



AVIATION WHITE PAPER

TOWARDS 2050

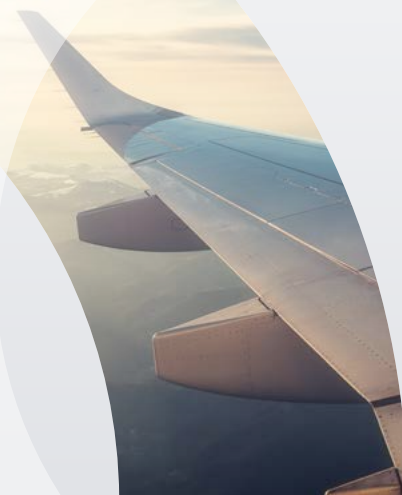


Aviation White Paper Policy Initiatives

The Aviation White Paper sets out long-term policies and actions to guide the next generation of growth and innovation across Australian aviation.

The white paper contains 56 new initiatives to be implemented by the Australian Government in partnership with industry, states and territories, and the community. These initiatives complement the government's broader economic priorities of building the skills and capabilities of Australia's workforce, fostering a more dynamic, productive and resilient economy, broadening economic opportunity and addressing disadvantage, and embracing the opportunities of net zero transformation and digitisation.

The department will publicly track the implementation of white paper initiatives and publish annual status updates. The Australian Government will conduct a formal evaluation of the Aviation White Paper in 2029.





A better passenger experience

The Australian Government's vision is for a fairer aviation sector that delivers a better passenger experience. Consumer rights will be clear and upheld, underpinned by timely dispute resolution. Aviation will be accessible for people with disability. The Australian Government will:

Initiative 1 – Legislate for an **Aviation Industry Ombuds Scheme**, which will have the power to direct airlines and airports to provide remedies to consumers and investigate customer complaints about airlines' and airports' conduct, with penalties for non-compliance. The enabling legislation for the ombuds scheme will outline requirements for airlines and airports to become members of the scheme, as well as the compliance and enforcement mechanisms. The ombudsperson will issue guidance on appropriate consumer conduct by airlines and airports, publish independent reports on the industry's complaints handling, make recommendations to the government for policy or regulatory change, and refer instances of systemic misconduct that may raise concerns under the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) to the ACCC for investigation and enforcement.

Initiative 2 – Deliver a new **Aviation Customer Rights Charter**, to be produced by the ombuds scheme, setting out the fair and appropriate treatment of customers by airlines and airports. The charter will outline minimum customer service levels, give customers greater certainty about what they can expect when flights are cancelled and delayed, and when passenger journeys are disrupted, including in relation to the prompt payment of refunds, across all fare types.

Initiative 3 – Adopt a 'show cause' arrangement, requiring airlines to report the reasons for delays and cancellations as part of the airlines' regular reporting of flight data to BITRE. The ombudsperson will also have powers to request additional information from airlines in relation to specific flights. Regular reporting of additional data about industry performance and conduct will increase transparency and public accountability for on-time performance and support the government to identify if further regulatory action is required.

Initiative 4 – Make new **aviation-specific disability standards** as a schedule to the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* under the DDA. The aviation-specific disability standards will affirm the rights of people with disability during air travel and the obligations that airlines and airports have to provide equal access. The Australian Government will co-design the aviation-specific disability standards with people with disability and consult industry on the draft standards in 2025.

Initiative 5 – **Require airlines and airports to coordinate the facilitation of passenger journeys for people with a disability.** The new aviation-specific disability standards will set out the obligations of airlines and airports to improve the coordination of passenger facilitation – from arrival at the airport terminal and throughout air travel until exiting the terminal at the destination airport.

Initiative 6 – **Require airlines to offer passenger assistance profiles** that will enable people to communicate accessibility requirements to airlines online, in advance. Passengers will be able to grant airlines permission to store information so they can book future travel with a complete profile and so airlines can access their assistance information each time they travel. Profiles will allow passengers to upload documentation about assistance animals and wheelchair

battery specifications so that airlines can confirm in advance that air safety requirements can be met. The Australian Government will consult on options to implement this requirement through the new aviation-specific disability standards.

Initiative 7 – **Review airline policies that limit the number of passengers who require assistance.** In developing the new aviation-specific disability standards, the Australian Government will consider options to prohibit airline policies that limit the number of passengers who require assistance aboard a flight – sometimes referred to as '2-wheelchair policies' – except where there is a clear and demonstrated aviation safety reason.

