface consisted of a 7 mm sealed surface for about 100 m at each runway end and the remainder is a 15 mm asphalt surface. The end sections were sealed in about 1986, with the central asphalt constructed in about 2006.

There was some minor rutting in the asphalt about 300 m from the RWY 29 Threshold, about 10 m south of the centreline. This has been caused by overloading of the pavement with a tandem wheeled vehicle; it does not appear to have been caused by an aircraft. There was no cracking evident with the rutting, which suggests that it may even have been caused during construction; it is of no immediate concern.

The sealed Runway End Safety Area was not inspected as it is an area that does not require a paved surface. Its purpose, as expressed in the MOS at sub-section 6.2.29 is to "...reduce the risk of damage to an aeroplane, enhance aeroplane deceleration and facilitate the movement of rescue and fire fighting vehicles." This section of the MOS also contains an advisory note which states "...it is recommended that areas abutting the runway should be provided with a compacted gravel pavement with a depth at the runway end equal to half the depth of the runway pavement, tapering to natural surface, the length of the taper being adjusted according to the bearing capacity of the natural surface. For areas beyond the gravel surface and outside the runway strip, graded but non-compacted natural surface with a grass cover is preferred. Hard pans should be broken up." **Therefore the sealed surface on the RESA is not required and does not need to be maintained.**

Runway 11/29 should be resurfaced in about 5 years. It could be resurfaced with a bitumen seal containing at least 10 mm aggregate.

The surface was found to be serviceable for aircraft operations.

The edges of the pavement were generally flush with the runway strip surface.

The graded area of the runway strip area had been mown regularly and provided a comfortable ride at about 65 kph.



Photo 1 - General view of Runway 29



Photo 2 – typical runway pavement – sealed section



Photo 3 – typical runway strip



Photo 4 – general view of asphalt pavement with wheel ruts 300 m from RWY 29 threshold



Photo 5 – typical asphalt pavement



Photo 6 – Runway 11 threshold area

6.2 Taxiways

There are a number of private access taxiways that do not have any restrictions on their use, even though they have been provided and maintained by the occupiers of the neighbouring properties. Signage should be erected restricting access to persons authorised by the taxiway owners to limit Council's liability as some of these private taxiways were unserviceable or do not comply with the required taxiway standards (see below for specific taxiways).

Even though these taxiways may have been provided by the neighbouring property owners, Council must ensure that they comply with the requirements of the Manual of Standards Part 139 – Aerodromes; Council is the aerodrome operator and the facilities have been installed on the aerodrome. Civil Aviation Safety Regulation Part 139, regulation 139.295 states "The standards applicable to registered aerodromes are ... the standards applicable to certified aerodromes in relation to the ... physical characteristics of the movement area". The responsibility for complying with this regulation rests with Council as the aerodrome operator and cannot be transferred to any third party.

Recommendation 5 *The private access taxiways could be signed with restricted entry to minimise Council's risk exposure in the event of damage to an aircraft.*

Recommendation 6 *The private access taxiways should comply with the standards contained in the Manual of Standards Part 139 - Aerodromes.*

There are currently 6 taxiways entering the runway, with a definite possibility of at least one more from a neighbouring property that has a hangar. Each taxiway entrance presents a potential hazard to the safe operation of aircraft in that it becomes an intersection between moving vehicles.

If the demand for more private access increases it may be safer to construct a parallel taxiway from the Pays area to the threshold of runway 29. The initial taxiway could be a simple grass taxiway, similar to those provided by the neighbours.

6.2.1 Main Taxiway

The main taxiway provides access to the apron area from runway 11/29. It is 15 m wide. It has a bitumen seal surface that appears to be of a similar age as the runway ends. It was basically sound with minimal stone loss and minor cracking.



Photo 7 – Main taxiway

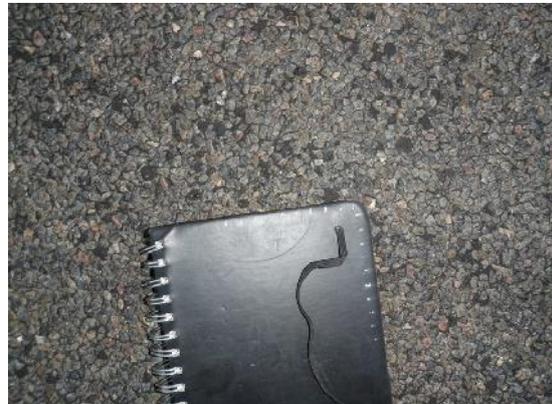


Photo 8 – Typical main taxiway pavement

The main taxiway should be resurfaced in about 5 years. It could be resurfaced with a bitumen seal containing at least 10 mm aggregate.

