

**Obstacle Limitation Surfaces Modernisation TWG  
Aviation Safety Advisory Panel Technical Working Group  
Tasking Instructions**

*The Obstacle Limitation Surfaces Modernisation (OLSM) Technical Working Group is established and operates in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Aviation Safety Advisory Panel (ASAP) dated June 2025 (or as amended).*

## **Background**

On 4 August 2025, the International Civil Aviation Organization published new Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and changes to Part 6 of the Airport Services Manual (Doc 9137), relating to the protection of low-level airspace in the immediate vicinity of aerodromes. The specifications of imaginary surfaces used to control obstacles will change for the first time in over forty years.

The first significant change is the introduction of a new coding system for decision-makers to use in determining and establishing obstacle limitation surfaces (OLS). The introduction of the new aeroplane design group (ADG) will result in the OLS being separated from the existing aerodrome infrastructure aerodrome reference code (ARC).

The new OLS will be divided into two groups: obstacle free surfaces (OFS) and obstacle evaluation surfaces (OES). OFS are specifically related to the type of runway and ADG. Surfaces currently applied to instrument precision approach runways will now be required for all types of runways. Most new OFS will differ in size from existing surfaces, except for those associated with small runways.

The OES differ significantly from existing surfaces. OES are based on the instrument flight procedure, the intended aircraft operations, and the ADG. OES are intended to provide a trigger for assessment where instrument procedures are published. At aerodromes where no procedures are published, surfaces for visual circuit patterns are to be protected. The move from existing surfaces may result in more demanding obstacle protection, or in some cases, existing OLS-affected areas may no longer be impacted.

In many cases, the new OLS will reduce the volume of airspace that must be protected. However, in some instances, the OLS-affected area may increase, in which case the Australian version of the OLS SARPs may need to be varied to suit local requirements.

New aeronautical assessment processes and methodologies specific to OLS will be introduced, likely via CASA advisory material. The process to implement the new OLS at each aerodrome will also need to be determined.

## **Aim**

The aim of the TWG is to provide guidance and advice to CASA on key deliverables for this significant and historic change. As identified in the TWG outcomes, work will be managed in stages. The initial aim of the TWG will be to consider stage 1 as outlined below. Additional work on future stages will be determined through updated tasking instructions as required.

- Stage 1: The aim of Stage 1 is to consider policy options, determine the most effective and acceptable approaches, and deliver a preferred policy in consideration of the Australian aviation safety framework.
- Stage 2: the TWG will consider, based on the agreed policy, the options for information to be included in aviation safety regulations, advice, and guidance material. The goal is to ensure the safe operation of aircraft, achieve the greatest benefit in terms of cost and effort, and support sound decision-making by aerodrome operators.
- Stage 3: The TWG will consider the impact of regulatory change on the aviation industry and determine strategies to ensure a smooth, efficient, and effective transition to the new Australian standards, without increasing risk or imposing unnecessary costs or burdens.
- Stage 4: The TWG will consider strategies to support aerodrome operators in transitioning to the new standards, including any necessary programs and tools to assist operators with decision-making, and will develop an implementation program that considers risk, timing, and the priority order of changes.

## **TWG outcomes**

To align with the stages, the outcomes will be divided into four stages, which may be considered concurrently.

### **Stage 1 – Policy development**

- The intended outcome is to develop a strategy for the introduction of new OLS

SARPs into the Australian aviation safety framework.

Stage 2 – Regulatory development

- The intended outcome is to provide guidance and advice on the introduction of proposed changes to the Part 139 (Aerodromes) Manual of Standards and advisory circulars.

Stage 3 – Transition strategy development

- The intended outcome is to develop a strategy for introducing the new SARPs to the aviation industry, and to plan the staging of the change to facilitate transition and associated programs.
- Additional outcomes include consideration of training, education, and awareness needs for aerodrome operators, airlines, pilots, support industries, and land-use planning entities.

Stage 4 – Implementation strategy development

- The intended outcome is to develop strategies, programs, and tools to assist aerodrome operators with decision-making and phased implementation, allowing the workload to be distributed over time.

