



Qantas Flight Training Centre

*Application for Ministerial
Call-In (MCI 9793)*

*Report to the Independent
Planning Commission*



December 2018

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Cover photo

Qantas A380 flying over Sydney Harbour (Source: Google)

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
Applicant	Qantas Airways Limited
Commission	Independent Planning Commission
Construction	The demolition of buildings or works, carrying out of works, including earthworks, erection of buildings and other infrastructure
Council	Bayside Council
Department	Department of Planning and Environment
EP&A Act	<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>
GSC	Greater Sydney Commission
LGA	Local Government Area
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
Minister	Minister for Planning (or delegate)
RMS	Roads and Maritime Services
Secretary	Planning Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy
SRD SEPP	<i>State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011</i>
SSD	State Significant Development
Three Cities	The Three Cities comprising the Eastern Harbour City, the Central River City and the Western Parkland City, as described in the <i>Greater Sydney Region Plan – A Metropolis of Three Cities</i>



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1. Background

1.1 Ministerial Call-In

Qantas Airways Limited (the Applicant) has submitted a call-in request under Section 4.36 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) to the Minister for Planning (the Minister) to declare the proposed Qantas Flight Training Centre a State significant development (SSD). The call-in request is included in **Appendix A** of this report.

This report presents the Department of Planning and Environment's (the Department) consideration of the call-in request in accordance with the Department's *Guideline on 'call-in' of State significant development under the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* (the Guideline).

1.2 Development Background

The Applicant currently owns and operates a flight training centre located within the Qantas Jetbase in Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport (Sydney Airport), Mascot in the Bayside local government area (see **Figure 1**). The Applicant is Australia's national carrier, which operates several domestic and international services daily. The existing flight training centre is currently the largest in the Southern Hemisphere and is critical to the Applicant's operations by supporting the training requirements of all Qantas pilots and flight crew to meet aviation safety regulations. The proposal seeks to relocate the existing flight training centre approximately 150 metres (m) to the east of the existing site to facilitate the construction of the proposed Sydney Gateway Project (see **Section 1.4**).

