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# plane torque

Archerfield

Brisbane's Metropolitan Airport



*Getting stuck in: LifeFlight Chair, Hon Jim Elder (left), and AAC Director Lachlan Bird get work started on LifeFlight's new heavy maintenance hangar.*

## All Systems Go for LifeFlight

Work has commenced on Archerfield Airport's largest hangar complex, a new maintenance and administration facility for LifeFlight Australia.

Archerfield Airport Corporation (AAC) Director Lachlan Bird and LifeFlight Chair Hon. Jim Elder officially launched the landmark project with a sod-turning ceremony on the Wirraway Avenue site on 11 August, in the presence of long-time LifeFlight supporter and philanthropist Clive Berghofer AM.

The \$24 million complex has been purpose-designed for LifeFlight and is a significant step up from the rescue service's current facility.

"Our current maintenance base at Archerfield has served as a brilliant home for our engineering team for many years and has seen hundreds of major services completed, but as demand for our aeromedical services has continued to grow, we have now outgrown it," Mr Elder said.

"We are expecting the new centre to be ready to go by early 2024. We have been working closely with AAC on this agreement and we thank them for making this a reality for our teams."

The new hangar will double LifeFlight's heavy maintenance capacity as the organisation prepares to meet Queenslanders' growing needs.

AAC Director Lachlan Bird said Archerfield Airport played a vital role in Queensland's emergency aviation network.

"Archerfield's location and facilities make it ideal for a wide range of general aviation operations and supporting the emergency services Queenslanders rely on has always been a priority for us," he said.

The 5,000m<sup>2</sup> hangar complex will service LifeFlight's fleet of aeromedical and search and rescue rotary-wing aircraft including AW139, BK117 and B412 helicopters, cementing Archerfield Airport's place as southeast Queensland's strategic maintenance base for general aviation.





## A message from the **EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER**

With work officially underway on LifeFlight's new heavy maintenance facility – the biggest hangar construction in Archerfield's history – I am reminded of the great synergies we can achieve here.

Archerfield's location, so close to the city and vital transport links, and the depth and variety of the services and expertise available at the airport and in the surrounding area, make Archerfield a very attractive option for organisations setting up or expanding in southeast Queensland.

Tenants moving into the Transition Estate are bringing new jobs, investment and sustainable economic vitality. Having a broad and resilient economic base is always important, even more so as the world confronts the pandemic's fallout and a rapidly shifting international situation.

Archerfield's role as an economic, educational and social hub will only become more critical as our region grows. Whether it's easing pressures on stressed supply chains, facilitating emergency services, educating young flyers or helping businesses reach their customers and suppliers, Archerfield stands ready to contribute. Thank you all for your roles in that mission.

Sincerely,

**Rod Parry**  
Executive General Manager

## Congratulations Gavin and Karen!

The Bird family recently enjoyed a double celebration – Gavin's 80th birthday and his and Karen's 51st wedding anniversary – on the same day.

It wasn't a masterstroke of event planning that made Gavin and Karen choose 19 August 1972, Gavin's 29th birthday, for their wedding. It had much more to do with Queensland's school holiday calendar as Gavin spent the first 30 years of his career working around the state as a teacher and principal. Along the way, he obtained a Master's Degree at Oregon University and opened Crestmead State School where a community hall was named in his honour in 2019.

Gavin was a Foundation Member of the Schizophrenia Fellowship in 1985 and took leave from the Education Department in 1991 to help develop the charity. His community work was recognised in 1999 when Gavin was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).

Gavin and Karen took their interest in education in a new direction when they opened their first child care centre in Marsden in 1988. Four more centres followed between 1991 and 1997; then, in 1998, they took the plunge and bought the lease on Archerfield Airport. Despite its poor financial position, Gavin saw the iconic airport's potential and he and a devoted team of staff and contractors gradually turned it around, making it financially secure and keeping it safe and operational until AAC was able to launch Project AIM in 2020. Marking 25 years since privatisation this year, Archerfield is now poised at the dawn of an exciting new era.

There are few quieter achievers than Gavin and Karen and everyone at AAC wishes them warm congratulations on their recent milestones.



