

november 2013



Required Navigation Performance (RNP)

Why does Ballina need Smart Tracking?

Currently, commercial pilots approaching Ballina Byron Gateway Airport must abort a landing if they cannot see the runway from an altitude of 660ft. This means that when the weather is very poor and visibility is low, some flights have to divert to other airports. With Smart Tracking, the altitude at which the pilots must be able to see the runway is just 250ft. This means that fewer flights will be diverted and reliability at the Airport will be improved.

Are landings at Ballina Byron Gateway Airport currently unsafe?

Pilots will never land if it is unsafe to do so. Smart Tracking will simply mean that landings can be made in very poor visibility at Ballina Byron Gateway Airport, without the need to divert to another airport.

When will Smart Tracking be implemented Ballina Byron Gateway Airport?

Airservices will not implement Smart Tracking until it is confident that there is no further need for community engagement. It is currently expected that Smart Tracking will be implemented by early January 2014. Initially, only Jetstar will use the Smart Tracking flight paths. There are around 25 Jetstar arrivals to Ballina every week. Over time, though, as other commercial airlines equip their aircraft and train their crews to use the system, use of the Smart Tracking flight paths is expected to increase.

Will Smart Tracking mean new flight paths/increased aircraft noise?

The arrival flight path to Runway 06 almost entirely matches the current, conventional arrival flight path on its final approach. The introduction of Smart Tracking will therefore make no difference to residents that live under this approach, except that Smart Tracking allows aircraft on final approach to glide to the runway, which reduces noise. However, Smart Tracking is a precision

navigation aid, which means that more aircraft will fly close to the centre of the flight path. As a result, people living underneath the centre of the flight path might experience more aircraft noise, and people living on the fringes of the flight path might experience a reduction in aircraft noise.

The arrival flight path to Runway 24 has been designed so that the final approach is over water. While the township of Alstonville is not currently underneath an approach flight path, aircraft using Smart Tracking will be at an altitude of around 3000ft at this point in their approach, so noise impacts will be minimal. Alstonville already experiences aircraft overhead departing from Runway 24.

How much will implementing Smart Tracking cost?

That is a matter for Ballina Byron Gateway Airport, which has requested Airservices to implement the technology.

Will Smart Tracking increase the number of jets using Ballina?

Smart Tracking improves reliability of arrivals, not the capacity of the airport. The number of aircraft arriving at the airport is a matter for the airport and individual airlines, not Airservices.

Will Smart Tracking change runway use at Ballina?

Smart Tracking procedures are being implemented for both Runway 06 and Runway 24. This means that current patterns of runway use, which are dependent largely on wind direction, will not change. Overall, Runway 06 is used slightly more across the year for arrivals than Runway 24, due to prevailing winds in the region.

Will Smart Tracking change departure flight paths?

The Smart Tracking proposals at Ballina are for arrivals only.