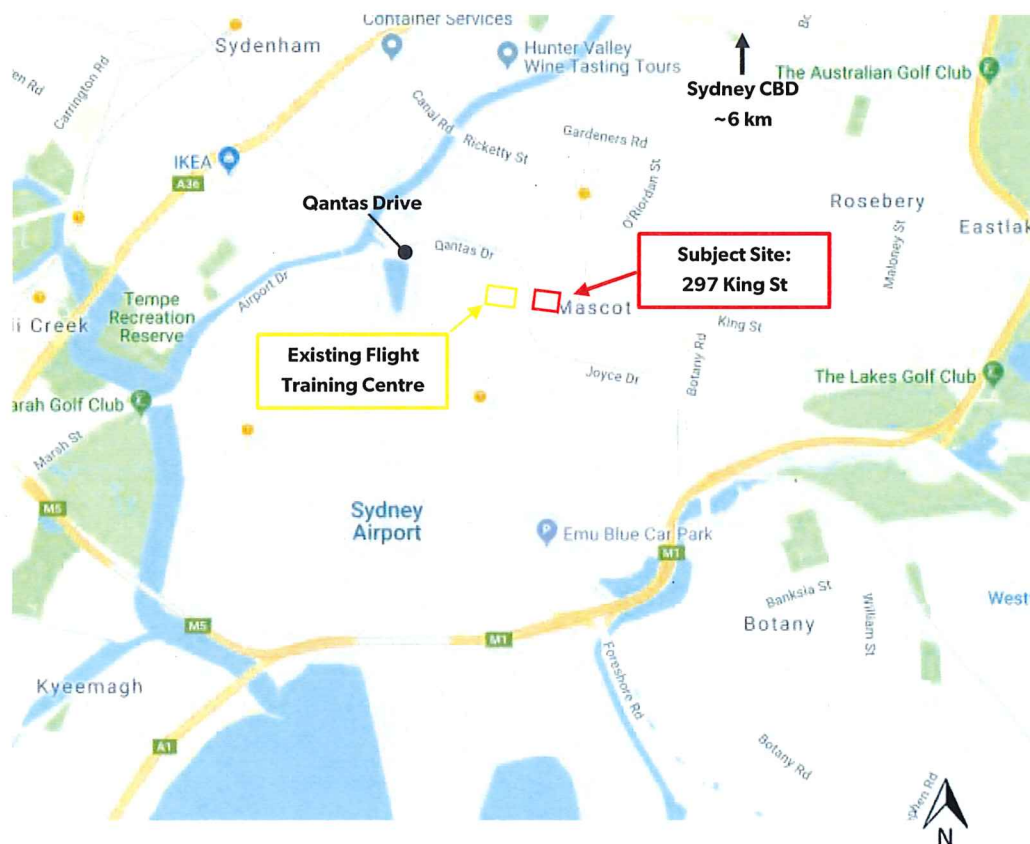


Figure 1 | Site Location

The new flight training centre would comprise full motion simulators, aircraft cabin mock-ups, evacuation pools and multimedia learning centres. The new centre would allow Qantas pilots and flight crew to undertake periodic testing in aircraft emergency and routine procedural environments to meet regulatory and legislative requirements.

1.3 The Site and Surrounding Land Uses

The Applicant’s headquarters, based in Mascot, are sited on approximately 16.5 hectares (ha) of land to the north of Sydney Airport. The Applicant also leases portions of airport land owned by the Sydney Airport Corporation Limited (SACL), which includes land where the existing flight training centre is located (see **Figure 2**).

The proposed site (the site) is located at 297 King Street, Mascot, approximately six kilometres (km) to the south of the Sydney central business district (CBD) and around 150 m to the east of the existing flight training centre and covers an area of 17,580 m². The site is located immediately adjacent to Qantas Drive and the Port Botany Freight Rail Line and is currently used as a carpark but also includes a disused gatehouse, industrial shed and a substation. Surrounding land uses include (see **Figure 2**):

- a Sydney Water asset and Qantas owned land to the north
- the Travelodge hotel development to the east
- Qantas owned land to the south
- the Port Botany Freight Rail Line, Sydney Airport and the existing flight training centre to the west.

