

FINAL REPORT ON TRIAL YELLOW U23 SMART APPROACH FLIGHT PATH PUBLISHED

Airways New Zealand, Auckland Airport and the Board of Airline Representatives New Zealand (BARNZ) have published the final report on the trial of the Yellow U23 SMART Approach flight path.

SMART Approaches are an example of best practice international air traffic management. They are becoming more and more common place in New Zealand and typically use less fuel, reduce aircraft noise and deliver significant benefits for the environment.

The decision to trial a third satellite-guided flight path to Auckland Airport from the north was publicly announced by the aviation industry in December 2014. The 12-month trial commenced on 1 September 2015 and concluded on 31 August 2016. The trial flight path was used between 7am and 10pm by up to 10 aircraft per day. It was flown by 441 aircraft, saving 3,396 nautical miles and 78,710 kilogrammes of fuel, and reducing carbon dioxide

emissions by 248,724 kilogrammes. Noise experts concluded that the difference in noise exposure on a day with 10 Yellow U23 SMART Approach flights and a day with no Yellow U23 SMART Approach flights was less than one decibel, or imperceptible, at most monitor sites.

A draft report on the trial was published on 20 October 2017 and was followed by a public consultation process. Written submissions on the draft report were accepted until 15 November 2017, and there was an opportunity for members of the community to present their submissions in person.

As a result of public feedback, Airways, BARNZ and Auckland Airport have modified the flight path to further avoid populated areas. It is now almost 1.5 kilometres off the coast of Eastern Beach, Mellons Bay, Cockle Bay and Waikitea Reserve, on average, and it's also now around half a kilometre south-east of Whitford. Aircraft using

the modified flight path will also be higher — at 5,000 feet when they fly over Bucklands Beach and 2,800 feet when flying south-east of Whitford. While these modifications would result in a slightly longer flight path for aircraft than trialled, they will reduce the impact of the flight path on the local communities.

The modified flight path will become operational in March 2019. Aircraft will only be able to use it between 7am and 10pm, with a maximum of six flights per day. That maximum number of flights per day can be increased to 10 in the future if certain conditions, outlined in the final report, are met. A third satellite-guided flight path to Auckland Airport from the south will also be trialled from March 2019.

More information about SMART Approaches and a copy of the final report: www.aucklandflightpathtrial.co.nz

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