

Memo

To: Aircraft Noise Community Consultative Group (December 2025 meeting)

From: Jason Higgs

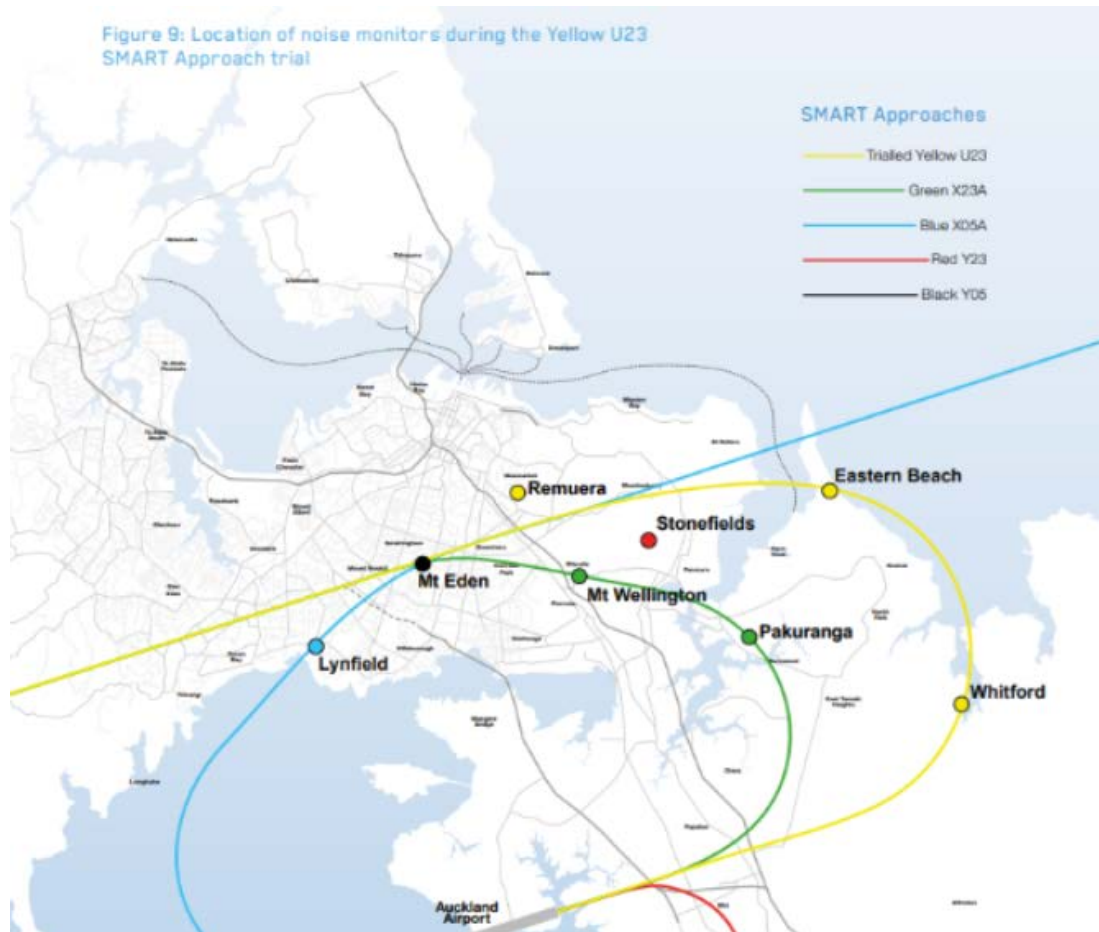
Date: November 2025

Subject: Proposal to increase daily cap for SMART track RNP X & U (Yellow U23, Blue X05A and Green X23A)

1 Introduction

The purpose of this memo is to provide a brief explanation to Aircraft Noise Community Consultative Group (ANCCG) members regarding the intended proposal from Airways to commence a 3-month trial, starting April 2026, to double the daily cap for SMART tracks RNP X & U (Yellow U23, Blue X05A and Green X23A). These three SMART tracks are referred to as northern SMART tracks. See diagram below.

This memo is to communicate Airways and Auckland International Airport Limited's (AKL) intention to discuss the trial at the March 2026 ANCCG meeting.



2. Background

During the 8th of September 2025 ANCCG meeting, Airways proposed the removal of the daily usage cap for SMART tracks RNP X & U (Yellow U23, Blue X05A and Green X23A), aligning with the southern SMART track Y (Red Y23 & Black Y05) which have no daily cap.

At the meeting, there was insufficient information for the group to discuss further and make an educated decision. The ANCCG Chair recommended that Airways and AKL meet prior to the December ANCCG meeting to better understand the situation, this has been completed.

Agencies present at the meeting agreed that the appropriate approach would be to double the respective caps, evaluate the impact and then make an evidence-based decision to remove the cap altogether.

3. Discussion

- Caps were originally implemented during the trial phase of the northern SMART tracks for community reassurance.
- The caps are largely considered arbitrary, with no specific reason for the specified cap.
- SMART tracks can only be used when there is less traffic (outside peaks). Currently the caps are rarely reached.
- There is no significant operational benefit identified for maintaining the caps.
- Initial indications from Marshall Day Acoustics (MDA) suggest that an increase or removal of the caps will not affect the existing noise contours based on current information from Airways.
- Maintaining caps create an administrative burden for Airways and an increased risk of human error (exceeding the cap).

4. Recommendation and Conclusion

- Due to the timing of newly appointed members to the ANCCG, AKL recommends providing time for new members to settle and educate themselves on the topic of aircraft noise prior to considering an increase or removal of the daily cap. This will ensure adequate engagement and involvement of the Community Consultative Group in the decision-making process.
- On the morning prior to the December 2025 ANCCG meeting, an induction session will be provided for new members. Airways will provide a background on SMART tracks and STARs/SIDs. Other subject matter experts will provide noise-related information such as community involvement, noise monitoring, exposure and contours, and AIAL management of noise complaints. The induction session in addition to the first ANCCG meeting will ensure new members can confidently discuss this proposal in depth during the March 2026 ANCCG meeting.
- The recommendation to be proposed in March 2026 is to double the daily cap from 10 to 20 flights for RNP X (blue and green track) and 6 to 12 flights for RNP U (yellow track) with a further intention to remove the caps completely provided evidence gathered from the 3-month trial is favorable.