

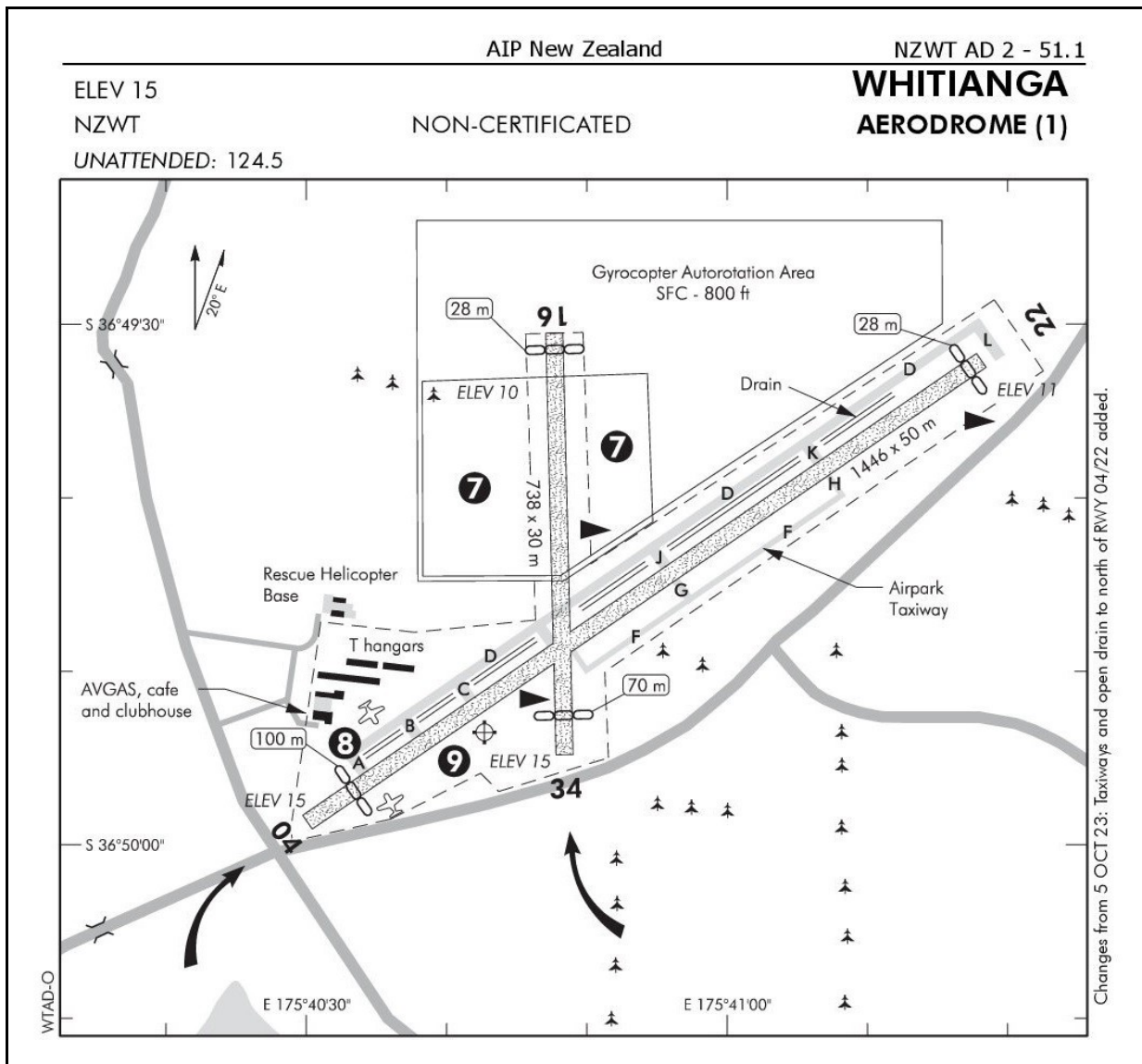
What is happening at Whitianga Airfield

The Mercury Bay Aero Club (MBAC) have recently introduced changes to the operating procedures for Whitianga Airfield (NZWT) that pilots need to be aware of. These new procedures have been introduced following upgrades to the airfield which were needed to ensure NZWT could cope with increasing traffic volumes.

The increased traffic has come from increased commercial and training activity at NZWT, including the establishment of a regular air service to Auckland by Barrier Air. This plus the construction of 48 new hangers has significantly increased the number of aircraft based at and/or operating from the airfield.