*Then and now: Karen and Gavin Bird at Archerfield in 1998 (top) and celebrating their 51st wedding anniversary and Gavin's birthday in August.*

## What the Yak?

Archerfield Airport has hosted plenty of unusual aircraft since aviation's experimental early days, but the inaugural Pacific Airshow Gold Coast in August brought something unique.

The Yak 110 is an aerial marvel: two Yak 55s cobbled together with a Lear 24 engine to produce the world's only trimotor aerobatics aircraft. This "flying catamaran" is the brainchild of aerobatic pilot Jeff Boerboon, master mechanic Dell Collier and aviation enthusiast Chad Barteel.

"We designed the Yak 110 over years of beers, talking meticulously through every detail and how we could make it work," Mr Boerboon told *The Australian* newspaper.

The aircraft made its debut in 2018 at the Pacific Airshow in Huntington Beach, California, and topped the list of attractions for the hugely successful 2023 event.

To make it happen, the aircraft was shipped in pieces to its new home at Archerfield where Gold Coast aircraft mechanic and aerobatic pilot Hayden Pullen helped put it back together.

Each fuselage has its own engine of almost 500 horsepower,



joined by the jet engine in the middle. The Yak 110 is piloted from the left side cockpit, which makes the right side available for curious – and intrepid – passengers. The one-of-a-kind aircraft caused plenty of double-takes at the Airshow.

"People who know anything about aircraft are blown away when they see it and people who don't know anything look at it and say 'that's not right,'" Mr Pullen, who also flew his Extra 330LT at the Airshow, told *The Australian*.

*Above: Not something you see every day: the Yak 110 was a hit at the recent Pacific Airshow Gold Coast.*



## Safety First! Nik Keeps Archerfield Compliant

Safety is at the heart of everything at Archerfield and, as the airport's newly appointed Operations Technical Manager, that usually involves Nikolay Radev.

Virtually all safety and compliance issues get the benefit of Nik's expertise and experience and his calm demeanour eases interactions between competing interests.

"Safety and compliance issues can arise from aviation and non-aviation operations," Nik says. "They go hand in hand because when we're building warehouses, for example, that has an impact on aviation operations."

Nik negotiates with government departments including Airservices Australia and CASA to make sure everything that happens at Archerfield ticks all the right compliance boxes and all parties have the approvals they need to do their work safely.

"My peers often regard me as a negotiator," he says. "When we talk about safety and technical issues, it isn't always black and white and sometimes emotions get in the way. My job is to investigate objectively and identify workable solutions backed by evidence."

Archerfield's broad mix of operations and tenants, from training organisations to business jet operators, keeps him busy.

"I've been told by CASA that Archerfield is an airport with a very complex layout and I agree," he explains. "Having four runways and being in the middle of a suburb has its unique challenges in terms of space and growth. However, we need to acknowledge the airport's reach and its proud history which goes back 92 years."

Nik began his career as a baggage handler at Varna International Airport in his native Bulgaria, rising over 10 years to become Operations Manager. After moving to Australia and earning a Master's Degree in Aviation Management, he secured a position with the Queensland Police Air Wing which later became QGAir. He joined Archerfield Airport Corporation as Compliance Officer before being promoted to his current position.

"Archerfield has lots of potential and a big future," he says. "It's very close to the city but there is still land available for development. The airport's location, near highways and just a short drive to the Gold Coast, means there are huge possibilities here for aviation and non-aviation businesses."

Nik sees emerging aviation technologies and associated maintenance services being part of that. He believes the new technologies will bring communities closer together, streamlining the transportation of freight and, eventually, people. Archerfield's location makes it a convenient maintenance base for Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) operators and traditional aircraft.

"AAM aircraft can land virtually anywhere. They don't necessarily need an airport but they need somewhere to go for regular maintenance," Nik explains. "Basing such facilities at Brisbane or other airports would be very expensive, even for quite large operators. Archerfield is a great alternative. There's a lot of interest in what we have to offer."

And Nik likes to emphasise another important advantage: "The people here are really good, I enjoy working with them," he says. "It's a great team environment."

