GOLD COAST ILS PROJECT APPROVED

News / Airports / Routes



Gold Coast Airport has received the green light to install an Instrument Landing System (ILS) as part of efforts to reduce the number of missed approaches, diversions and delays due to weather.

The ILS, which assists pilots on equipped aircraft with a precise radio navigation aid, will be installed for flights landing from the north on Runway 14, which the airport has said previously is the direction about two-thirds of all flights land.

Construction was expected to be completed in 2017, in time for the city's hosting the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Currently, Gold Coast was the only airport among the Australia's top 12 busiest airports that currently did not have an ILS. The airport has the satellite based landing system Required Navigation Performance (RNP), as well High Intensity Runway Edge Lighting (HIRL) installed in 2012.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss said there had been an average of 50 diversions a year at the South East Queensland airport due to weather, in addition to "many more missed approaches and aircraft that never left their port of origin due to the forecast weather conditions at the Gold Coast".

"The ILS will help to reduce diversions, aircraft circling, missed approaches and flight cancellations

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in poor weather conditions," Truss said in a statement on Monday.

"This will reduce the inconvenience and impost on passengers, airlines, airport retail businesses, transport operators and other stakeholders due to flight disruptions."

While the new system was expected to improve the airport's operational performance, Truss noted the concerns of locals who fear extra aircraft noise given the aircraft would need to make a longer approach from the north when the ILS was in use.

To that end, Airservices has been advised to "make every effort to minimise the use of the ILS while meeting air safety requirements", Truss said. The Minister added the ILS was expected to be used for "no more than 10 per cent of the time" on fine weather days and when Runway 14 was in use. And there would be no change to Gold Coast Airport's 2300 to 0600 curfew.

"No additional residents will be exposed to noise levels greater than 60dB(A) in these conditions. By way of reference, 60dB(A) is roughly equivalent to the noise level of normal conversation and 70dB(A) is similar to the noise of a nearby passing car," Truss said.

"Maximum use of the ILS will occur on extremely bad weather days when runway 14 is in use, which is around 10 days per year.

"I expect Airservices to work collaboratively with the Airport, airline industry and community in designing Noise Abatement Procedures which prioritise RNP and other existing approach procedures above the ILS.