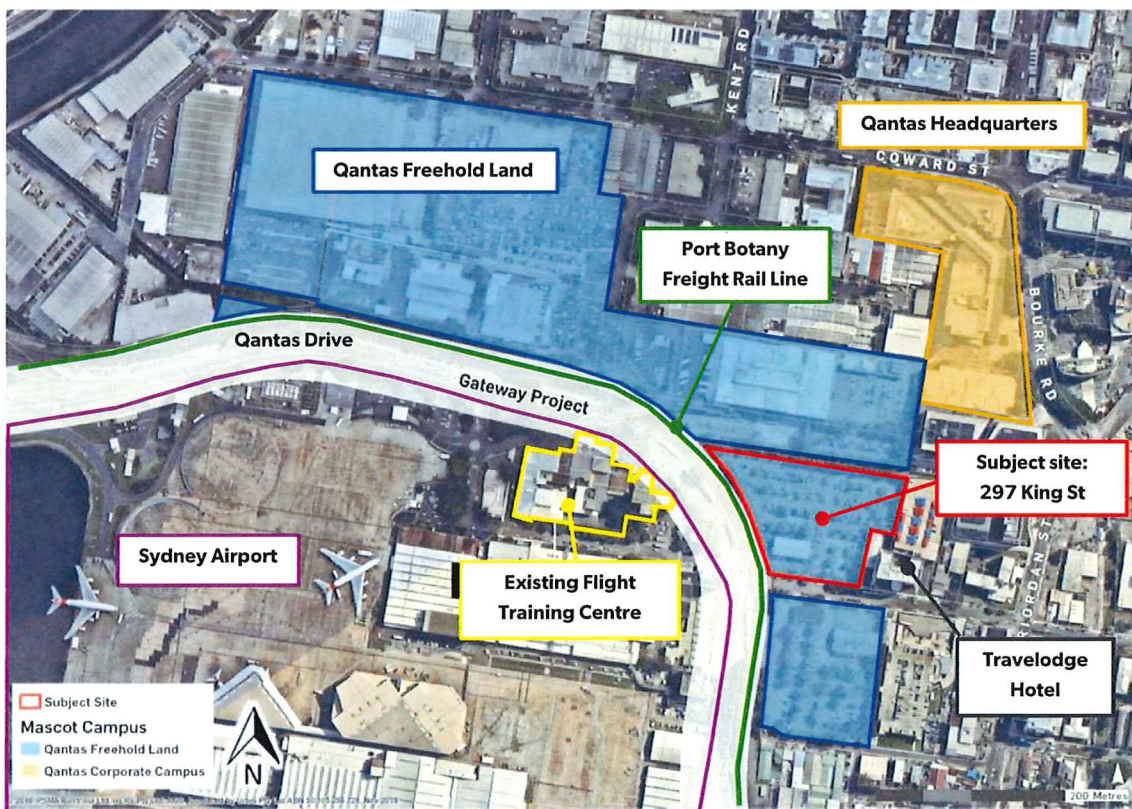


Figure 2 | Location of the Subject Site

1.4 Sydney Gateway Project

Sydney Airport and Port Botany are important international gateways which are forecast to grow significantly over the next 20 years. Efficient connections to the Sydney CBD and other major centres and freight terminals are required to support this growth.

In September 2018, the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) announced the Sydney Gateway Project (Gateway Project), which is proposed to improve connections to Port Botany and Sydney Airport by increasing the capacity of the surrounding road and rail network and providing a new alternative route to the domestic and international airport terminals (see **Figure 2**).

As part of the Gateway Project, Qantas Drive will be widened by approximately 16 m, which will require the partial demolition of the Applicant's existing flight training centre. To ensure RMS can meet its construction deadlines to deliver the Gateway Project, the existing flight training centre must be vacated by 30 June 2021. Therefore, the Applicant is seeking to relocate and construct a new flight training centre to facilitate the delivery of the Gateway Project.

2. Project

2.1 Project Description

The project seeks to construct and operate a new flight training centre which will consist of advanced technological aircraft equipment to allow pilots and crew to undertake high level practical and theoretical flight training. The proposed flight training centre would include the following components as shown in **Figure 3**:

- emergency procedures component, including but not limited to:
 - cabin evacuation emergency trainers or full-scale cabin mock-ups to simulate routine and emergency procedures
 - an evacuation training pool to facilitate realistic training for ditching emergencies
 - slide descent tower for the training of deployment and use of slides during an evacuation
 - door trainers to simulate use of emergency exits
- flight training component, including but not limited to:
 - 12 full motion simulators with visual function, motion and sound to allow crew to be trained in all aspects of normal and emergency operations
 - training devices for emergency procedures
 - computer rooms, multimedia centres, briefing and debriefing rooms.