*Above: Welcome to Archerfield: AAC's Operations Technical Manager Nikolay Radev (left) hands over the keys to the Yak 110's new home to mechanic and pilot Hayden Pullen.*





## Historic Crash Site Found

Unknown for almost 60 years, the crash site of a 1942 Qantas de Havilland DH-86 Express was recently rediscovered by Fred Wimmer and his trusty metal detector.

VH-USE 'Sydney' took off from Archerfield Airport on 20 February 1942 – the day after the first and largest Japanese air raid on Darwin – en route to Darwin via Mount Isa with seven wartime priority passengers on board. Rain and low cloud made visibility poor and the plane crashed into the slopes of Mount Petrie, then on Brisbane's outskirts, about 10 minutes later. All nine people on board were killed instantly.

Although the crash site was quickly identified, photographed and cleared, other wartime priorities and decades of urban sprawl meant it was 'lost' until Mr Wimmer used historical records and modern maps to search what is now koala habitat. It didn't take long until his metal detector pinged and Mr Wimmer started retrieving items including an engine tag, a pilot's button and a 1939 penny. He called Peter Dunn, Secretary of the Aviation Historical Society of Australia (Qld), who joined the search.

Almost as soon as Mr Dunn waved one of Mr Wimmer's metal detectors over the area, he uncovered a piece of brass engraved with L S MARSHALL. It was the name tag of Chief Officer Lindsay Stuart Marshall, the aircraft's co-pilot and second cousin of legendary Australian aviation pioneer Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith – conclusive proof at last that they had found the crash site.

*Above: VH-USE 'Sydney' Co-pilot Lindsay Stuart Marshall's name tag lay lost in the ground about 2.5km east of the Gateway Motorway at Burbank for more than 80 years.*

## Thanks, Geoff!

As Archerfield's mowing contractor, Geoff Smith (pictured) has not only kept the airport looking spic and span for 33 years, he has also made a significant contribution to safety and amenity. As well as supporting AAC's maintenance team, Geoff has been a great advocate for Archerfield Airport in the local community where he is well known, particularly through his selfless service with Rotary. Thanks for your work, Geoff, and best wishes for a happy and restful retirement.



## For Lease

**Building 115** – This lowset building with Colorbond roof and Hardiplank cladding has a building area of 84.26m<sup>2</sup> on a site area of 174m<sup>2</sup>. With male/female toilet and shower facilities and kitchenette, it has power and computer connections and office space.

**Site 030 Demountable Office** – This 60m<sup>2</sup> air-conditioned demountable office on Grenier Drive has a small kitchenette and bathroom amenities.

**Site 231 Aeroport** – This concrete-floored, steel-framed, Colorbond aeroport off Qantas Avenue offers open-ended airside access. It measures 13m x 12m with a 4m entrance.



A brave Monto teen is back in the saddle after a devastating accident, thanks to expert medical care and Angel Flight.

Bella Southern visited Archerfield Airport recently with one of the Angel Flight pilots who helped facilitate her recovery from serious facial injuries when she was kicked by a horse at her home outside of Monto in May 2022.

Bella was rushed to Queensland Children's Hospital where she endured weeks of maxillofacial surgeries to reconstruct her shattered face and deal with a serious eye injury. Even after discharge, the prospect of losing her eye remained very real and Bella required ongoing care, complicated by the seven-hour drive from Monto to Brisbane. In stepped Angel Flight, making accessing the care Bella needed much easier and less stressful. So far, Angel Flight has transported Bella and her family to Brisbane nine times.

Although Bella's eye couldn't be saved, she hasn't let it stop her doing the camp drafting she loves. She's back on the circuit, recently reaching the finals in the Cloncurry competition, and remains a source of inspiration for Angel Flight volunteer pilot Steve Darveniza.

"Bella is as bright as a button, with a joyful sense of humour while possessing a quiet yet strong underlying sense of purpose," he said. "I'm pleased to have had the pleasure of meeting Bella and her family. They are indomitable."

Angel Flight volunteers have made a big impression on Bella too. "The drivers and pilots are some of the nicest people I've ever met, alongside the amazing nurses and doctors at all the hospitals I've visited," she said.

*Above: Bella Southern and her Dad, Mick, popped into Archerfield recently with Angel Flight volunteer pilot Steve Darveniza.*

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