



TAF Review Frequently Asked Questions



Review of Aerodrome Forecast Services (TAF Review 2021) at a glance

- The Bureau of Meteorology regularly conducts reviews of Aerodrome Forecasts (TAF Reviews) to ensure TAF services funded by the Meteorological Service Charge (MSC) continue to meet the needs of the Australian aviation industry and regulatory and safety obligations.
- The Bureau released the *TAF Review Consultation Draft Report* on 8 September 2020 for a four-week public consultation. Feedback was sought from all areas of the aviation industry and other interested parties on the recommendations and draft service changes.
- The TAF Review Technical Working Group and a TAF Review Executive Committee reviewed all submissions and considered safety, operational impacts and other issues and concerns provided by interested parties in finalising the *TAF Review 2021 Final Report* and its recommendations.
- The *TAF Review 2021 Final Report* is available on the Bureau's aviation webpage at <http://www.bom.gov.au/aviation/taf-review/>
- The service changes recommended by the TAF Review 2021 will be implemented on 2 December 2021.
- Aerodromes where MSC-funded TAF services are to be withdrawn, the Bureau can continue to provide TAF services as user-funded services on a cost-recovery basis. Refer to the document available [here](#) for more information.
- The Bureau will continue to provide on-request aerodrome forecasts to emergency services.
- Observations and other forecast and warning services provided to the aviation community and the general public will not change as a result of this review.
- A TAF is not mandatory in order to operate flights to an aerodrome but is of benefit for possible fuel reduction purposes. Flights to hundreds of aerodromes throughout regional and remote Australia operate safely without a TAF service already.
- TAFs are only one of several forecast services provided for aviation operations. The other primary forecasts include Graphical Area Forecasts (GAF), Grid-Point Wind and Temperature (GPWT) Forecasts, Area QNH (pressure) forecasts, AIRMETs and SIGMETs and pilots will retain access to these meteorological forecast and warning services.

For information regarding flight rules, please refer to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why does the Bureau need to review its TAF services?

It is important for the Bureau to regularly review its MSC-funded TAF service to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Australian aviation industry and regulatory and safety obligations.

The TAF Review provides a way to determine which aerodromes qualify to receive a MSC-funded TAF service based on industry agreed criteria and considerations.

2. Which aerodromes are reviewed as part of the TAF Review and what data is used?

All aerodromes with TAF services are assessed as part of the TAF Review. The TAF Review uses the Airservices Airspace Research Application (ARA) dataset, which provides statistics (some estimated) for over 1500 aerodromes across Australia. The data used for this review was captured pre-COVID (i.e., before March 2020), so the impact of the pandemic had no influence on recommendations made.

An aerodrome owner or operator can submit revised data if they believe that the new TAF category outlined in the TAF Review does not accurately reflect their actual passenger and movement numbers.

Further details are given in Appendix 3 of the *TAF Review 2021 Final Report*.

3. How was feedback to the *TAF Review Consultation Draft Report* considered and how were the final decisions made?

A TAF Review Technical Working Group and a TAF Review Executive Committee were established—each of which has representatives from Airservices Australia (Airservices), Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DOITRDC) and the Bureau. Both groups reviewed all submissions. The final determination was based on data relating to the user community and aviation activity levels at each aerodrome as well as more general consideration of aviation safety and operation of the Australian air transport network. The issues and concerns raised by interested parties through the consultation period were considered to reach the final decisions contained in the *TAF Review 2021 Final Report*.

Four changes were made in direct response to industry feedback in preparing the *TAF Review 2021 Final Report*. These include:

- i. No change in service at Derby (Western Australia), which was proposed to have reduced services.
- ii. No change in service at Richmond (New South Wales), which was proposed to have reduced services.
- iii. No change in service at Moomba (South Australia), which was proposed to have MSC-funded services cease.
- iv. No change in service at Telfer (Western Australia), which was proposed to have MSC-funded services cease.