Initiative 8 – **Review industry compliance with the new aviation-specific disability standards.** The Australian Government will publicly report on airlines' and airports' compliance with the new aviation-specific disability standards after the rules come into effect.

Initiative 9 – The Australian Government will produce **user guides that outline airlines' and airports' legal requirements under the DDA and the new aviation-specific disability standards.** These accessible user guides will inform passengers about their rights and about airlines' obligations to facilitate more effective provision of assistance. The content and format of the user guides will be co-designed with people with disability.

Initiative 10 – Provide **improved remedies for damage to wheelchairs and other mobility devices.** The Australian Government will consult on amendments to the *Civil Aviation (Carriers) Liability Act 1959* (Cth), and supporting regulations, to increase the maximum compensation entitlement for passengers whose wheelchairs or other mobility devices are damaged or lost by domestic airlines.



A competitive and efficient aviation sector

The Australian Government's vision is for a more competitive domestic airline sector, to drive lower fares and better services for consumers. Efficient development and utilisation of Australia's airport assets will underpin the sustainable and affordable growth in aviation services. The Australian Government will:

Initiative 11 – **Reform Sydney Airport slot management arrangements** to improve efficiency in the allocation and use of take-off and landing slots at Sydney Airport and reduce incentives for anti-competitive slot misuse:

- The government has adopted recommendations from the 2021 Review of the Sydney Airport Demand Management Scheme (Harris Review) to improve operational efficiency at Sydney Airport, increase transparency of slot allocation and use, provide expanded definitions of slot misuse and rebalance slot allocation towards new entrants.
- In line with the recommendations of the Harris Review, the government will also reform governance arrangements for the Slot Manager and Compliance Committee, providing for more effective enforcement of slot rules. The Slot Manager will be appointed through a competitive process, with governance arrangements to manage real or perceived conflicts of interest, an essential criterion for selection. This process has commenced.



Initiative 12 – Revise principles for the aeronautical pricing negotiation process between airlines and airports.

The Australian Government will consult on amendments to the Aeronautical Pricing Principles to specify that: (1) pricing agreements between airports and airlines should not contain anti-competitive clauses; and (2) airports should provide such information and data to airlines as necessary to ensure transparent pricing negotiations.

- In addition, the government will consider options for the ACCC to monitor the conduct of aeronautical pricing negotiations at Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Western Sydney airports.

Initiative 13 – Task the next PC inquiry into the economic regulation of airports to consider whether there is evidence that airports are misusing market power and whether the current framework allows large airlines to unduly delay beneficial airport expansions. The inquiry will consider the costs and benefits of further reforms to slot rules for domestic flights, including:

- a stricter ‘use it or lose it’ rule
- a limit on the period for which slots can be ‘grandfathered’.

Initiative 14 – Monitor domestic airline pricing and performance. In October 2023, the Australian Government directed the ACCC to monitor the pricing of domestic air passenger transport services until the end of 2026. Reports on domestic airline prices, costs and profits are published quarterly to enable greater public scrutiny of airline practices and help identify any instances of airlines misusing market power.

Initiative 15 – Consult on implementing an enhanced version of the ACCC’s monitoring of pricing and service quality at Australia’s major airports – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth – with the Western Sydney Airport to be included in the price monitoring regime at an appropriate time. The Australian Government will conduct an impact analysis to consider whether to require the collection of more detailed disaggregated data about airport revenue, costs and assets and whether a revised set of quality of service indicators is warranted:

- Enhanced data collection could inform more transparent pricing negotiations between airports and airlines and make it easier for the ACCC to identify misuses of market power by airports.
- The next periodic PC inquiry into the economic regulation of airports will consider the data collected and analysed by the ACCC in advising government if changes are required to the current light-touch approach to the economic regulation of airports.

Initiative 16 – Publish additional data on airline performance and aviation competition. BITRE has powers to collect data from airlines under the Air Navigation Regulation 2016; however, the regulations limit publication of this data. The government will consult on amendments to these regulations by 2026 to enable the collection and publication of more detailed data to support increased transparency and scrutiny of airline performance. BITRE will also develop and report on aviation competition indicators to monitor trends in the sector.

Initiative 17 – Review government travel purchasing policies to consider whether changed policy settings could better support competition.



