
2020/2021 COMPLIANCE REPORT
TAXIWAY BRAVO
EXTENSION PROJECT

EPBC 2008/4170

31 August 2021



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2020/2021 COMPLIANCE REPORT

INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE AND CONSTRUCTION AT CANBERRA AIRPORT, ACT

EPBC 2008/4170

1. Description of Activities

1.1 EPBC Number

EPBC 2008/4170

1.2 Project Name

Taxiway Bravo Extension Project, Canberra Airport

1.3 Approval holder and ACN

Managing Director, Canberra Airport Pty Ltd

ACN 080 361 548

1.4 The Approval Action

The approved action undertaken as part of this EPBC Approval is the Taxiway Bravo Extension Project. The project commenced on 4 June 2019 and reached practical completion on 5 August 2020; the construction of the northern extension having taken fourteen months to complete. Taxiway Bravo North was opened for business on Wednesday, 13 August 2020.

1.5 Location of the Project

Canberra Airport, ACT 2609

1.6 Person Accepting Responsibility for the Report

A signed declaration is provided at Section 6 of this Report.

1.7 Date of Preparation of the Report

The report is dated 31 August 2021.

Aircraft using new Taxiway Bravo – First Flights – 13 August 2020



2. Address of all Approval Conditions - EPBC 2008/4170

2.1 Compliance Table

A Compliance Table is provided at **Attachment 1**.

2.2 On-Airport Rehabilitation Measures Taken to Date

Condition 2.a.ii requires the rehabilitation of 17.1 hectares within the Canberra Airport Lease to meet the definition of Natural Temperate Grassland. This is Canberra Airport's preferred option in response to Condition 2 of the Taxiway Bravo approval EPBC 2008/4170).

The following measures have been implemented to date:

- a) 26/27 May 2020 - Re-seeding of the Taxiway Bravo Shoulders and Batters

In late May 2020, the contractor engaged to construct the Taxiway also undertook works to re-seed a total area of 52,285m² along the Taxiway alignment. The following methodology was employed:

Topsoiling Methodology:

- Scraper cart and placement of topsoil;
- Grader followed grader to smooth out any high areas;
- Backhoe and workers with shovels undertook topsoil placement around pits and up against the asphalt as required;
- Work was done on a ten-minute recall as this allowed enough time for the grader to smooth out any non-compliant levels and evacuate the graded strip;
- This work was completed prior to grassing.

Grassing Methodology:

- Truck drove into Runway graded strip and a worker on foot walked around spraying out hydromulch with seed;
- Work was done on a ten-minute recall as this allowed enough time for the truck and worker to evacuate the graded strip.

The areas of work included:

West Bravo

- Grassed Shoulder – 9746m²
- Batters – 13284m²

East Bravo (North of Foxtrot)

- Grassed Shoulder – 5437m²
- Batters – 8914m²

East Bravo (South of Foxtrot)

- Grassed Shoulder – 5711m²
- Batters – 9193m²

As no adequate supplies of native grass seeds could be sourced for this re-seeding project, the Airport determined with the agreement of Alison Rowell, Biologist and Environmental Consultant, to procure a 80%/20% mix of Prosper Fescue and Couch respectively. The seed was spread on the surface of the topsoil taken from the Taxiway Bravo construction zone and then stabilised with a bituminous material to detract birds and to protect the seed from wind/jet blast.

b) February 2021 - Inspection of Re-seeded Area by Alison Rowell, Biologist and Environmental Consultant

Alison Rowell undertook an inspection of the re-seeded area around Taxiway Bravo. Following the inspection, Alison Rowell provided the following report via email dated 15 February 2021:

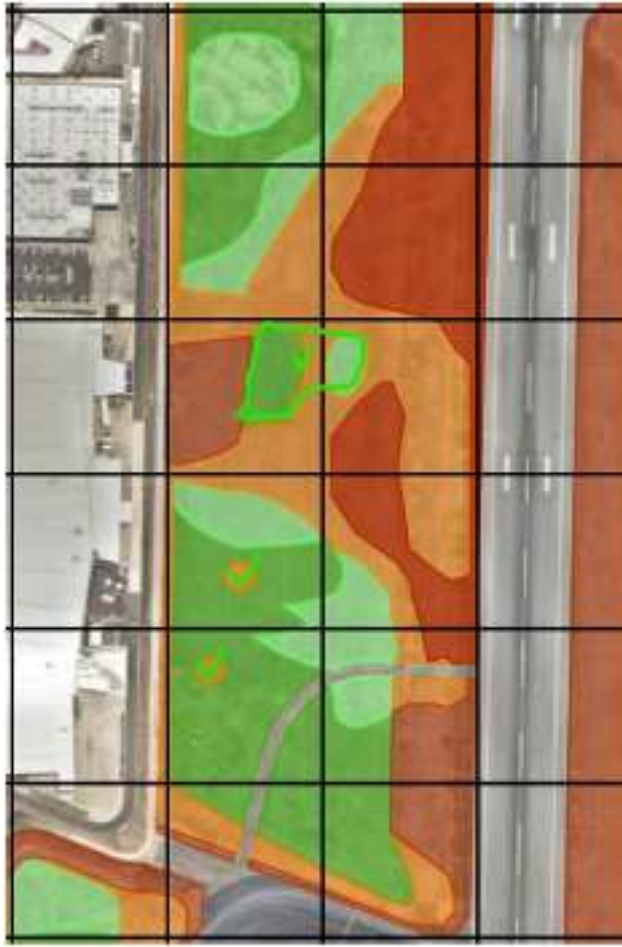
“You asked me to inspect the re-grassing around the Taxiway Bravo area to determine whether additional NTG had been created after grassing of the verges of Taxiway B. This may be because you have noticed the growth of native forbs (wildflowers) on some areas where exotic grasses have been sown, including in the swale east of the taxiway.

I attach my vegetation mapping of that area before Taxiway Bravo was constructed (NTG in green), a January 2020 image from actmapi showing the taxiway under construction, and a photo I took on 15 February 2021.

If you look at the south-eastern-most verge of the taxiway under construction you can see that an area of NTG has been altered/shaped. This area is shown in my ‘Native forbs & exotic grass’ photo, where you can see germination of exotic grasses in the sowing furrows and a number of native forbs in the spaces between the grasses.

*This is similar to the effect we noted when the haul road around the Eastern Grass was left to recover, where the first species to appear on the bare and compacted soil were native forbs, probably resprouting from roots and germinating from seeds in the soil. In the Taxiway Bravo case, although the number of species and frequency of native forbs now present would allow the vegetation to be classed as NTG **if the surrounding grasses were native**, this altered grassland would not now meet the NTG criteria. This is because the first step in determining NTG is ‘The percentage cover of native vascular plants (including annual and perennial species) in the patch is greater than the percentage cover of perennial exotic species’. This is not the case here because of the higher cover of ‘perennial exotic species’ i.e. the sown grasses.*

2018/2019 Vegetation Mapping before Taxiway Bravo was constructed – A Rowell



ACTMapi Image showing Taxiway Bravo under construction – January 2020



Image of Native Forbs and Exotic Grass – Taxiway Bravo SE Verge – 15 February 2021, A Rowell



c) Grassland Earless Dragon (GED) *Tympanocryptis lineata* Monitoring at Canberra Airport, 2019 and 2021

The Natural Temperate Grassland on Canberra Airport is habitat for vulnerable and endangered fauna, including the GED and GSM. In that regard, monitoring for these threatened fauna species is conducted every two years.

Alison Rowell, Biologist and Environmental Consultant, undertook the most recent GED monitoring at the northern end of Canberra Airport in late summer/autumn 2019 and 2021, and no GED were found during monitoring at the permanent grids in this area. However, one GED was found during the pre-construction survey for Taxiway Bravo in May 2019.

A copy of the GED 2019 and 2021 monitoring report is provided at **Attachment 2**.

d) Golden Sun Moth

GSM monitoring had been planned for mid-November to mid-December 2020, the usual GSM peak flying period. Counts are undertaken in suitable weather conditions (warm to hot, sunny and relatively calm), and in the middle of the day, when maximum numbers of male moths are likely to be flying. Unfortunately, weather conditions did not favour GSM this season and the monitoring did not proceed.

