

# FROM THE TOWER

Hello and welcome to February 2010 edition of 'From the Tower', Bankstown Airport's Air Traffic Control news circular. The aim of From the Tower is to provide you, the Bankstown aviation community, with a regular source of news and information from an Air Traffic Control perspective. It is also aimed at keeping you informed of relevant and important events happening in and around the aerodrome, and to be a forum to discuss procedural topics focussed on operations at Bankstown.

**G**'day and welcome to the first edition of *From the Tower* for 2010. This issue covers a few current issues concerning operations at Bankstown, in particular the transition to Class D operations which will affect us all in some capacity. Other topics include the increase in fire fighting operations into and out of Bankstown, mainly focusing on helicopters, staffing at Bankstown and Camden control towers, wake turbulence, air traffic priorities and the CASA directive effective 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2010.

2009 was a year in which G.A faced many challenges. The impact of the global economic downturn has had a significant impact on all areas of aviation, and from the notable reduction of aircraft movements at Bankstown it is evident that we too have felt the impact. Hopefully 2010 is when it all turns around.

Bankstown recorded 376000 aircraft movements for 2009, around 10000 down on 2008. The busiest month was March, with around 37000 movements. The second half of the year saw the gradual reduction in movements, with December being the quietest only recording around 22000.

## Transition to Class D

As I'm sure you are all aware CASA has directed Airservices to put in place measures to provide a Class D control service at all GAAP aerodromes around Australia. Airservices has been working to formulate formal procedures, produce internal training packages for controllers, to assess the need for physical restructuring of the tower consoles and determining how to best provide the required service in a safe, orderly and expeditious manner. These processes are still being undertaken with the intention to implement by early June, 2010.

For more information see the CASA website at [www.casa.gov.au](http://www.casa.gov.au).

CASA conducted GAAP workshops around the country to inform industry, and from the information put forward at those workshops the following changes to operations/procedures can be expected. It appears the proposed Class D operations will be closely aligned with the US FAA Class D procedures.

What does this mean for operations at Bankstown?

1. Visual Meteorological Conditions (VMC) criteria (minima) will change within the Control Zone (CTR).
  - Flight visibility: 5000m.
  - Distance from cloud: 600m horizontal, 1000ft above, 500ft below.
2. Special VFR (SVFR) criteria
  - Flight visibility: 1600m (fixed wing).
  - Distance from cloud: clear of cloud.
3. Separation requirements
  - IFR to IFR: Separation provided
  - IFR to SVFR: Separation provided
  - SVFR to SVFR: Separation provided when vis is less than VMC
  - IFR to VFR: No separation provided
  - VFR to VFR: No separation provided
4. A pilot may cancel an IFR flight plan in VMC.
5. Class D will also see the re-introduction of full SMC, or ground control.



There are no changes to airspace design. The Inbound Reporting Points (IRPs) for VFR aircraft will remain unchanged. i.e. Prospect and 2RN will still be the approach points for pilots operating under the VFR to track to and report at for a clearance into the Class D CTR.

CASA will be undertaking a comprehensive education campaign over the coming months and any questions from industry regarding the change to rules and procedures should be directed to CASA.

The implementation date for Class D operations will also see the Camden Air Traffic Control Tower reopening 7 days a week, from 0800 to 1800 local. Camden is currently only open on weekends and public holidays, and is staffed by controllers from Bankstown.

## Staffing

If you thought that you have heard a few new voices over the radio from the tower the last few months - you'd be right.

- **Joel** from Tamworth was the first to arrive. He has successfully checked out in all positions in the tower – SMC, COORD and ADC (Surface Movement Control, or Ground, Coordinator and Aerodrome Control).
- **Darren**, a seasoned BK pilot, arrived from ML Enroute Centre and also successfully checked out in all positions.
- **Jane** was given BK as her first posting out of the ATC Learning Academy, and has so far checked out on SMC and COORD, and will formally begin her ADC training in the coming weeks.
- **Matt**, a former BK controller, returned from far north QLD in January and also successfully checked out in all positions last week.
- **Scott**, another former BK controller, has made the journey back from Sydney TWR and is currently undergoing training in all positions

These additional controllers will allow current BK controllers to venture down the M5 and begin training at CN tower to provide the service required when it opens 7 days a week.