A skilled, secure and productive aviation workforce

The Australian Government’s vision is for a diverse and skilled aviation workforce – supported by clear training pathways, fair working conditions and secure jobs – to enable a productive and dynamic Australian aviation sector. The Australian Government’s 2022 Secure Jobs, Better Pay reforms limited the use of fixed term contracts, strengthened equal pay provisions, improved access to flexible working arrangements, and modernised the bargaining system to lift wages and productivity. The 2023 and 2024 Closing Loopholes reforms sought to address behaviours that undermine pay, security and safety for workers, including allowing the Fair Work Commission to make orders to ensure labour hire employees earn at least the same as directly hired employees, and ensuring a practical definition of casual employment with a clear pathway to secure work. The government will continue to engage closely with unions and advocates to support safety and job security for workers in the industry.

To position the aviation workforce to meet the needs of the sector now and to 2050, the Australian Government will:

Initiative 18 – Streamline training and accreditation pathways for licenced aviation maintenance engineers (LAMEs), including:

- **allowing for modular licensing of LAMEs.** Aircraft maintenance engineers can now be licenced by CASA for specific competencies relevant to their careers, without having to complete the full LAME examination process
- **recognition of licences from overseas authorities** with similar standards and requirements. CASA already recognises aviation maintenance engineer licences issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand. By the end of 2025, CASA will adopt a framework for recognition of licences issued by civil aviation authorities in nations that apply regulations that are equivalent to those applied by CASA. Engineers licenced by these authorities will still be required to pass exams on Australian aviation law to be licenced by CASA
- **improving alignment between CASA licensing and VET qualifications.** The Manufacturing JSC, Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance, has established an Aviation Working Group, with representation from industry, unions, training providers and CASA, to recommend changes to the Certificate IV in Aeroskills to provide graduates with a more direct pathway to CASA licensing. The initial scoping project will report later in 2024.

Initiative 19 – Set expectations for large Australian airlines to train and employ newly qualified pilots rather than relying solely on recruiting experienced pilots from other aviation businesses. The Minister for Transport has written to Qantas and Virgin Australia asking them to advise how they will increase pilot training and early career development to support a sustainable pipeline of Australian pilots. If the airlines fail to put in place appropriate arrangements, the Australian Government will consider other options, which could include a levy on large Australian airlines to fund pilot training programs and cadetships.



Initiative 20 – Establish a new Gender Equity Charter with the aviation industry. The Australian Government will partner with the aviation industry and unions to commit to employment targets for women in senior and operational roles and elimination of gender pay gaps, as well as improving policies and practices to support traditionally feminised sections of the aviation industry. Charter members will report publicly on progress against charter commitments. Charter membership will be a consideration in the awarding of some Australian Government aviation sector grants funding.

Initiative 21 – Plan for the future workforce needs of the aviation sector. The Transport and Logistics JSC, Industry Skills Australia, has published an Initial Workforce Plan for operational personnel (including pilots, cabin crew and air traffic controllers) and the Manufacturing JSC, Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance, will undertake planning for the aircraft maintenance workforce. These plans will identify aviation skills and set out training priorities, including support for decarbonisation and the rollout of new technologies. They will inform future work by the respective JSCs to align training courses with industry needs.



Maximising aviation's contribution to net zero

The Australian Government's vision is for Australia's aviation industry to reach net zero emissions by 2050. The aviation sector will be a key contributor to achieving Australia's national emissions reduction targets, fuelled by the development of a domestic SAF industry and technological advancements in electric and hydrogen-powered flight. The Australian Government will:

Initiative 22 – Consult with industry and the community on the introduction of LCLF demand-side measures, including through delivery of a regulatory impact analysis.

Initiative 23 – Establish a robust certification scheme, consistent with international standards, to provide SAF purchasers and air travel consumers assurance of the environmental, safety and social credentials of SAF. The Guarantee of Origin Scheme will be expanded by mid-2028.

Initiative 24 – Provide access to the \$1.7 billion Future Made in Australia Innovation Fund to support the development of LCLF production technologies using new feedstock sources, building on the current \$30 million allocated for activities to support development of a SAF and renewable diesel industry with production from renewable feedstocks in Australia.

Initiative 25 – Consider options for an LCLF production incentive and demand-side measures to accelerate the development of an LCLF industry in Australia, with a key focus on producing SAF and renewable diesel. The government is currently consulting on the best way to design production incentives and demand measures, and is seeking feedback on the optimal policy mix to support the industry.



