

## > Historical Context



Camden Airport

Master Plan  
2004/05



## > Historical Context

Camden Airport is historically linked to the Macarthur-Onslow family, descendants of John Macarthur, a man widely regarded as the “father” of the Australian Wool industry and linked to the airport’s role during World War II. Camden Airport was constructed in 1935 on the Macarthur-Onslow family property and was initially used as a private aerodrome.

### 7.1 The War Years

The onset of World War II resulted in the Federal Government purchasing the site. Camden Airport was home to at least seven squadrons that undertook training, anti-submarine, convoy escort, reconnaissance, general air and meteorological roles. A large US Army Air Corp was based and barracked at the airport.

### 7.2 World War II to Federal Airports Corporation

In 1946, the Department of Civil Aviation assumed ownership of the airport and the following aviation infrastructure and procedures occurred during the subsequent years:

- **1946** – Runway 06/24 was sealed;
- **1962** – The control tower was built;
- **1975** – Continuous daylight air traffic control introduced;
- **1978** – Taxiway from the apron to the sealed 06/24 runway sealed;
- **1980** – Introduction of General Aviation Airport Procedures (GAAP) in June; and
- **1988** – Transfer of airport ownership to the Federal Airports Corporation (FAC) on 1 January, 1988.

By the time that Camden Airport transferred to the FAC in 1988, it had become a satellite airport for Sydney, serving light planes, the association flying (eg Scouts), private and commercial flying operations, sport flying and gliding.

### 7.3 FAC to Camden Airport Limited

Under the FAC regime, Camden, Bankstown and Hoxton Park Airports were managed as a single business unit to achieve economies of scale in management. The FAC era represented the first real attempt to run Camden Airport as a commercial business. Major activities during this period included:

- **Early 1990s** – Construction of various taxiways and run-up bays to service the main 06/24 sealed runway; and
- **1997** – Re-sheet of all sealed surfaces (06/24 runway, aprons, taxiways etc).

From a commercial perspective, by the end of the FAC period, Camden Airport had been significantly upgraded in terms of infrastructure and was operating under an improved management structure.

### 7.4 CAL to Today

In 1998, ownership of Camden Airport was transferred, along with Bankstown and Hoxton Park Airports, from the FAC to Sydney Airports Corporation Limited (SACL), as part of the winding-up of the FAC following the privatisation of its non-Sydney Basin airports. The following is the chronology of control, management and activity of the airport from 1998:

- **1998** – Transfer, on 1 July, of the ownership of the airport to CAL a wholly owned subsidiary of SACL;
- **2000** – Camden played a minor role as a subsidiary GA airport for light aircraft during the Sydney Olympic Games;
- **2001** – Separation, in June of CAL from SACL. Airport becomes a "stand alone" entity wholly owned by the Commonwealth;
- **2003** – Reduction, by Airservices Australia, of the air traffic control tower hours to weekends and public holidays; and
- **2003** – Sale of the airport lease to the BaCH Consortium on 15 December.

In the lead-up to its privatisation in 2003, Camden Airport had become a stable commercial enterprise.