

Media release

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Airservices to introduce aviation fire services at four airports

Airservices today announced that four new aviation rescue and fire fighting (ARFF) services would be introduced at Gladstone (Queensland), Newman (Western Australia), Ballina and Coffs Harbour (New South Wales) by the end of 2014.

It follows increased demand on Australia's air traffic network due largely to the growth of fly-in, fly-out traffic, as a result of the resources industry, an increase in tourism and the on going growth in Australia of new low cost carriers.

The introduction of new services at these locations will see new fire aviation stations built by Airservices at each airport.

"The introduction of new services will protect the community by offering vital first response capability to airport emergencies and an added layer of safety to airport users," said Airservices Executive General Manager ARFF, Michelle Bennetts.

"This means we are bolstering our fire fighter numbers and vehicle fleet to meet the new service requirements and in the next three years around 240 new fire fighters will need to be recruited into the service.

"Additionally, Airservices has on order a further eight ultra-large fire vehicles which will help us meet our future service requirements."

In June 2013, Airservices reintroduced an ARFF service at Port Hedland Airport using a temporary facility while a new fire station is constructed. ARFF services at both Karratha and Broome airports were also reintroduced in 2009 and 2011 respectively.

Regulations set by Australia's Civil Aviation Safety Authority require an aviation rescue fire fighting service be established at airports which have had in excess of 350,000 passenger movements for the previous financial year.

Airservices ARFF is one of the world's largest providers of specialist aviation fire rescue services and responded to around 9000 emergencies in 2012 from its existing 22 fire stations at international, domestic and regional airports nationally.

A large volume of these responses were to domestic incidents, including medical first-aid, automatic fire alarms at airport buildings and to motor vehicle accidents on or around the airport.

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