Connecting regional Australia

The Australian Government's vision is for the benefits of aviation to be shared across regional and remote Australia as part of its commitment that no one is held back and no one is left behind. The Australian Government will:

Initiative 26 – Direct the PC to undertake a review of the determinants of regional airfares to identify opportunities to improve regional services, access to capital cities and reliability.

Initiative 27 – Extend the Remote Airstrip Upgrade (RAU) Program with additional funding of \$50 million over 3 years (from 2024–25). The Australian Government will continue to support the Remote Aviation Access Program, which consists of the RAU and Remote Aerodrome Inspection programs and the Remote Air Services Subsidy scheme. These programs fund critical safety and accessibility upgrades for airstrips in remote communities and critical inspection services to ensure safety of remote airport operations; and subsidise regular air transport services to communities in remote and isolated areas of Australia.

Initiative 28 – Provide \$40 million to extend the Regional Airports Program (over 3 years from 2024–25). The Regional Airports Program will continue to support regional airports to improve safety and connectivity and will also enable regional airports to make the investments they will need for the transition to net zero and to improve climate resilience. A financial management framework will be an essential element of high-value applications.

Initiative 29 – Update the program guidelines for all regional and remote aviation programs to report against how they contribute to Closing the Gap outcomes, such as providing increased training, employment and procurement opportunities for First Nations businesses and communities. Grant decisions will also take account of membership of the Australian Government's Gender Equity Charter for Aviation.



Regenerating General Aviation

The Australian Government's vision is for a thriving aviation ecosystem, strengthened by the growth and diversification of GA. The Australian Government:

Initiative 30 – Has written to airport operators to make it clear that, when making decisions to approve future master plans or MDPs, the government will have regard to the appropriateness of the airport's community consultation processes and whether appropriate access to the airport site has been provided for GA, consistent with the regulations in the *Airports Act 1996*.

Initiative 31 – Will require that CASA refresh its GA Workplan in consultation with the sector to prioritise changes to the civil aviation safety framework that reduce regulatory burden and support development of new technologies, while keeping the community safe.



A balanced approach to airport planning and noise

The Australian Government is committed to reducing the impacts of aircraft noise on Australian communities and supporting the efficient development and utilisation of Australia's airport assets to underpin the sustainable, accessible and affordable growth in aviation services. The Australian Government will:

Initiative 32 – Create an independent Aircraft Noise Ombuds Scheme as part of the Aviation Industry Ombuds Scheme. The Australian Government will establish the Aircraft Noise Ombuds Scheme independently of Airservices Australia, as part of the Aviation Industry Ombuds Scheme. The Aviation Industry Ombuds Scheme will have the power to conduct independent investigations into aircraft noise complaints handling, publish reports and make recommendations to government about the handling of noise complaints, community consultation processes and the presentation of noise related information.

Initiative 33 – Improve transparency about aircraft noise impacts. Airservices Australia will examine its Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System (NFPMS) and include additional information in the NFPMS on aircraft movements and noise impacts. Airservices Australia will also publish a quarterly report on noncompliance with noise abatement procedures.

Initiative 34 – Produce new guidance for 'Flying Considerately'. The Australian Government will develop guidance to pilots on 'Flying Considerately' to minimise noise impacts in residential areas, when operating under visual flight rules or outside of controlled airspace. This guidance will be incorporated in the Aeronautical Information Package, which is distributed to pilots by Airservices Australia.

Initiative 35 – Appoint an Airservices Australia executive for noise and environment to lead the agency's work on noise minimisation, including engagement with affected communities, and ensure this work is integrated with the operational decisions of air traffic controllers.

Initiative 36 – Improve land use planning outcomes near airports to seek to avoid further development that is inappropriate for the noise level and protect airport operations from potential safety risks, through:

- working with National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group to update NASF 'Guideline A' by 2027 to describe best-practice approaches for **including aircraft noise exposure notifications on property titles for new developments.**
- supporting implementation of the recommendation from the 2021 review of the NASF to **improve education on the NASF for local planning officials.**
- **updating the Australian standard on building siting and construction in relation to aircraft noise intrusion.** The Australian Government has applied to Standards Australia to review AS 2021:2015 and consider incorporating the guidance handbook on producing information on aircraft noise (SA HB 149:2016) into the standard.