The surface was found to be serviceable for aircraft operations

6.2.2 Parallel Taxiway

This taxiway provides access to the hangars and to the Airpasture hangar. At the time of this inspection it was closed between the private hangars and Airpasture due to rough and uneven surface.

The pavement appears to have been installed in a hurried manner and its usage has grown over time and has overstressed the sub-standard pavement. The entire length is uneven and appears to be a risk to aircraft operations. There are significant surface cracks, about 10 to 15 mm wide, near the entrance to the hangars.

This taxiway is the only access to Airpasture, which operates agricultural aircraft that can tolerate the below standard pavement. It is also the only paved access to the hangars that contain a mix of privately owned aircraft that may find this taxiway hazardous.

This taxiway needs to be reconstructed as soon as possible as it presents a hazard to the safe operation of aircraft. The reconstruction should also include widening the pavement to 7.5 m wide (MOS sub-section 6.3.1)

There is at least one head wall that is too close to the taxiway; the MOS requires the width of the culvert (a bridge) to be not less than the width of the taxiway and the graded areas of the taxiway strip. For a Code A taxiway this is a width of 22 m.



Photo 9 – Parallel taxiway



Photo 10 – Parallel taxiway/runway intersection



Photo 11 – surface cracking in parallel taxiway



Photo 12 – entrance to hangar area

Recommendation 7 *The Code A taxiway parallel to the runway should be reconstructed with a final pavement width of 7.5 m. and a clearance from the centreline to any headwall of 11 m.*

6.2.3 Pays Taxiway

The Pays taxiway provides access from the apron area to then neighbouring property owned by Pays Aviation. As such it is a private use taxiway that accesses the Jet A1 fuel bowser. It is also used by Pays vehicles, including a heavy aviation fuel tanker.

The taxiway is a 7.5 m wide grass taxiway with the central 4 m sealed; it is marked with yellow cones spaced 7.5 m apart.

The seal surface is severely cracked, due to a combination of age (brittle) and overloading and has reached the end of its economic life. It's serviceability on an ongoing basis cannot be assured, and it may fail with the next pass of the fuel tanker; it is more likely to fail (form potholes) when the sub-surface becomes wet.



Photo 13 – Pays taxiway



Photo 14 – surface of Pays taxiway

Recommendation 8 *Reseal Pays taxiway from the apron to Pays property, or restrict aircraft use.*

6.2.4 Pays Gravel Taxiways

The gravel taxiways to Pays agricultural/firefighting operations area were in reasonable condition.

6.2.5 Other taxiways

The two private access taxiways that access the threshold area of runway 29 were in reasonable condition. They were provided by and are maintained by the owners of the neighbouring properties. A representative of Neva-Part Aviation Welding was observed mowing the taxiway without a rotating beacon or high visibility clothing, or without any co-ordination with the ARO.

The Neva-Part Aviation Welding taxiway does not meet the clearance requirements for a taxiway as it is parallel to a fence located approximately 5.5 m from the centreline. The MOS sub-section 6.3.1 requires an obstacle free taxiway strip width of 16.25 m either side of the centreline. It may not be possible to meet this clearance requirement as the gateway to Neva-Part Aviation Welding is located in the corner of two fences. An alternative to minimise Council's risk exposure may be to sign it as not being available to aircraft under power.

This natural surface taxiway should also have yellow taxiway markers defining its limits (refer MOS sub-section 8.2.4).



Photo 15 – Private taxiway to neighbouring property



Photo 16 – taxiway to Neva-Part Aviation Welding. Note fence line and an absence of taxiway markers

6.3 Aprons

6.3.1 Main Apron

The sealed RPT apron area in front of the Terminal Building and the other parking areas in front of the hangars and to the west of the RPT were in reasonable condition.

The apron pavement consists of a number of sealed sections of varying ages.

The main apron area should be resurfaced (10 mm seal) in about 5 years.