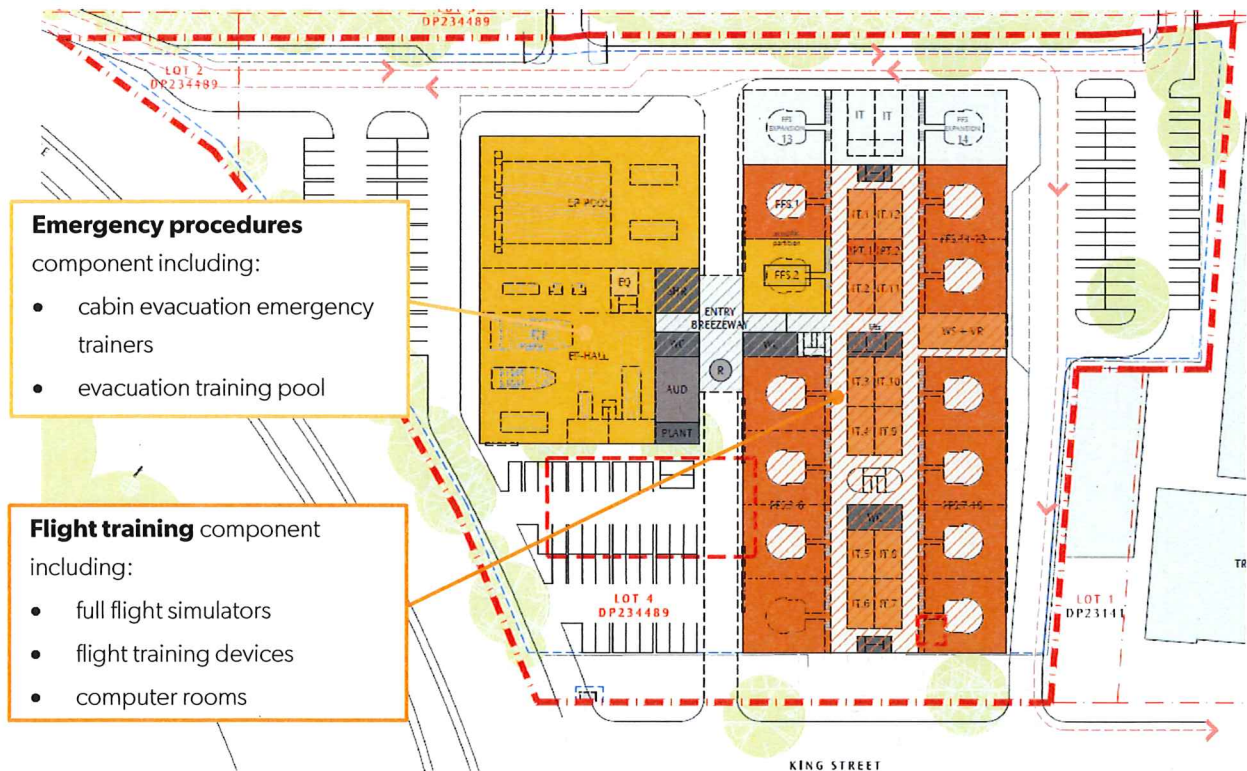


Figure 3 | Conceptual Site Layout

The Applicant anticipates the construction of a new flight training centre would take approximately 16 months. Installation, commissioning and calibration of equipment including full motion flight simulators, would take a further seven months.

To meet RMS' construction timeframes, the Applicant has advised it must commence construction of the proposed flight training centre no later than 1 September 2019.

2.2 Applicant's Need and Justification for Call-In

The Applicant considers the proposal is of State planning significance and requests it be declared SSD for the following reasons:

- the relocation of the flight training centre would enable the delivery of the Gateway Project,
- the proposal would ensure the Applicant's operations and the broader operations of Sydney Airport are not impaired by the construction of the Gateway Project. Without a functioning flight training centre, the Applicant would be unable to carry out its operations
- the proposal is critical to maintaining aviation safety regulations and legislative requirements
- the proposal has arisen in response to the Gateway Project and would assist in achieving the objectives of the *A Metropolis of Three Cities – the Greater Sydney Region Plan* (the Region Plan) and *Eastern City District Plan* by:
 - o allowing Qantas Drive to be widened as part of the Gateway Project, which would ensure Sydney's road and rail network can meet the forecast future growth and the freight and logistics network can remain competitive and efficient
 - o maintaining Sydney Airport's function as an international gateway for passengers and freight, while also supporting airport-related land uses and infrastructure in the area around the airport and Port Botany.
- the timing for the Gateway Project construction is critical and this has implications on when the Applicant must vacate the existing site
- the proposal would require coordination between multiple Government agencies with the Department experienced in coordinating assessments of this nature.