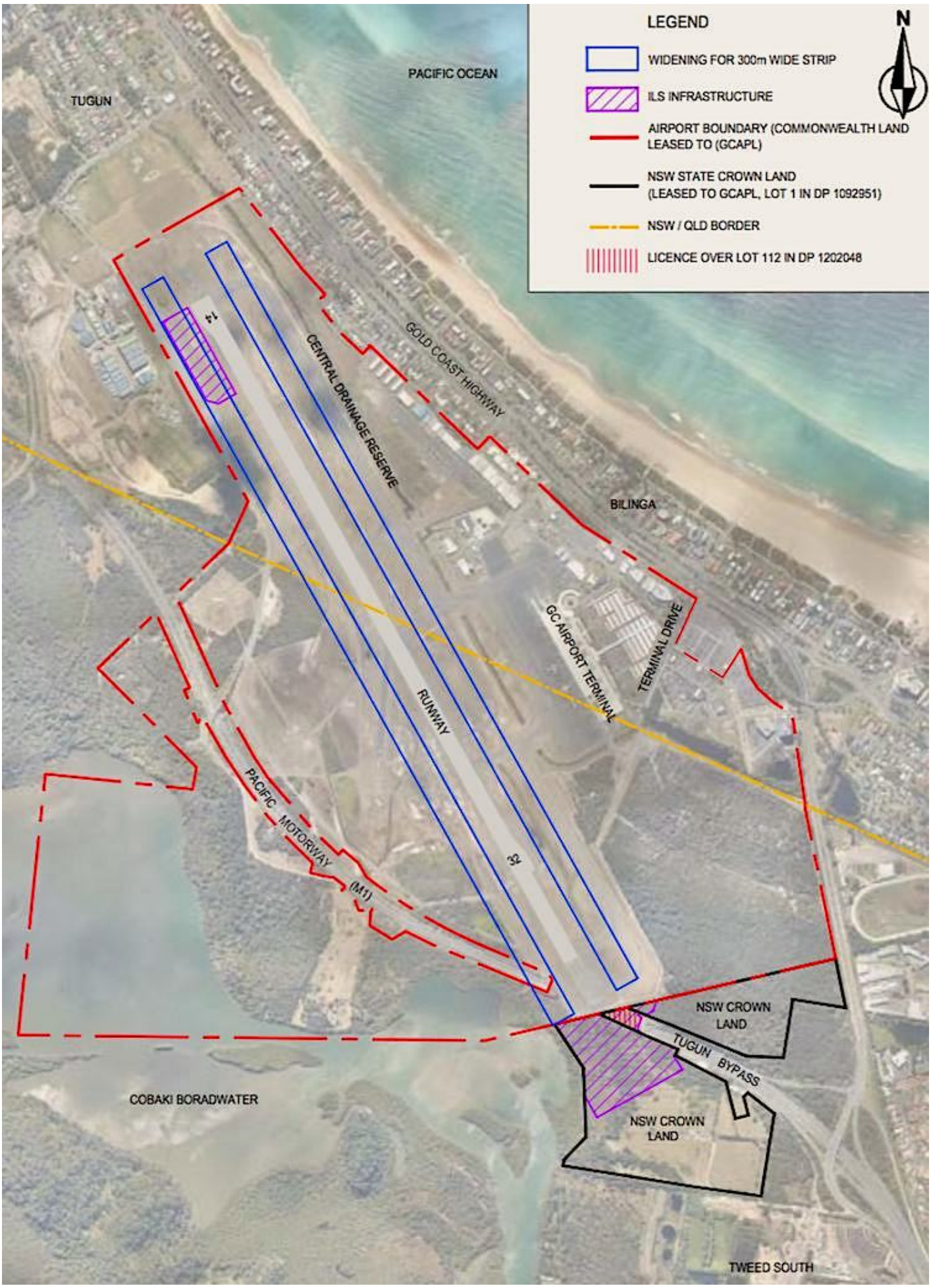
"The majority of arrivals to Gold Coast Airport are from ports to the south. For these aircraft, the existing visual and instrument approaches are shorter and require less fuel and will continue to be preferred.

Also, Truss said the airport's most frequent users were "committed to continue using current approach procedures to help minimise aircraft noise impacts, unless an ILS approach is specifically required".

The airport currently handled about six million passengers a year, with the number expected to rise to 16.3 million by 2031.

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The proposed ILS installation at Gold Coast Airport. (Gold Coast Airport/Airservices)

Gold Coast Airport chief operating officer Marion Charlton welcomed the federal government's decision.

"The introduction of the ILS forms part of Gold Coast Airport's platform for contributing to the economic prosperity of the GoldCoast, south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales regions for decades to come," Charlton said in a statement.

"We want to thank all of our stakeholders who have contributed to the Major Development Plan and we look forward to working with all of them as the project moves into the implementation phase."

While there had been some opposition to the ILS from local residents, Gold Coast Airport said independent research from JWS Research found the project was supported by the majority of the community.

Gold Coast Airport said 74 per cent of residents backed the introduction of the ILS, while 65 per cent of those living under the flight path area also approved the project.

"Only 15 per cent of residents oppose the ILS, including just 23 per cent who live in the new flight-path area," Gold Coast Airport said.

Truss said there would be a 12-to-18-month post-implementation review after the ILS was commissioned covering noise monitoring and reporting.

The Minister also "strongly encouraged" Gold Coast Airport to be "alert to further technological advancements" such as Ground-Based Augmentation Sytstem, "should they become available for implementation using a curved approach over water to the airport."

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