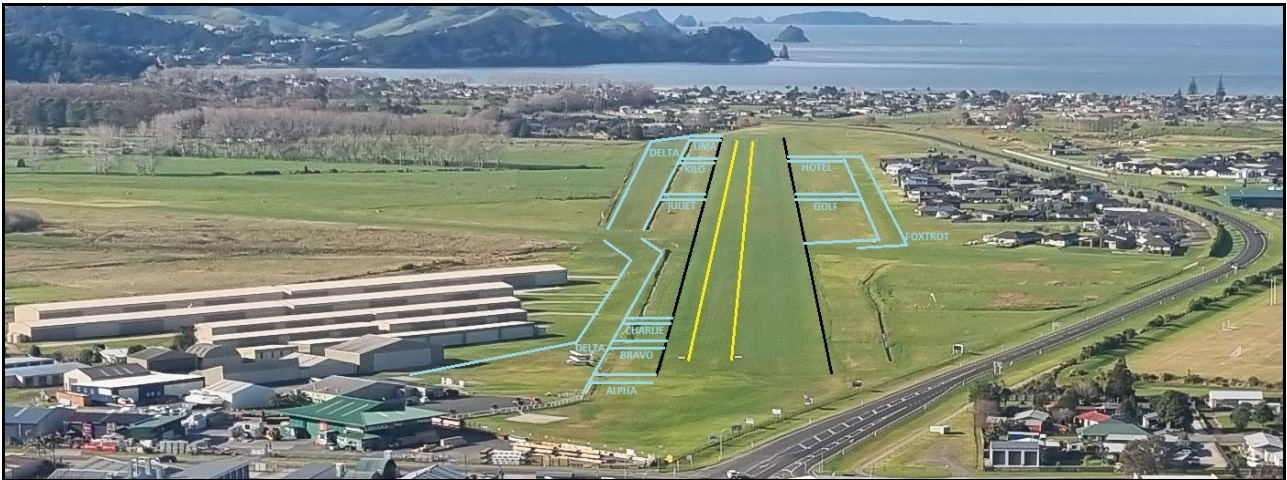
The increased traffic was causing significantly more wear and tear on the grass runway surface and to mitigate this, the MBAC has funded substantial upgrades to the airfield to make the runway more resilient year-round. These upgrades drove the introduction of the new procedures to ensure continued safe operations at NZWT and to alleviate further wear and tear on the runway.

While these changes should prevent further runway deterioration, we do require the help and cooperation of visiting pilots to comply with the new procedures to help keep the airfield in the best possible condition.



Runway 04/22 "in-use" strips.

The main 04/22 runway has increased in width enabling establishment of parallel runway sections. Each week, an "in-use" section is designated by runway end marker boards which are moved weekly to spread wear on the strip. Pilots **must** identify and use, the "in-use" runway section when landing and departing NZWT.



NZWT Runway 04/22 border in black. "In-use" section in yellow. Taxiways in blue.

Taxiing and backtracking changes

For safety, we have introduced a policy of not permitting aircraft to backtrack or taxi on 04/22 alongside the "in-use" runway section as there is insufficient clearance between taxiing aircraft and aircraft taking off or landing. If pilots need to backtrack or taxi along 04/22, they must use the "in-use" runway section.

New Taxiways.

Two new taxiways designated **Golf** and **Hotel** have been established on the southern side of runway 04/22 connecting to taxiway **Foxtrot** which runs parallel with 04/22 in front of the Airpark houses. Where possible, aircraft should use taxiway **Foxtrot** rather than backtracking or taxiing down the main runway.

In addition, in late September, a new full-length taxiway, designated **Delta**, will be opened on the northern side of the 04/22 runway. This taxiway runs from the clubhouse to the threshold of runway 22 and three new taxiways, designated **Juliet, Kilo, and Lima**, provide access to and from runway 04/22 from **Delta**.

Once these taxiways are operational, pilots will be expected to vacate the "in-use" strip at the earliest opportunity and use either taxiway **Delta** or **Foxtrot**. When exiting, please use the taxiways as other grass areas are soft most of the year.

Note also, that when using taxiway **Delta**, caution is required where it crosses runway 16/34. Holding-point signs have been added at the cross points and while a radio call is not required, a good lookout is needed prior to crossing 16/34.



Hold-point 16-34 looking East

Hold-point 34-16 looking West.

Downwind operations now prohibited.

There is now a note on the airfield plate prohibiting downwind operations. This is to reduce the impact on the runway from the higher speeds associated with downwind landings and departures.

Notams, noise abatement rules, and other considerations.

Before heading to Whitianga please ensure you check the latest **Notams** for NZWT. While new grass is being established, taxiways may be closed, and these will be advised via Notam.

The AIP Vol 4 NZWT aerodrome plates now also contain notes regarding **noise abatement rules**. We are privileged to be located close to town and are trying to be good neighbours. With this in mind, we have established rules whereby pilots departing on runway 04 are to maintain runway heading until crossing Buffalo Beach, conversely when landing on runway 22, pilots need to be established on final prior to crossing the shoreline.

Also, when operating in the circuit, although not published, the **preferred downwind track** is along the estuary river to minimise noise over the town.

Lastly, we also ask that all aircraft use standard joining procedures and **observe the correct circuit direction** as published on the AIP Vol 4 chart. Pilots also need to be aware that the airfield is used by training schools in the area.

Plans for the future.

We are looking at providing an **AWIB** service in the future as well as creating some new **VRP's** around the airfield which will hopefully assist pilots when joining or vacating the circuit at NZWT. Also, with more helicopter traffic at the airfield, we are looking to introduce helicopter arrival and departure procedures.

Summary of Changes

- ! Runway 04/22 has been widened to allow multiple parallel strips.
- ! Only one strip will be "**in-use**" on any given day.
- ! The "**in-use**" strip will be marked by runway marker boards.
- ! If taxiing/backtracking on 04/22, aircraft must taxi on the "**in-use**" strip.
- ! Taxiing/backtracking on the runway beside the "**in-use**" strip is prohibited.
- ! Aircraft should exit 04/22 and use parallel taxiways where possible.
- ! Two new taxiways now provide access to southern **Foxtrot** taxiway.
- ! A new full-length taxiway **Delta** is to open in September.
- ! Pilots should taxi on **Delta** or **Foxtrot** rather than taxiing on 04/22.
- ! Downwind landings are now prohibited.
- ! Please read Notams before visiting NZWT.
- ! Taxiways may be closed as improvements are made.
- ! Noise abatement rules now apply when departing on 04 or arriving on 22.
- ! The preferred downwind track is along the estuary river.
- ! All circuits for 04/22 are to the south of the runway.