## Wake Turbulence

The unpredictable nature of wake turbulence makes it an extremely hazardous situation, especially for light aircraft. Wake turbulence is not a common occurrence in the GAAP CTR, but on occasion ATC will need to apply appropriate wake turbulence separation standards when aircraft designated MEDIUM or HEAVY operate within, or in close proximity to, the CTR.

Examples of such aircraft operating at BK may include:

- Convair MEDIUM
- Global Express MEDIUM
- Black Hawk Helicopter MEDIUM
- Skycrane HEAVY

Wake turbulence is applied in 2 ways:

1. To the runway threshold as a time separation standard, or
2. As a distance standard to aircraft airborne.

For example, if a Convair departs runway 29C, a C152 cannot depart from 29R for 2 mins after the Convair is wheels up. If the Convair departs 11C, a C152 cannot depart from 11L until 3 mins after the Convair is wheels up, as the threshold for 11L is displaced more than 150metres from the full length of 11C. As such the C152 is determined to be an intersection departure.



The wake turbulence envelope is considered to be ½ mile either side of track, 1000ft below and 5 miles behind the aircraft from which it is being produced. This is more likely something to take into consideration when flying enroute. Further information on wake turbulence, the required separation standards and their application can be found in AIP ENR 1.4 – 13.

The Erickson Skycranes which have been at Bankstown over summer play a vital role in the fire fighting capabilities of the state. When tasked to perform a fire fighting role, priority is afforded to the aircraft. This is not limited to the Skycranes, but also the HELITAK and FIREBIRD aircraft, and sometimes chartered flights carrying firefighting personnel who advise ATC of their FFR (Fire and Flood Relief) status. FFR status is afforded the same priority as MEDICAL 1 and SAR (Search and Rescue) status. To regulate and ensure these aircraft are able to operate



unrestricted, other aircraft may be delayed as result. Ultimate priority is given to an aircraft emergency. Further information on air traffic priorities can be found in AIP ENR 1.4-15.

## **CASA Directive effective 18th January, 2010**

On 24th December last year CASA issued directions to Airservices Australia relating to the limit on circuit traffic. From the 18th January 2010 the circuit cap was raised from 6 to 8 aeroplanes. The amended figure of 8 aeroplanes does not include arriving and departing traffic. This means the arrival / departure frequency can operate with little, if no, restrictions.

However, as the Pilot in Command, you need to have a plan in the back of your mind if a clearance is not available, and you are instructed to remain clear of the CTR. ATC have always had the option to deny clearance for various reasons, traffic and workload management included.

Consider this: Aircraft crash on the aerodrome. ATC initiate Aerodrome Emergency Plan (AEP).

ATIS reads similar to this: *'Bankstown Terminal Information Golf, Bankstown aerodrome closed due aircraft accident, clearance not available, delay unknown, Bankstown Terminal Information Golf.'*

You, as the Pilot in Command, need to know what to do. It is not ATC's role to instruct or suggest possible options. The delay could be anywhere from 5 mins onwards, and the reopening of the aerodrome is up to the emergency services onsite, and the BK safety officer, not the TWR.

A major problem that has occurred during the last few AEP's (which are thankfully few and far between) has been taxiing aircraft. As soon as ATC call the emergency services and activate the AEP the aerodrome is released to the safety officer in Car 2. All activity on the aerodrome must STOP. ATC will process airborne traffic as required but aircraft on the Movement Area must cease taxiing immediately. The last thing an ambulance or fire tender needs to do once airside is dodge aircraft still taxiing. Listen out on SMC frequency and monitor the ATIS for further instructions.

## **Finally...**

Once again thanks for taking the time to read this publication, we hope it has highlighted some important areas of discussion and is a forum for further thought in the classroom or at home.

From The Tower is written for news and information purposes only. It does not in any way replace or supersede any of the applicable aviation regulatory documents and as such should not be used as a substitute.