4. What changes to MSC-funded TAF services are being implemented?

The following changes to MSC-funded TAF services are to be implemented on 2 December 2021 based on the *TAF Review 2021 Final Report*:

- i. TAF services at 189 aerodromes shall remain unchanged and funded by the MSC.

ii. Changes to MSC-funded TAF services as follows:

- Reinstate TAF services at 2 aerodromes:
 - Temora (YTEM) in New South Wales; and
 - Naracoorte (YNCR) in South Australia
- Increase TAF services at 3 aerodromes:
 - Brisbane West Wellcamp (YBWW) in Queensland; and
 - Busselton (YBLN) & Halls Creek (YHLC) in Western Australia
- Reduce TAF services at 4 aerodromes:
 - Cooma (YCOM) & Taree (YTRE) in New South Wales; and
 - Flinders Is (YFLI) and St Helens (YSTH) in Tasmania
- Cease MSC funding of TAF services at 9 aerodromes (including 7 industry specific aerodromes):
 - Ballera (YLLE), Clermont (YCMT), The Monument (YTMO) & Trepell (YTEE) in Queensland;
 - The Granites (YTGT) in Northern Territory; and
 - Argyle (YARG), Barrow Is (YBWX), Leinster (YLST) and Rottneest Is (YRTI) in Western Australia

For more details, refer to Section 3.2 of the *TAF Review 2021 Final Report*.

5. What are the next stages in the TAF Review?

The *TAF Review 2021 Final Report* is now available at <http://www.bom.gov.au/aviation/taf-review/>

These TAF service changes will be updated in ERSA and implemented on 2 December 2021.

Aerodromes affected by these changes in service have been notified directly by the Bureau. If required, the Bureau can continue to provide a TAF service for these airports as a user-funded service on a cost-recovery basis. See Question 16.

A post-implementation review of any changes made because of the TAF Review will be conducted one year after the implementation of the TAF Review recommendations.

6. Will there be another TAF Review?

As part of our quality management processes, the Bureau plans to initiate a full review of all TAF services three years after the implementation of the TAF Review 2021. If a change to a TAF service at an individual aerodrome is required prior to the next review, any proposed changes to the categorisation and service will be discussed and a decision made at the Bureau-Aviation Industry Services Working Group meeting.

The Bureau will also undertake a post-implementation review one year after the implementation of the TAF Review recommendations.

7. Will weather observations be affected by the TAF Review?

Existing weather observation infrastructure will not be removed as part of the TAF Review. Aerodromes which currently have an Automatic Weather Station (AWS) and/or Aerodrome Weather Information Service (AWIS) will retain these services even if MSC-funding for the TAF service ceases.

As part of its Aviation capital works programme, the Bureau will be installing automated observation equipment to MSC-funded TAF aerodromes where the TAF Review has identified a requirement. Most of this equipment is expected to be installed by the end of 2024, however, delays may occur if there are difficulties in obtaining reasonable cost leases or where there is a lack of supporting infrastructure.

8. Is the TAF Review focused on cost savings rather than safety?

Safety is paramount to the TAF Review and was a major driver for undertaking the review. The TAF Review identified that the quality of TAFs would be improved, and safety enhanced, by ensuring that all TAF sites meet minimum observation requirements.

9. Apart from TAF, will any other weather services be affected?

No other weather information or services will be affected by the TAF Review. At locations where a TAF service is ceased, other aviation weather information will continue to be provided. Real-time weather observations (e.g. METAR/SPECI and AWIS) will continue at these aerodromes, and other aviation forecasts and warning services within the surrounding airspace, such as Graphical Area Forecasts (GAF), significant weather (SIGWX) and significant meteorology warnings (SIGMET) will remain unchanged. Furthermore, all weather observations, forecasts for the general public, weather warnings and climate predictions will also remain unchanged.

Funding and Administration

10. Who funds the Bureau's aviation weather service?

Australian Government policy requires that the Bureau recover the appropriate costs incurred in the provision of specialised aviation services from the aviation industry. The Bureau's core aviation service is funded by the aviation industry on a cost recovery basis through funds collected via the MSC – See Question 11.

11. What is the Meteorological Service Charge (MSC)?

The MSC funds the core aviation meteorological service and is recovered by Airservices on behalf of the Bureau. The MSC is incurred by:

- all domestic landings operating under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR);
- all international flights (inbound and outbound); and
- all flights over an Australian Flight Information Region (FIR).

The charge is calculated based on the deemed maximum take-off weight (MTOW) and the distance flown. There are two different rates based on MTOW of the aircraft, these being up to 20 tonnes and over 20 tonnes. For further information refer to <http://www.bom.gov.au/aviation/about-us/overview/>

About TAFs

12. What is a TAF?

An Aerodrome Forecast, or TAF, is a forecast of expected weather conditions within 5nm of the aerodrome reference point and is designed for aircraft take-off and landing at the aerodrome. It is used by the aviation industry, particularly pilots and flight planners. TAFs include coded descriptions of weather, visibility, cloud, wind, temperature and pressure for aviation use.

Refer to <http://www.bom.gov.au/aviation/data/education/taf.pdf> for additional information on TAF.

