

Welcome to Archerfield Airport Corporation's Spring 2007 e-newsletter.

There has been some misinformation circulated relating to the airport's status and I wish to clarify this.

The categories of licensed and unlicensed Aerodromes ceased to exist in June 2006. Airports were required to become either certified or registered under the new Civil Aviation Safety Regulation (CASR) 139.

CASA has advised that "An aerodrome must be certified if it is used by RPT aircraft carrying more than 30 passengers or frequent charter flights carrying more than 30 people." (www.casa.gov.au/publicinfo/casarole.htm)

As this does not apply at Archerfield, CASA has advised that the correct classification for Archerfield is Registered. CASA also advise that "Registered aerodromes must have the same physical standards as certified aerodromes".

No existing operators have been disadvantaged by the choice of classification. It should be noted that the aerodrome will be placed into the certified category if / when there is an operational requirement. The airport is currently being maintained at a standard that will allow this to occur.

It should also be noted that aircraft exceeding 5700 kg have always required special clearance to use the runways and taxiways because of the pavement strength. Such clearance is given freely unless calculations show that wheel loading may result in runway damage.

Gerard Campbell, CEO

First corporate hangar tenant



Leading waste management specialists, Wanless Environmental Services, is the first to lease one of Archerfield Airport's new corporate hangars.

By the end of the year, the company's corporate jet will be operating in and out of the airport; transporting executives and clients to Wanless Environmental Services' various offices throughout Australia and the South Pacific.

The purpose-built complex has four hangars, each with offices and meetings rooms, all designed to suit a range of modern corporate aircraft. It is only the second hangar in the world to feature revolutionary new pivoting doors that pivot upwards to provide a shade awning (rather than slide open and encroach on adjoining hangars).

Michael Cooke, Pilot and Aviation Manager for the Wanless Group, said the company's recent decision to purchase a corporate jet would provide enormous flexibility and time efficiencies.

"What could take a week with airline travel will take a day with a jet," he explained. "Also, our head office at Coopers Plains is just a few minutes away from the airport, so having a corporate hangar so close suits us down to the ground."

Wanless Environmental Services is a Queensland success story. It now has operations in all capital cities and most regional centres throughout Australia.

Michael said the corporate lounge and associated facilities in the hangar complex would also be used by the company for client meetings, small conferences and training purposes.



Hot start to fire season

Archerfield Airport is once again the base for specialist B3 Squirrel waterbombing aircraft on standby in South East Queensland during the fire season. And in the first week of operations in August, the aerial fire fighters were called to no less than four major bushfires.

This is the fourth year that the team from WA-based Helicopters (Australia) Pty Ltd has provided vital support to the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS). Last year, these contract aircraft flew a total of 99 hours and performed 656 water drops on firegrounds, as well as providing valuable information back to ground crews.

The team comprises three pilots, an engineer and two drivers of support trucks. Their three Squirrel AF350 B3 aircraft are each capable of carrying 1,000 litres of water and up to 100 litres of fire fighting foam, which increases the effectiveness of water by up to 10 times.

According to Helicopters (Australia) Manager, Joe Driver, the team members look forward to their annual 12 week stay in Brisbane.

"There's a great cooperative spirit in Queensland, especially by the air traffic guys at Archerfield and Brisbane Airports," he said. "Everyone helps us when we are called out to do our job. It's great."

Joe said that while the work was not dangerous, it does require concentration and extensive training. Ideally, aerial waterbombing occurs at 50 feet and 50 knots. During an operation, a QFRS supervisor rides in the lead aircraft and communicates with an incident controller on the ground to establish the best location for waterbombing. The support trucks travel to a safe location near the fire to allow the aircraft to refuel.

Fire fighting is just one of many services offered by Helicopters (Australia). At the other end of the spectrum, the company provides Antarctic expedition support!



Cloud seeding in Queensland

profile George Ditchmen



Australia's aviation industry has lost a 'legend' with the recent passing of George Ditchmen, OAM, FRASc (pictured).

George, 93, was a familiar face at Archerfield Airport since 1935. He was also widely acknowledged as one of just a handful of aircraft engineers left in Australia with the practical experience needed to repair vintage planes.

"If George didn't have a part, he made it. He had the rare ability of being able to work on new and old aircraft – and he's the reason many of the country's Tiger Moths and other old planes are still flying," explains Barry Hempel of Hempels Aviation.

In his trademark white overalls, George operated GB Ditchmen Pty Ltd at Archerfield for half a century. Before that he worked as a flight engineer for Qantas, which operated out of Archerfield from the 1930s.

Initially George set up his business and workshop in an igloo hangar, which he rebuilt after it was flattened by a cyclone. Even in his nineties, with son Ralph managing the business, George would come to work several times a week. If you dropped by, you would often find him relaxing in his favourite chair (from an old aircraft) and enjoying a cuppa.