6.4 Aerodrome Lighting

The airport lighting systems, including the PAL+AFRU, were inspected/activated as part of the Inspection.

The following issues were found:

-) Pilot Activated Lighting Control system was not functioning and there was no NOTAM. The lights are activated by a Photoelectric cell and operate all night;
-) The holding point lights (main taxiway) were blue instead of the required amber/yellow, with one of the lights having a blown globe;
-) Blue taxiway and white runway light lenses had been intermixed at the taxiway intersection;
-) One runway light and two blue turning node lights were unserviceable; and
-) 3 lights in the runway 29 threshold lights were unserviceable as there luminance was not consistent with the other lights. This should have rendered the runway 29 threshold as unserviceable at night.

During and subsequent to the inspection these faults were rectified, however they should not have existed as they were generally easy to fix (replacing lenses and lamps). NOTAM C2/16 was issued to advise of the PAL failure.

All the other lights provided consistent luminosity that appeared to comply with the requirements for a low intensity runway lighting system.

There are no portable lights on stand-by or a stand-by generator.



Photo 17 – Blue holding point light



Photo 17 – Primary Wind Indicator

6.5 Wind Direction Indicators and Signal Circle

6.5.1 Primary IWI

The Primary Wind Direction Indicator is located adjacent to the main apron and is serviceable. It has a black circle surrounded by 14 white cones.

The black circle required poisoning to remove the vegetation growing in it.

There are no wind indicators installed abeam the threshold of each runway. The MOS, sub section 8.7.1.2 states “CASR Part 139 also requires that non-precision approach runways be provided with a wind direction indicator at the threshold of the runway.” Then exclusions and exemptions contained in this section do not apply at Scone as there is not an Automatic Weather Information System broadcasting and the runway is greater than 1200 m in length.

Recommendation 9 *Provide an illuminated wind direction indicator abeam each threshold, as specified in the MOS, or provide an Automatic Weather Information Broadcast on a discrete frequency.*

6.5.2 Signal Circle

The signal circle is adjacent to the Primary Wind Indicator, and is also well maintained. It is also surrounded by a 1 m wide white circle.

6.6 Obstacle Limitation Surfaces

The obstacle limitation surfaces are inspected as part of the daily serviceability inspection.

The approach, take-off and transitional surfaces were surveyed in **November 2015**.

6.7 Aerodrome Markers and Markings

6.7.1 Runway Markers and Markings

All the runway markings were in a good condition. The centrelines were 300 mm wide.

There are no requirements to provide touchdown zone or aiming point markings as the runway is less than 1500 m long (refer MOS sub-section 8.3.7.1)

6.7.2 Taxiway Markers and Markings

The main taxiway markings are correct.

Parallel taxiway markings, at the entrance to runway 11 are incomplete due to pavement repairs and a partial gravel surface. The holding point area should be sealed and the marking reinstated.

The gravel taxiways should have yellow gable markers installed on the edge of the graded section of the runway strip to mark the holding point/taxiway entrance.

All the natural surface private taxiways should be marked with yellow taxiway markers.

Recommendation 10 All taxiway markers and markings should be installed and maintained in accordance with the Manual of Standards Part 139 - Aerodromes.

6.7.3 Apron Markings

The apron markings for parking aircraft larger than 5,700 Kg appeared to be reasonable, however there were infringed by a parked aircraft that had no other indicated parking area.

A review of the apron markings may provide a more efficient use of the available area through the provision of marked areas for aircraft that are less than 5,700 Kg MTOW and by realigning the primary parking positions.

Recommendation 11 Review the main apron parking positions and provide marked areas for aircraft with a MTOW less than 5,700 Kg.

The grass aprons were correctly marked.

The aprons on neighbouring properties were not inspected as it is considered that they are not part of the Registered Aerodrome; they are not on the property title.

6.8 Use of Radios

The Reporting Officer uses a hand held radio to monitor radio broadcasts. He also has Radio Telephone Operator Certificate of Proficiency and, if necessary, will communicate with pilots.

6.9 Equipment used for dispersing birds and animals

There was no equipment available for the dispersal of birds.

There have not been any reported bird strikes in the previous 12 months.

It would appear that on the absence of reported bird strikes and the lack of formal and informal complaints received that there is no wildlife hazard at Scone. As such a simple procedure is required to ensure continued monitoring and recording of observed wildlife and any dispersal actions undertaken. There is no requirement for a Wildlife Hazard Management Plan.

