



Australian Government

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts**

Airport Environment Regulatory Engagement Charter

October 2026

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Document control

Refer to the following table for the approver and latest version of this document.

Version	Release date	Approver	Reason for update
1.0	October 2026	Assistant Secretary, Airport Environment	Initial release of document.

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Purpose

This Charter outlines the behaviours that Airport Environment Officers (AEOs) should model and the behaviours that the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (the department) expects from entities regulated under the *Airports (Environment Protection) Regulations 2026* (the 2026 Regulations)¹ and the *Airports (Environment Protection) Regulations 1997* (the old Regulations) to foster a collaborative regulatory relationship. The old Regulations and the 2026 Regulations are collectively referred to throughout this document as ‘the Regulations’.

The information contained within this document does not reduce, extend or modify legislative obligations or powers contained in the legislation. This is an administrative document that assists but does not control regulatory, compliance and enforcement related decisions. Each decision will consider all matters relevant to the circumstances.

In the event of any inconsistency between this document and the legislation under which the Department or AEO exercises a statutory function, power or discretion, the legislation will prevail.

Who does this charter apply to?

This Charter applies to

- AEOs and department staff
- Entities regulated under the Regulations including Airport Lessee Companies (ALCs), their tenants and other operators at an airport
- The regulation of environmental matters at the leased federal airports identified in Table 1.

Table 1: Leased federal airports.

State	Airports			
ACT	Canberra			
NSW	Sydney (Kingsford Smith)	Bankstown	Camden	Western Sydney (Nancy Bird Walton)
QLD	Brisbane	Gold Coast	Townsville	Archerfield
VIC	Melbourne	Essendon	Moorabbin	
TAS	Hobart	Launceston		
SA	Adelaide	Parafield		
WA	Perth	Jandakot		
NT	Darwin	Alice Springs		

¹ It is noted the *Airport (Environment Protection) Regulations 1997* (the old Regulations) were repealed on 1 April 2026 by the *Airports (Environment Protection) (Repeal and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2026*, and were replaced by the 2026 Regulations. However, the 2026 Regulations continue the operation of the old Regulations until the period ending immediately before 1 April 2027.

What is not covered by this charter

This Charter does not apply to

- The Airport Building Control Application processes
- General complaints unrelated to environmental management of Airports.

Other relevant documents

This Charter should be read in conjunction with the department's overarching client service charter and the following documents available on the department's website:

- [Client Service Charter | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts](#)
- **Airport Environment Regulatory Practice Statement**
- **Airport Environment Officer Operations Manual**

Principles of engagement

People covered by this charter strive to:

- ensure effective and efficient environmental regulation at leased federal airports
- foster a cooperative, transparent, and efficient regulatory environment
- empower ALCs, their tenants and other operators to comply with applicable laws and contribute to the protection of the environment at leased federal airports in the public interest.

They commit to uphold the following principles:

Accountable - we provide clear and timely guidance for decisions and actions based on a consistent understanding of airport environment regulations and accept responsibility for actions and decisions, with clear processes for appeal and review

Respectful - we are professional, honest, fair and courteous in our application of environment regulations and collaborative discussion is promoted where there are differences of opinion

Transparent – we share relevant and accurate information openly, subject to confidentiality obligations with a view to using resources efficiently to meet regulatory requirements

Consistent – we ensure regulatory decisions and actions are predictable, based on established rules and procedures, and are delivered in a timely and efficient manner

Stewardship – we build capability and knowledge through regular, respectful dialogue to address issues and improve regulatory outcomes

Communication channels

The department's primary point of contact on all matters related to regulation of the environment, at airports covered by this charter, is the designated AEO.

AEOs may be contacted directly, or in the first instance via:

Director
Environmental Regulation
Airport Environment Branch
Email: aeo@infrastructure.gov.au

If the matter is urgent, please contact the department's Director, Environmental Regulations Section.

To ensure that communications channels remain effective we ask that regulated entities

- Designate a primary contact point for all official communications and notify the department via email at aeo@infrastructure.gov.au
- Develop a protocol for handling urgent issues, including designated escalation points.

Responsibilities of the Regulator

The AEO aims to:

- Treat regulated entities and their employees fairly, impartially, and courteously
- Ensure regulatory frameworks, guidance, and procedures are maintained and available on the department's website
- Actively support the regulated entity's understanding of its obligations by offering timely information and regulatory guidance
- Provide timely decisions and responses to submissions, applications, and inquiries, including meeting deadlines for decision making specified in the *Airports Act 1996*, and the Regulations.
- Upon request of an airport building controller (ABC), provide timely advice about the environmental impacts of proposed building activities to ABCs. AEOs do not have express statutory functions under the ABC regulatory scheme but may be consulted by ABCs in the exercise of their functions.
- Conduct audits, inspections, and enforcement actions in a fair, consistent, and respectful manner and in accordance with our approach to regulation outlined in the Airport Environment Regulatory Practice Statement
- Offer information and guidance before potential breaches or incidents occur to help the regulated entity make informed decisions, and take preventive actions
- Provide mechanisms for the regulated entity to give feedback, raise concerns, or appeal regulatory decisions through transparent and accessible channels
- Manage complaints and feedback in accordance with the department's client service charter
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive or proprietary information in accordance with legal requirements
- Engage with the regulated entity through structured consultations when introducing or amending regulations
- Support the shared interests of the aviation environment
- Acknowledge queries from regulated entities within 2 business days.

Our expectations of regulated entities

Regulated entities will:

- Take responsibility for your environmental management decision-making, safety, finances and behaviour towards the department's staff
- Tell us if you require us to make any necessary adjustments in our engagement with you because of any disability or cultural or religious requirements
- Provide all relevant information in a timely manner, or as required by the Regulations, to support AEO decision making processes
- Treat AEOs and department employees fairly, impartially, and courteously
- Familiarise yourself with guidelines on environmental regulation on the department's website [link] to ensure full and ongoing compliance with all applicable acts and regulations
- Aim to achieve compliance voluntarily as a core part of your operational culture, without the need for the department to take enforcement action
- Submit accurate, complete, and timely reports and data as required
- Cooperate with regular site visits, monitoring, inspections, audits, investigations and remediations conducted by the AEO
- Engage proactively with the AEO on emerging issues, risks, or non-compliance events, including novel remediation, reuse of contaminants or water or soil pollution
- Provide constructive feedback on regulatory processes and participate in regulatory reviews and consultations where appropriate.

Dispute resolution

Disputes and complaints will be managed in accordance with the **Department's client service charter**. Further information on review of AEO decisions can be found in the **Airport Environment Officer Operations Manual**.

Evaluation and continuous improvement

The Airport Environment Regulatory Engagement Charter sits within a hierarchy of government and departmental policies and obligations that shape how the Department regulates in response to environmental risks at leased federal airports. This hierarchy of government and departmental policies and obligations is set out in the Airport Environment Regulatory Practice Statement.

Feedback is valued as it can be used by us to deliver improvements in our regulatory services, systems and processes. Feedback also enables ongoing evaluation and improvement to the dispute resolution process.

Feedback may be submitted via email to the Director, Environmental Regulation Section at aeo@infrastructure.gov.au

This charter will be reviewed and updated as needed to incorporate changes to government and/or departmental policy, amendments to legislation or feedback from industry.