According to his daughter, Sue Brown, George's experience and innovation were in demand even in the early days.

"Qantas, Ansett and TAA were always flying in aircraft engines and other vital components for repair – and I remember spending a lot of time typing letters for Dad trying to organise parts from all over the world," remembers Sue Brown.

George's ability to engineer and produce parts or tools was also legendary. Sue relates the story of the time her father went to the doctor with a fish bone caught in his throat. It was out of reach of the doctor's instruments – so George went back to his workshop and made an instrument to do the job!

In 1993, George was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his services to aviation; but in his typically modest style, he didn't even go to the ceremony. He asked that the medal be posted to him.

"He was a wonderful man, but a terrible hoarder," says Sue. "He wanted to keep every nut and bolt."

As well as a deep love for aircraft, George liked to tinker on other forms of transport. He lovingly restored a 1914 Humbrette; and in one of those weird twists of fate, came across a wreck of a 1934 Levis motorcycle which he rebuilt. The bike turned out to be the very one that he had once owned and raced in his youth.

George is greatly missed by his family and wife, Betty; and by all at Archerfield Airport who knew and respected him.



Cloud seeding research trials in Queensland are soon to get underway, with Archerfield Airport about to provide hangar facilities and other services.

As the state continues to feel the effects of the worst drought on record, the Queensland Government is embarking on a four-year cloud seeding research project. The aim is to find out if cloud seeding is a viable way to enhance rainfall over the South East's dam catchments, including those of Somerset and Wivenhoe Dams.

Cloud seeding has been used with varying degrees of success throughout the world. It involves dispersing substances such as silver iodide, dry ice or salt into clouds to stimulate rainfall. While the process works extremely well in some places (Tasmania is one example), success is not guaranteed in other places because of a combination of climatic and other factors.

Two methods of seeding (using salt and silver iodide) will be tested during the Queensland trials, which start during the coming summer storm season. In addition to the seeding, local weather systems and cloud microphysics will be investigated. A polarimetric Doppler research radar recently installed at Redbank Plains will provide valuable data for this research. Another meteorological instrument may also be established at Archerfield Airport.

This project is a partnership involving the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence, the Bureau of Meteorology, the University of Southern Queensland, Monash University, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and aircraft provider/s.

While the project has attracted strong national interest, it is not expected to break the drought.

Long-awaited link to open

It is hoped that a new road at the northern end of Archerfield Airport will be carrying traffic in the coming weeks, as soon as the transfer of land ownership is finalised.

It is almost a year since the Federal Government approved a gift of land by Archerfield Airport Corporation for the new road, known as Barton Street. However, since the Council and Department of Main Roads finished construction work some months ago, the fully sealed road has been waiting for legalities to be completed and an official opening to take place. It's been a frustrating wait for all who travel near the airport.

Once it opens, Barton Street will link Balham and Beatty Roads and is certain to improve both traffic flow and safety around the airport. AAC believes the new road will help regenerate Archerfield as a key transport node for Queensland.

security upgrade

Security at Archerfield Airport has been significantly upgraded in recognition of the airport's strategic importance – and as a result, the corporation is required to take its new airside responsibilities seriously.

The improved security measures, including CCTV and new access control systems, were funded under the Federal Government's anti-terrorism initiative. Strict controls are now in place to ensure that only authorised people are airside.

Airport tenants are reminded that they are legally responsible if a visitor or staff member goes airside via their premises without correct clearance.

watch every drop!

A quick reminder to airport tenants to watch every drop. To date, you've done a great job conserving water during the drought; and we appreciate the efforts of those who are using minimal water in the aircraft washdown bay for either safety purposes or operational necessities.

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Feedback

We are interested in your feedback on our newsletter.
Please forward any comments to aac@archerfieldairport.com.au

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Like all capital city general aviation airports, Archerfield Airport is home to many varied types of aircraft flown by pilots of different ages and capabilities. Students and experienced pilots often mix on the large network of grass and sealed taxiways. Therefore it's important to keep taxi speeds to a safe level.

Controllers on duty occasionally observe pilots taxiing at unsafe speeds, sometimes passing aircraft that have just vacated runways or weaving their way at speed through lines of parked aircraft. Aircraft wingspans are much wider than the average vehicle; the braking efficiency is usually less than that of a family car – and spinning propellers can turn a slight mishap into a major tragedy. At the least, the repercussions of trying to save a few minutes of taxi time can be very expensive.

Pilots and controllers work well together at Archerfield to create a safe flying environment despite the sometimes challenging situations. Please remember not to reduce your vigilance once you land and clear the runway. Your responsibilities remain until your aircraft is safely tied down in the parking area.

George Lane
Tower Manager

tower talk