A wrap up meeting to stage 1 will be planned for approximately 4 weeks after the first meeting, if the TWG requires it. Or if the TWG agrees to a second meeting being unnecessary, a closing summary will be shared with the TWG once all feedback from the TWG has been collated and processed.

## Roles and responsibilities

| CASA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Technical Working Group Members                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organise meetings and workshops, and produce agendas, papers and supporting materials.</li><li>• Facilitate meetings and workshops.</li><li>• Record insights and findings.</li><li>• Communicate openly and consistently with working group members about project status and issues.</li><li>• Respect the time of all working group members by minimising work required to achieve outcomes.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commit to supporting the project objectives and timeline.</li><li>• Engage and collaborate constructively at all times.</li><li>• Prepare for working group activities by reviewing agendas, papers and supporting materials.</li><li>• Provide timely and considered advice in meetings, and between meetings as required.</li><li>• Respond to requests for feedback on draft materials within agreed timeframes.</li></ul> |

## Behaviour

TWG meetings are a place for constructive collaboration. Behaviour likely to disrupt the collaborative nature of the group will not be tolerated. The ASAP secretariat may eject members from the meeting in the event of such behaviour.

## Confidentiality

All discussions and materials from TWG meetings should be treated as confidential. Premature dissemination of information may dilute TWG processes, particularly if discussion points remain unsettled or documents are not ready for public consultation.

## Reporting arrangements

At the conclusion of the meeting, or soon thereafter, recommendations and reports of the TWG will be provided to the Chair of the ASAP, through the Secretariat.

## Consensus

A key aim of the Technical Working Group is that a consensus be reached, wherever possible, in the finalisation and preparation of advice for the Aviation Safety Advisory Panel and CASA.

Consensus is understood to mean agreement by all parties that a specific course of action is acceptable. Achieving consensus may require debate and deliberation.

## Membership

Members of the TWG will be appointed by the ASAP Chair, following ASAP processes. Requests for changes to the membership will be made to the Chair of the ASAP, through the Secretariat.

## Attendance and travel

Meetings will be facilitated using videoconferencing to allow for increased member attendance at all meetings. This will be coordinated by the ASAP Secretariat or CASA working group lead as required.

## TWG decision making

A key aim of the ASAP is that a consensus be reached, wherever possible, in the provision of advice to the CEO/DAS. TWGs will follow the same consensual principles as the ASAP.

Consensus is understood to mean agreement by all parties that a specific course of action is acceptable. Achieving consensus may require debate and deliberation.

Consensus can be unanimous or near unanimous, the Chair will determine how best to proceed and discuss with the CEO on outcomes where divergent views appear. Consensual outcomes include:

- 1) full consensus, where all members agree fully in context and principle and fully support the specific course of action
- 2) general consensus, where they may be disagreement, but the group has heard, recognised and acknowledged and reconciled the concerns or objections to the general acceptance of the majority of the group. Although not every member may fully agree in context and principle, a majority of members

support the overall position and agree not to object to the proposed recommendation – any relevant information supporting the differing perspectives will also be presented in the meeting records.

- 3) dissent, where differing views about the preferred course of action are maintained. This occurs when members do not agree with the recommendation or cannot reach agreement on a recommendation.

If necessary, the ASAP and TWGs will determine if consensus is reached by way of voting. Members will also have the opportunity to confirm their views are accurately represented in meeting reports before they are published.

Where there is full consensus, the report, recommendation or advice should expressly state that every ASAP or TWG member was in full agreement with the advice.

Where there is general consensus, the nature and reasons for any concern by members that do not fully agree with the majority recommendation should be included with the advice.

Where there is dissent, the advice should explain the issues and concerns and why an agreement was not reached. If a member does not concur with one or more of the recommendations, that person's dissenting position should be reflected.

When possible, the ASAP or TWGs should be given the opportunity to reconsider the report or advice, including any dissenting views, to see if there might be scope for further reconciliation of any disagreements.