3. Strategic Context

The Department has considered the call-in request against the provisions of several key strategic planning documents prepared by the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC). The proposal is consistent with:

- the GSC's vision in the Region Plan to support the development of infrastructure that supports the Three Cities. The proposal would enable the Gateway Project to go ahead while also protecting the operation of Sydney Airport
- the objectives of the *Eastern City District Plan* including:
 - protecting the airport's function as an international gateway for passengers and freight
 - facilitating road planning to connect Sydney Airport to WestConnex
- the objects of the EP&A Act to promote and coordinate the orderly and economic use and development of land
- the objectives of the industrial zoning of the site under the *Botany Local Environmental Plan 2013*.

The Department's consideration of the call-in request in relation to these strategies and plans is detailed further in **Section 6**.



4. Statutory Context

4.1 Call-in Power

Section 4.36 of the EP&A Act provides that the Minister may, by order published in the Gazette, declare specified development on specified land that is not declared under section 4.36 to be SSD, but only if the Minister has obtained and made publicly available advice from the Independent Planning Commission (the Commission) about the State or regional planning significance of the development.

4.2 Zoning and Permissibility

The site is zoned as IN1 – General Industrial in the *Botany Local Environmental Plan 2013*. The proposed flight training centre is defined as an industrial training facility, which is permitted with consent within this zone.

4.3 Consent

Schedule 1 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011* (SRD SEPP) describes the categories that are SSD. The Applicant investigated two possible planning pathways for the proposal, which are described below.

4.3.1 Air Transport Facility

Clause 17 of Schedule 1 relates to *development for the purpose of air transport facilities that has a capital investment value of more than \$30 million*.

An air transport facility means an airport or a heliport that is not part of an airport, and includes associated communication and air traffic control facilities or structures. Although the proposal relates to the airport, the site is not located on land parcels that comprise Sydney Airport. Therefore, the proposal would be classified as local development that requires consent under Part 4 of the EP&A Act.

4.3.2 Educational Facility

Clause 15 of Schedule 1 relates to development for the purposes of education facilities, and identifies that the following would be SSD:

- (1) *Development for the purpose of a new school (regardless of capital investment value).*
- (2) *Development that has a capital investment value of more than \$20 million for the purpose of alterations or additions to an existing school.*
- (3) *Development for the purpose of a tertiary institution (within the meaning of State Environmental Planning Policy (educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities) 2017, including associated research facilities, that has a capital investment value of more than \$30 million.*

As the proposal is neither a new school or a tertiary institution, the proposal would not be classified as SSD.

In the event that the project is called-in as SSD by the Minister, the Minister would become the consent authority for the proposed development.



5. Engagement

As detailed in the Department's *Guideline on 'call-in' of State significant development under the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979*, the Department consulted with Bayside Council (Council) to seek its views on the call-in request. On 4 December 2018, the Department provided a copy of the call-in request to Council and requested its views. On 18 December 2018, Council provided a submission to the Department advising it had no objection to the application being assessed by State Government. Council noted the critical nature of the project and supported the Applicant's use of the 'call-in' power under section 4.36(3) of the EP&A Act.

Council's submission on the proposal is attached at **Appendix B**. The Department has also made the call-in request and Council's submission publicly available on its website.



6. Consideration of Call-In Request

The Minister has requested the Commission consider six issues when providing advice to the Minister to determine the State significance or regional planning significance of a development proposal. The Applicant's and Department's consideration of each of the issues is provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Consideration of Key Criteria