GSM monitoring is therefore planned for mid-November to mid-December 2021.

e) Ongoing Fieldwork and Mapping/Assessment

The following extract is taken from an email received from Alison on 6 August 2021 which further builds on the Airport's continued work towards NTG regeneration on airport:

"Let me know if you want me to look at the Taxiway Bravo regrassing again. There were quite a few native forbs in the area I inspected in February (they presumably came from the stockpiled topsoil) but the vegetation didn't qualify as NTG at that stage as the majority grass cover was non-native. I'd need a map of where to inspect and a list of the species mix that was used to stabilise the ground. The 2010 CEMP for Airside Works says: 'Reseeding to exclusively use Couch, Redleg and Fescue grass (or any combination thereof)' - what I saw in February looked like a Fescue and I don't think you used Redleg (a native)? If you did add Redleg and if some of the exotic grass cover species were short-lived the situation might have changed by now, though we found from a previous exercise that native grasses were poorer than native forbs at re-establishing themselves from translocated soil.

And re Malcolmvale section of Northern Road route: I noticed when doing other work on the Airport recently that the land between the route and the Airport eastern fence has been mown again so that its structure looks similar to when I did the threatened species mapping and reptile surveys, which is very different from February 2021 when I delivered a short report on biomass fluctuations there over the years. Is the mowing being done as part of future grassland/habitat management by the Airport?"

On 6 August 2021, Noel McCann, Director of Planning and Government Relations, responded to Alison that *“In response to your question on Taxiway Bravo, it would be very useful for you to map what is there now and compare it to the pre-construction mapping”*.

In that regard, the Airport will continue to work with Alison Rowell over the next three/four years to undertake fieldwork to map and assess the condition of the NTG on airport. This will include sourcing NTG seed and forbs in order to rehabilitate the NTG in compliance with the conditions applying to EPBC 2008/4170.

The projected program of work will include, but not be limited to, the production of mapping of the status of NTG to compare with Taxiway Bravo pre-construction and further site assessments have been scheduled for November 2021 and January, June and November 2022.

In January 2021, a video was taken driving south along the Taxiway Bravo Eastern Bank and the following image is derived from the video:



In mid-August 2021, the following images of the Taxiway Bravo re-grassed areas were taken:





3. Biodiversity Offset Strategy – Year 1 Tasks and Targets

The Strategy identifies the following Tasks and Targets for Year 1:

Task	Description	Target
Site Identification	Identify rehabilitation areas of vegetation quality 4 and 5 within the Airport lease that are unlikely to be affected by future development and aviation safety requirements.	Year 1
Seed Collection	Collect, dry and store seed from Master Plan offset property and on-Airport harvesting.	Year 1-4
Further Develop Grassland Experiment	Conduct additional experiments to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weed control application rates• Seed application rates• Pre- and Post-seeding watering rates• Broad acre seeding methods• Density and timing of spreading hay bearing seed• Translocation methods• Propagating forbs	Year 1-2

3.1 Site Identification

In December 2018 and January 2019, Alison Rowell undertook a survey of NTG within the Airport lease which included the following identified areas:

- Southern end of new Taxiway Bravo
- South of Taxiway Delta
- West of the Airservices Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting Service (ARFFS) Fire Station
- West end of the Cross-Runway
- Eastern Grass

The resultant mapping shows 6.0 hectares of new NTG derived from various experiments undertaken over time (refer section 3.3). The NTG mapping is provided at **Attachment 3**. Note the mapping work was done prior to commencement of construction of the Taxiway Bravo extension.

3.2 Seed Collection

The outcome to date is that Greening Australia collected small amounts of forbs and grasses and were processing the seed. Canberra Airport understands the amounts were not sufficient or the seasonal timing right to use the seed or forbs for the Taxiway Bravo re-seeding program and that Greening Australia used the seed collected in various areas around the ACT.

Canberra Airport will also consult Alison Rowell, Biologist and Environmental Consultant, to source seed and/or forbs to undertake further rehabilitation works.

