



POSITION STATEMENT – 18 April 2019

PILOT TRAINING SCHOOL AT THE PORT LINCOLN AIRPORT

Council was approached in late 2018 by Flight Training Adelaide in relation to the development of a flight training operation at the Port Lincoln Airport. The approach was on the basis of a non disclosure arrangement, and Council accepted that arrangement in recognition of the potential economic benefits which would be likely to flow to the region from such a business activity. Council was prevented from sharing information with the community by virtue of the Non Disclosure Agreement.

Council entered into the Non Disclosure Agreement on the basis that the training school is not a fait accompli, as project funding is required to bring the project to reality. In addition Council recognised that community consultation would occur as part of the development assessment process, a process that has been called in by the State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP) who have recognised that the project is a major initiative for the State.

Council has subsequently agreed to allow Flight Training Adelaide to relocate part of its operation to Port Lincoln Airport to cope with overload from its Parafield operations as a short term arrangement.

Council is aware of a number of community concerns in relation to the FTA operations, and has been working to address these issues. One such community concern has been in relation to the proposed closure of runway 05/23, and its impact on landings given certain prevailing winds. In this regard Council has reviewed the required infrastructure to accommodate a flying school, and believes that runway 05/23 can be retained if it is shortened by 100 metres. Council believes that this is possible while still meeting the needs of General Aviation which can comfortably work with runway 05/23 being reduced to 1175 metres in length.

Another local concern has been in relation to the operators of private aircraft who operate from private landing strips. Council remains of the view that local and flight training operations can be managed in cohesion as all pilots use the local transmitting frequency.

Flight Training Adelaide has advised that from their perspective the operational outcomes during the initial stages of the proof of concept have been outstanding. They have also advised that the support from the greater community and the friendliness and welcoming attitude from the residents of Port Lincoln has been overwhelming for their international students.

However, like all good operational plans, FTA have recognised that their plans need adjusting to suit and fit the dynamics of the local circumstances, and challenges that could not have been foreseen at the outset. In saying this FTA are very respectful of the local community and the need for locals to buy-in to a workable and sustainable operational framework under which FTA can operate. Initial indications are that some of the residents in the communities of North Shields and Poonindie have been inconvenienced by the increase in aircraft activity and to a certain extent, the different sound FTA aircraft bring to the airport. Council and FTA recognise that noise impact has been an issue for local residents, and further work is being undertaken to assess noise impediment as part of the development assessment process being managed by SCAP - this work has not been completed.

In particular it appears that the high volume use of runway 05/23 for circuit training is causing angst and discomfort for some of the residents in North Shields. After a constructive review of the continued use of this runway for circuit training, the Council and FTA have decided to cease circuit training on this runway effective 17 April 2019. This runway may still be used for the arrivals and departures of FTA aircraft from and to the training area and for aircraft returning from navigations.

Council and FTA have also agreed to explore the use of alternative landing strips, such as at Cummins and Coffin Bay to reduce the intensity of circuits being conducted from the Port Lincoln Airport.

Another point of concern raised by some stakeholders is that the intended establishment of a permanent facility would see the training footprint grow threefold. Although student numbers will increase with a permanent footprint, this will not mean a proportional increase in circuit training. At any point in time FTA can only have 4-5 aircraft in the circuit in order to ensure safe separation between training aircraft. Regardless of the increase in student numbers, a third of students will be doing 6 weeks of ground theory before they start flying, one third will be doing circuit work and the other third will be on navigation exercises well North of the airport.

That said, FTA has recognised that there is still some way to go for the local community to become accustomed to the change in sound and frequency of FTA aircraft and there are still a number of other operational challenges to be ironed out. In the interest of taking the community on the journey with Council, FTA has agreed to defer the establishment of its permanent facility for the time being and operate at the proof of concept rate of up to 60 students in Port Lincoln at any one time, as they find common ground with local stakeholders in the community. FTA advise that once they are confident of support from those at ground level they

will reconsider an establishment date for a permanent facility. FTA will however look to get the State Government Development Approval as soon as possible, which will be held in abeyance until such a time that it decides to start the development. This would not happen before the 2nd quarter 2020.

In the mean time, as a further measure to address community concerns FTA have advised that they will adopt a fly friendly program, and undertake their operation within the following 'fly friendly guidelines': -

Fly Friendly Guidelines

Operations

When safe to do so and/or within the guidelines of the Air Navigation Act - the main objectives of the Fly Friendly program are that the FTA planes will: -

- Climb to operating height as soon as possible*
- Maintain operating height*
- Reduce engine power as soon as possible*
- Follow the promulgated flight paths*
- Avoid residential areas if and where practicable*
- Do not fly wide circuits - keep as narrow as possible*
- Utilise low powered descent approaches from the training area (reduce noise)*

Circuit Operating Hours

- Monday to Saturday 7 am to last light*
- FTA will not be conducting any night flying at Port Lincoln except for the purpose of changing aircraft over with Parafield and the recovery of aircraft if needed.*

(Please note there can be arrivals and departure on navigations prior to 7.00am)

- Sunday 8.00 am to last light*
- Christmas Day No flight training*
- New Years Day No flight training.*
- Anzac day No circuit training before 9am*

Council remains aware that the proposed flying school provides a significant economic opportunity for the region, both in terms of jobs provided and in enhancing the profile of Port Lincoln and the Lower Eyre Peninsula.

Council looks forward to continuing to work with FTA to ensure that the FTA operation, in whatever format that may take, will be beneficial to FTA, the District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula and the wider region, and will have the support from the local community.

**RODNEY PEARSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**