Applicant's Consideration	Department's Consideration
<p>Criterion 1</p>	
<p>Whether the proposal is of regional or State importance because it is an identified strategic location, or is critical in advancing the nominated strategic direction or achieving a nominated strategic outcome, contained in a relevant State policy, plan or strategy, or regional or sub-regional strategy?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant notes the proposal is located within a regionally significant trade gateway, being Sydney Airport. The relocation of the existing flight training centre would allow for the delivery of the Gateway Project, which is critical road infrastructure. The proposal is crucial to the Applicant maintaining operations as a global and national airline in addition to supporting the efficient operation of Sydney Airport. The proposal would assist in achieving the strategic vision and objectives of the GSC's <i>Eastern City District Plan</i> by facilitating the development of critical road infrastructure near Sydney Airport and Port Botany The proposal would contribute to the generation of long-term jobs. 	<p>The Department agrees with the Applicant's position and considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proposal is of State significance as it would assist in delivering the Government's strategic objectives for providing critical road infrastructure to meet Sydney's forecast future growth while also improving links to and supporting the growth of Sydney Airport the proposal is consistent with the objectives in the Eastern City District Plan to retain surrounding industrial land to provide supporting functions for Sydney Airport the proposal would ensure Qantas flight crew can maintain stringent aviation safety regulations to ensure the safe and efficient operation of Sydney Airport. <p>The Department concludes the proposal is of State importance as it would advance the strategic direction of the Region Plan and the <i>Eastern City District Plan</i>.</p>
<p>Criterion 2</p>	
<p>Whether the proposal delivers major public benefits such as large-scale essential transport, utility infrastructure, or social services to the community?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant states the proposal would enable the construction of the Gateway Project, which would deliver major public benefits, while also ensuring the Applicant's operations are not compromised. The Applicant must vacate the existing facility by 30 June 2021 and requires a new flight training centre to ensure its operations are not impacted. If this date cannot be achieved, the Applicant would not be able to vacate the existing site, which could potentially delay the Gateway Project. 	<p>The Department agrees with the Applicant's position and concludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the project would provide major public benefit by supporting the delivery of the Gateway Project in a timely manner the project would ensure continuity to the Applicant's operations without compromising the safe and efficient operation of Sydney Airport, which serves the transport needs of the local and regional community

Applicant's Consideration

- Therefore, the project is a crucial component in the development of the Gateway Project and the continued and safe operation of Qantas aircraft and Sydney Airport.

Department's Consideration

- the development of an advanced and modern flight training facility would provide significant public benefit by maintaining highly trained pilots and flight crew
- while the project itself would not provide large-scale essential transport or infrastructure, the proposal would enable beneficial use of the land required for the development of the Gateway Project and the proposed flight training centre, which is consistent with State strategic planning objectives.

Criterion 3

Whether the proposal is likely to have significant environmental, social or economic impacts or benefits, be of a significant hazardous or environmentally-polluting nature, or is located in or in close proximity to areas or locations that have State or regional environmental, archaeological or cultural heritage significance.

- The project is not expected to be potentially hazardous nor would it result in significant environmental impacts.
- The proposal would have significant economic impacts if it does not meet the strict construction deadlines required by the Gateway Project.
- This could result in significant delays to the delivery of the Gateway Project and potential grounding of Qantas fleet which could cause delays at Sydney Airport.

The Department agrees with the Applicant's position and concludes:

- the project is located adjacent to Sydney Airport which is an important and nationally significant passenger and freight gateway. The Gateway Project is subject to a separate State significant infrastructure assessment process and would operate under a Ministerial consent.
- the Department is best placed to coordinate the assessment between Government agencies to ensure key issues are appropriately identified, assessed and coordinated in a timely manner
- Council noted the critical nature of the project and agreed that the Department is best placed to manage the assessment of the proposal
- the proposal would not result in significant environmental impacts but will provide significant economic benefits by protecting Sydney Airport's function as an international gateway for passengers and freight and maintaining the efficient operation of Sydney Airport.
- the potential grounding of the Applicant's fleet would have a significant impact on the national economy across a broad range of sectors including tourism, business and financial services
- the proposed activities relating to the flight training centre are not expected to be potentially hazardous
- the site is not located near any areas or locations of State or regional environmental, archeological or cultural heritage significance.

