

WARRUMBUNGLE SHIRE COUNCIL

Ordinary Meeting – 16 September 2021

Item 17 Aerodrome Certification

Division:	Technical Services
Management Area:	Technical Services
Author:	Director Technical Services – Kevin Tighe
CSP Key Focus Area:	Public Infrastructure & Services
Priority:	P13 Roads throughout the Shire are safe, well maintained and appropriately funded.

Reason for Report

The reason for this report is to determine the level of regulatory management and reporting desired for the aerodrome at Coolah and at Coonabarabran.

Background

The Coolah Aerodrome and the Coonabarabran Aerodrome are regulated by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA). They are regulated because both aerodromes are registered, Coolah Aerodrome was registered on the 13 May 2004 and Coonabarabran Aerodrome was registered on the 22 February 2006. Due to the introduction of new rules, CASA has advised that for both aerodromes to continue to be regulated, they must transition to certification by May 2022.

Issues

Aerodromes not approved by CASA to the regulated requirements are referred to as aircraft landing areas (ALA). Within the Warrumbungle LGA, Baradine Aerodrome is an example of an ALA. Also, an aerodrome that does not transition to the new rules will have any published terminal instrument flight procedure (TIFP) cancelled by the certified instrument flight procedure designer responsible for maintaining the TIFP for the aerodrome.

Certification involves the submission of a compliant aerodrome manual, referred to as a Manual of Standards (MOS), as well as development and implementation of safety management plans and the availability of trained reporting officers. A summary of the differences in management of safety between a certified aerodrome and an ALA is provided in the attachments.

The infrastructure at the Coolah Aerodrome consists of one unsealed runway and a pilot activated lighting system and boundary fences. The utilisation of the Coolah Aerodrome is not known with certainty however, it is apparent that there is very little activity at the aerodrome. The aerodrome is located some 20 minutes drive from Coolah and has on rare occasions been used by air ambulance to fly out patients from Coolah Hospital. Due to the proximity of surrounding hills and lack of warning lights on those hills there is no flight instrument rating for the Coolah Aerodrome.

The infrastructure at Coonabarabran Aerodrome consists of one sealed runway and a cross runway that is unsealed. The aerodrome also includes several hangars, a terminal building, fences, pilot activated lighting system, flight instrument rating and

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an Aero Club building. The Coonabarabran Aerodrome is also an established base for firefighting operations. The utilisation of the Coonabarabran Aerodrome is not known with certainty, however it is known that it is frequently used for air ambulance operations and it is used for courier flights. The aerodrome is located some 15 minutes drive from Coonabarabran. Also, it is known that charter flights, particularly for astronomers, use the aerodrome. The range of multiple users suggest the cost of transitioning to and maintaining certification can be justified on the basis that these users require confidence that safety standards are regulated by CASA.

Options

The option to transition both the Coolah and the Coonabarabran Aerodromes to certification exists, as does the option not to transition either of the aerodromes. Due to the administrative and reporting burden that comes with certification, Council may wish to pursue certification for the Coonabarabran Aerodrome only.

Financial Considerations

The cost of transitioning to certification status is not known with certainty, however the development of safety management plans will involve the engagement of a specialist aerodrome adviser. Also, the ongoing cost of implementing safety systems is not known.

Council is able to undertake current reporting requirements within existing budget allocations and this includes the training of selected staff in Baradine, Coolah and Coonabarabran in the duties of Reporting Officer.

Community Engagement

The scale of community interest in this issue is low, the impact is rated as moderate, which means that the minimum level of engagement on this issue is to inform and consult.

Attachments

1. Listing of aerodrome categories and associated management and reporting requirements.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council prepare necessary management plans and manual of standards to enable transition to new rules imposed by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority for certification of the Coonabarabran Aerodrome.
2. That the Coolah Aerodrome ceases to be a regulated aerodrome and no process of certification is undertaken.