3.3 Further Develop Grassland Experiments

The Airport continues to work with Alison Rowell, Biologist and Environmental Consultant, as well as others including Greening Australia, to further develop the NTG experiments in the NTG areas identified on Airport. Over the years, these experiments have included:

- A Greening Australia experiment in the Eastern Grass near Scherger Drive;
- A weeding program and spreading of seed by our experiment of broadcasting NTG and mowing thatch between taxiway Alpha the Runway and near the Instrument Landing System (ILS);
- The establishment of a translocation site north of Taxiway Foxtrot and west of Taxiway Alpha;
- Improving drainage to the north of Runway 17/35.

4. Non-compliance Condition 3A – Revision of Biodiversity Offsets Strategy – Corrective Action

On 7 July 2021, Canberra Airport wrote to the Environment Compliance Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, to report a non-compliance with Condition 3A of EPBC 2008/4170, Taxiway Bravo Extension, a variation of which was approved on 3 June 2019. Condition 3A states:

3A. Within 6 months following completion of construction, the person taking the action must revise the Biodiversity Offsets Strategy to identify the impacted natural temperate grassland area that is available for rehabilitation, and specify a program to rehabilitate the land to natural temperate grassland. The revised Biodiversity Offsets Strategy must be submitted to the Minister for approval. The approved plan must be implemented.

To correct this non-compliance, Canberra Airport proposed to DAWE that it would undertake a review and submit a revised Biodiversity Offsets Strategy for submission to the Minister for approval, together with Annual Compliance Report 2, by 31 August 2021. DAWE agreed to this approach via email correspondence dated 21 July 2021 received from Elizabeth Cotterell, Senior Compliance Officer. The relevant extract stated:

“Thank you for your letter of 7 July 2021 regarding EPBC 2008/4170. The department notes your advice that the revised Biodiversity Offsets Strategy, as required under condition 3A, will be submitted for Ministerial approval with the 2020-21 Annual Compliance Report (ACR) by 31 August 2021.”

A revised Biodiversity Offsets Strategy is therefore submitted with this Annual Compliance Report for the Minister’s approval and is provided at **Attachment 4**. Once approved by the Minister, Canberra Airport will implement the Strategy.

For completeness, correspondence from the Airport dated 7 July and DAWE’s response of 21 July 2021 are provided at **Attachment 5**.


Although there has been a non-compliance of Condition 3A, the Airport can advise that throughout December 2020 and February 2021 Alison Rowell, Biologist and Environmental Consultant, undertook fieldwork to assess the condition of the re-seeded batters and shoulders along the Taxiway alignment. This is further discussed in section 2.2b).

Also of relevance, is the ongoing fieldwork that the Airport has scheduled with Alison Rowell for the remainder of 2021 and 2022. This is further discussed in section 2.2e).

In addition, the Planning and Environment Team has and will continue to inspect the Taxiway Bravo NTG areas periodically as necessary. To date, during 2021 the Team has twice driven along the Taxiway Bravo alignment. The Airport Operations and Airside Services Team is responsible for maintaining the NTG on airport under instruction from Alison Rowell in terms of mowing and weed spraying and the like. The Airport has also devised a Weed Management Plan and this also provides guidance in terms of weed identification and methods of control in areas identified as NTG.

5. Declaration of Accuracy

In making this declaration, I am aware that sections 490 and 491 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) make it an offence in certain circumstances to knowingly provide false or misleading information or documents. The offence is punishable on conviction by imprisonment or a fine, or both. I declare that all the information and documentation supporting this compliance report is true and correct in every particular. I am authorised to bind the approval holder to this declaration and that I have no knowledge of that authorisation being revoked at the time of making this declaration.

Signed	
Full name (please print)	Noel Edward McCann
Position (please print)	Director of Planning and Government Relations
Organisation (please print including ABN/ACN if applicable)	Canberra Airport Pty Ltd ACN 080 361 548
Date	31 August 2021

Summary of Attachments:

Attachment 1 Compliance Table EPBC 4170

Attachment 2 Grassland Earless Dragon *Tympanocryptis lineata* Monitoring at Canberra Airport, 2019 and 2021 – Alison Rowell, Biologist and Environmental Consultant

Attachment 3 2018/2019 NTG Mapping – Alison Rowell

Attachment 4 Taxiway Bravo Biodiversity Offset Strategy – revised August 2021

Attachment 5 Canberra Airport and DAWE – Condition 3A non-compliance correspondence