6.10 Aerodrome Fencing

While the airport is fenced it is not secure because:

-) Entry gate to Pays Air Services main area is open 24 hours per day and provides direct access onto the apron;

-) Vehicle gate onto Pays maintenance hangar area to the NW of the Terminal is open 24 hours per day and provides direct access onto the apron;
-) The apron is accessible on foot through the Airspeed Aviation facility at any time; and
-) Vehicular access is available through the unoccupied property containing a private hangar and an unfenced airside boundary, located adjacent to 152 Satur Road.

As such, Council may be exposed to action to recover damages in the event of any accident or vandalism resulting from an insecure boundary or from wandering livestock or domestic pets, such as large dogs.

It was noted that the private taxiways from the neighbours at the eastern end of the aerodrome were secured with well-maintained gates.

Recommendation 12 *Council should formally assess its risk from the unsecured airside boundary and, if necessary, take measures to secure the airside access.*

6.11 Other Services

The fuel facility is located adjacent to the main apron and is operated by Pays Air Service. It was maintained in a neat and tidy condition.

7 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary of the 2016 ASI Recommendations

	RECOMMENDATIONS	COMPLETED	ACTION OFFICER
1	An Aerodrome Manual should be prepared containing those procedures that Council determines are necessary for Council to ensure the safety of aircraft operations at Scone Aerodrome.		
2	The Aerodrome Serviceability Inspection Checklist should be fully completed for each inspection or reasons for not inspecting a facility should be included. The reports should also include details of any actions taken to rectify any defects.		
3	An Aerodrome Emergency Plan could be developed and implemented with the local emergency services and the aerodrome community to ensure a co-ordinated and effective response to any incident on the aerodrome.		
4	The Aerodrome Reporting Officers should attend an appropriate training course.		
5	The private access taxiways could be signed with restricted entry to minimise Council's risk exposure in the event of damage to an aircraft.		
6	The private access taxiways should comply with the standards contained in the Manual of Standards Part 139 - Aerodromes.		
7	The Code A taxiway parallel to the runway should be reconstructed with a final pavement width of 7.5 m. and a clearance from the centreline to any headwall of 11 m.		
8	Reseal Pays taxiway from the apron to Pays property, or restrict aircraft use.		
9	Provide an illuminated wind direction indicator abeam each threshold, as specified in the MOS, or provide an Automatic Weather Information Broadcast on a discrete frequency.		
10	All taxiway markers and markings should be installed and maintained in accordance with the Manual of Standards Part 139 - Aerodromes.		
11	Review the main apron parking positions and provide marked areas for aircraft with a MTOW less than 5,700 Kg.		

RECOMMENDATIONS		COMPLETED	ACTION OFFICER
12	Council should formally assess its risk form the unsecured airside boundary and, if necessary, take measures to secure the airside access.		

Annex 1 - Qualifications of T J Griffiths



Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology



Higher Technician Certificate

Civil

awarded to

Thomas Joseph Griffiths


Principal


Head of Division

No. 11217
Issued in January 1976
Year of Calendar 1976


Secretary, Board of Technical Studies



Australian Government
Civil Aviation Safety Authority

Airspace and Aerodrome Regulation Division

CASA Ref: F13/1730-1

9 September 2014

Mr Thomas Griffiths
(Approval Number A014) (ARN 574262)
41 Mt Rumney Road
Mt Rumney
Tasmania 7170

Dear Mr Griffiths.

Subject: Approval to Conduct Safety Inspections at Registered and Certain other Aerodromes

I refer to your application dated 5th September 2014 for approval under the provisions of Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) 139.320(2) to conduct aerodrome safety inspections at registered and certain other aerodromes. Your application has been assessed in accordance with the regulation and has been approved.

Under the provision of CASR 139.325(1), this approval remains in force for five (5) years from the date of issue. Your conduct of aerodrome safety inspections shall be under surveillance of officers of this Authority. This function and the day to day matters in relation to your approval will normally be performed on behalf of the Authority by me as the aerodrome inspector assigned to your approval.

If you have any queries regarding this approval or any other aerodrome related matters, please contact me on 02 8651 3046.

Yours faithfully


Mr Joe Hain
Aerodrome Inspector
CASA – Sydney Office

9th September 2014

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