Criterion 4

Whether the proposal is of significant economic benefit to the region, the State or the national economy, such as those with high levels of financial investment and continuing or long-term employment generation?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal is central to the Applicant's operations and provides significant economic benefit to the local, regional and national economies. Disruptions to the operation of the flight training centre could result in the potential grounding of Qantas fleet and affect the National economy across various sectors including tourism, business, freight and logistics. The proposed flight training centre would be relocated within Qantas' headquarters in Sydney. This ensures long-term jobs can continue to remain in Sydney. 	<p>The Department agrees with the Applicant's position and notes the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> would enable the site to contribute to long-term employment generation by ensuring the Applicant can retain the flight training centre and other supporting functions in Sydney presents a unique opportunity for redevelopment of the site to provide an advanced and modern flight training centre would facilitate the construction of the Gateway Project which is critical road infrastructure and supports the economic growth of the Sydney region, in line with strategic objectives.
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Criterion 5

Whether the proposal is geographically broad in scale, including whether it crosses over multiple council and other jurisdiction boundaries, or impacts a wide area beyond one local government area?

<p>The Applicant considers this is not a relevant determining issue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the proposal is not geographically broad in scale, the Department considers the proposal would require coordination across various regulatory agencies to assess and manage the project's impacts as it would require consideration of multiple planning instruments Specifically, the project is required to comply with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) requirements RMS and Transport for NSW guidelines <i>Eastern City District Plan</i> which are the principle strategic planning documents developed by the GSC to guide development and growth in the region. The Department concludes it is best placed to undertake a coordinated and streamlined environmental assessment under the SSD legislation and ensure an appropriate level of input from the multiple agencies that have a role in regulating the project.
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Criterion 6

Whether the proposal is complex, unique or multi-faceted and requires specialist expertise or State coordinated assessment, including where councils require or request State assistance.

<p>The Applicant states the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is a specialised facility that plays a central role in supporting the Applicant's business operations is unique given the timeframe for the assessment of the project is fundamental to the timely delivery of the Gateway Project 	<p>The Department agrees with the views presented by the Applicant and concludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proposal is unique due to the timeframes required by RMS to successfully deliver the Gateway Project the Department routinely coordinates numerous State Government agencies into a streamlined assessment process for projects of State significance to ensure that
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Applicant's Consideration

Department's Consideration

- will require coordination of a range of State government stakeholders including the RMS, CASA and the GSC.

- impacts are thoroughly and efficiently assessed and managed
- Council is supportive of the project being assessed and regulated by the Department.



7. Conclusion

The Department agrees with the position of the Applicant that the project is State significant. In summary, the Department considers the project would benefit from an SSD declaration because:

- the proposal presents a significant opportunity to redevelop the site for airport related uses, while also facilitating the construction of the Gateway Project in a timely manner
- the proposal would assist in delivering the Government's strategic planning objectives in the Region Plan and the *Eastern City District Plan* for providing critical road infrastructure to meet Sydney's forecast future growth
- the proposal is essential to the Applicant's operations as a national carrier and would ensure Qantas flight crew can maintain stringent safety regulations which would support the safe and efficient operation of Sydney Airport
- the proposal would enable the site to contribute to long-term employment generation by ensuring the flight training centre remains in Sydney
- the Department has a long history and good working relationship with key State government agencies who would be required to provide technical input into the assessment of the application.
- the Department is best placed to coordinate the assessment between State government agencies to ensure key issues are appropriately identified, assessed and coordinated in a timely manner
- Council advised it had no objection to the project being assessed by State Government.

The Department is satisfied all relevant criteria have been addressed by the Applicant and sufficient information has been provided to determine that the proposal is SSD.



8. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Independent Planning Commission:

- **considers** the Applicant's request and the Department's consideration as outlined in Section 6 of this report
- **provide advice** on the State or regional significance of the proposal in accordance with the six general issues relating to State or regional significance
- **provide** advice to assist the Minister for Planning in his decision on whether or not to call-in the proposal as State significant development.


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