Most aerodromes with a TAF service also have an AWS which reports current weather conditions. These observations are often referred to as aerodrome weather reports or METAR/SPECI. The TAF Review does not propose the removal of any aerodrome weather reports.

Refer to <http://www.bom.gov.au/aviation/data/education/metar-speci.pdf> for additional METAR/SPECI information.

13. How are TAFs used?

Pilots and other aviation users utilise TAF to learn of expected weather conditions for take-off and landing at aerodromes for flight planning purposes. When sufficiently poor weather conditions are forecast, aircraft must carry additional fuel to enable the aircraft to fly to an alternate aerodrome if it is unsafe to land at the destination aerodrome due to weather. Pilots may also carry additional fuel to hold until the weather has passed, and it is safe to land at their destination.

14. Will the cessation of a TAF service mean aircraft can't fly to a location?

The operation of services into an aerodrome is not dependent on the availability of a TAF for that location. Moreover, there are hundreds of aerodromes that operate without a TAF.

In the absence of a current TAF for a destination aerodrome, pilots are typically required to carry sufficient fuel for a diversion to a suitable alternate aerodrome. Carrying diversion fuel can impose an economic penalty on the aircraft operator, due to the need to reduce freight carried or the number of passengers for a flight, in order to offset the additional weight of the diversion fuel.

At locations where a TAF service is ceased, other aviation weather information will continue to be provided. At the aerodrome, real-time weather observations will continue (e.g. METAR/SPECI and AWIS), and for the airspace around these aerodromes, aviation forecast and warning services such as Graphical Area Forecasts (GAF), significant weather (SIGWX) and significant meteorology warnings (SIGMET) will also be available.

15. What happens in an emergency situation where there is no TAF?

During emergency situations, a TAF can be requested by approved emergency users, e.g. medical, search and rescue, fire fighting services etc. The Bureau recognises the high importance and requirements of emergency operations and will continue to provide additional issues of a TAF, or an extension of the TAF validity period, for approved emergency users, when required.

16. What is the process to request a new, or an extension to an existing TAF service?

If an aerodrome owner, operator or an airline believes they require a new, or an extension to an existing TAF service, they should refer to the document [Aerodrome Forecast \(TAF\) Request Procedure](#).

17. What is required to provide a TAF service for a new location?

To obtain a new TAF service, the Bureau requires:

- access to meteorological observations representative of the aerodrome from an AWS with aviation sensors, whose installation and ongoing maintenance is approved by the Meteorological Authority <http://www.bom.gov.au/met-authority/>;

- a funding source; and
- forecasting and 'weather watch' capacity to undertake the additional TAF.

The funding source could be either the MSC or a user-funded service. The later will also require a service agreement to be signed by both the Bureau and the source of the funding.

18. What is an industry specific aerodrome?

An industry specific aerodrome is an aerodrome that exists primarily for services to an individual industry rather than the general community (e.g. does not offer regular publicly accessible services), such as mine sites, oil rigs or similar locations. At industry specific aerodromes, a TAF service will not be funded by the MSC but can be provided by the Bureau on a user-funded basis.

19. What is a user-funded TAF?

A user-funded TAF, also known as a contractual TAF, is a TAF service provided by the Bureau that is funded by the aerodrome owner or operator as opposed to being funded by the MSC as part of the core aviation weather service. The user-funded TAF may cover the full TAF service or may be an extension to the MSC-funded TAF service. This service requires a service agreement to be signed by both the Bureau and the source of the funding.

To obtain a user-funded TAF service, the aerodrome must have an AWS with aviation sensors and the equipment needs to be approved for aviation use by the Meteorological Authority <http://www.bom.gov.au/met-authority/>

20. Who funds user-funded TAFs?

Typically, the aerodrome owner or operator would fund a user-funded TAF service and may in turn recover costs from aircraft using the aerodrome. Alternatively, the user-funded TAF may be funded directly or indirectly by local industry, regional agreements, local council, state or federal governments.

21. What is the cost of an automatic weather station (AWS)?

The total cost of an installed AWS suitable for aviation use, including ceilometer and visimeter, is typically between \$130,000 and \$300,000 depending on siting costs. In addition, there are annual maintenance and servicing costs, which vary between \$2,000 and \$15,000 per annum.

For aviation use, the weather station needs to meet requirements defined by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Contact Information

For further information on TAF Review please:

- visit <http://www.bom.gov.au/aviation/taf-review/>
- contact TAFreview@bom.gov.au
- call Ashwin Naidu on (02) 9296 1503