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IFALPA congratulate Sydney Airport Corporation for runway RESA upgrade plan but has concerns that it does not go far enough

Chertsey 29 November: In today's air transport environment one of the most common types of incident leading to accidents is the runway excursion. In recent years, 29% of all fatalities in air transport have been as a result of runway excursion. On average, an excursion by an aircraft engaged in air transport operations will occur once in every 10 days. Clearly, the seriousness of this threat to aviation safety cannot be overstated.

Runway excursions happen for a variety of reasons but accident data shows that if an aircraft involved in an excursion event comes to a halt upright and intact and within rapid reach of rescue and fire fighting services the threat of injury and death is dramatically reduced.

This is why the International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) welcomes the decision by Sydney Airport Corporation the operators of Kingsford Smith International Airport (YSSY) to upgrade to the Runway End Safety Area (RESA) on runway 07/25 to the 90 metre minimum required by ICAO. However, the Federation's view is that nothing less than the 240m RESA recommended by ICAO will provide an adequate level of safety for air transport operations.

IFALPA recognises that in some cases because of topographical or other issues it is not possible to create a full 240m RESA on a given runway. When this is the case, IFALPA argues that an arrestor bed system such as an EMAS that delivers the same level of protection should be installed.

Therefore, the Federation urges Sydney Airport Corporation to consider either extending the RESA on runway 07/25 to 240m or installing the EMAS alternative and, as a result, dramatically reduce the risk to the travelling public from the dangers of a runway overrun.

Notes to Editors

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represents in excess of 100,000 pilots in more than 95 countries world-wide. The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of airline pilots, promoting the highest level of aviation safety and security world-wide and providing services, support and representation to all of its Member Associations. See the Federation website www.ifalpa.org

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