Initiative 37 – Improve engagement with communities affected by changes to airspace and flight paths.

The Australian Government has set expectations for Airservices Australia to apply best-practice consultation when designing airspace and flight path changes, consistent

with the Community Engagement Standard for Flight Path and Airspace Change Proposals finalised in 2023.

Initiative 38 – Update guidelines for Community Aviation Consultation Groups (CACGs) to set out ministerial expectations for greater community input into the CACG work programs, greater community involvement in CACG meetings and more widespread dissemination of CACG information to community members.

Initiative 39 – Require additional information in airport master plans and MDPs about how development of the airport will address climate change resilience, decarbonisation and disability access. The Australian Government will amend the Airports Regulations 2024 to include this requirement. The Minister for Transport has also written to airport operators to advise that, when making decisions to approve future master plans or MDPs, the Minister will have regard to how the airport has addressed these additional requirements, as well as the appropriateness of the airport's community consultation processes, and whether appropriate access to the airport site has been provided for GA. For master plans or MDPs that involve new or changed runways, the Minister will also have regard to the suitability of the airport's plans for noise mitigation, including the appropriateness of noise sharing arrangements.

Initiative 40 – Review the Airports Act 1996 by 2030 to support any decision on airport lease renewals. The Australian Government will conduct a comprehensive review of the legislative and regulatory arrangements for the ownership, planning, development and environmental management of the 22 LFAs. This will provide regulatory certainty for airport lessee companies, ahead of applying to exercise their right to extend the initial 49-year airport lease period for a further 50 years.



World-leading safety, security and airspace regulation

To maintain Australia's world-leading standards of aviation safety and security, the Australian Government will:

Initiative 41 – Update Australia's Aviation State Safety Programme, National Aviation Safety Plan and National Air Navigation Plan. As a member of the International Civil Aviation Organization, Australia produces a series of planning documents showing how we will achieve aviation safety outcomes, consistent with our international obligations. The Australian Government will update these planning documents in 2024 to make clear our aviation safety goals, identified risks and priority areas for improvement.

Initiative 42 – Reform the administration and management of Australia's airspace by 2030, through a 4-stage process. The Australian Government will incrementally put in place airspace arrangements that allow for the increased use of drones and other new aviation technologies, without compromising air safety:

- **Stage 1** is to release a whole-of-government plan for air traffic management of commercial drones and other uncrewed aircraft in 2024. The **Uncrewed Aircraft System Traffic Management Action Plan** will outline steps the Australian Government will take to enable new types of air traffic management systems in Australia.



- **Stage 2** is to provide guidance to CASA in 2024 on the Australian Government's expectations for airspace administration. The Australian Government will produce a new **Australian Airspace Policy Statement** to replace the policy statement that came into effect in 2021. The new policy statement will give clear direction to CASA on the Australian Government's priorities for airspace management, including in relation to drones and other new technologies.
- **Stage 3** is for CASA to prepare a new framework for Australian airspace in 2026. The **Australian Future Airspace Framework** will describe how classes of airspace will be implemented and administered across Australia.
- **Stage 4** is to **update relevant airspace legislation** by 2030. These changes will give government agencies the powers they need to regulate airspace use safely as new types of aviation technology increasingly share the same airspace as conventional aircraft.

Initiative 43 – Expand requirements for aircraft to broadcast their location electronically. Widespread use of ADS-B devices will increase aviation safety and efficiency and reduce collision risk. By late 2025, the Australian Government will consider advice about a timetable for mandating ADS-B devices, while also extending subsidies for the purchase of ADS-B equipment until 2027.



Enabling new aviation technologies

To take advantage of the opportunities from a growing aviation technology and manufacturing sector, and protect Australians from drone misuse, the Australian Government will:

Initiative 44 – Improve information available to industry about funding and procurement opportunities. The Australian Government has expanded the [drones.gov.au](https://www.drones.gov.au) website to provide a single point of reference for the emerging aviation technologies sector to access a wide range of government funding and procurement opportunities.

Initiative 45 – Release an Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Strategy in 2024 that provides long-term policy settings to encourage investment in the nascent sector.

Initiative 46 – Require that CASA update its Strategic Regulatory Roadmap for drones and AAM in 2024, outlining the safety regulator's strategic approach to working with industry to oversee the safe rollout of these new technologies.

Initiative 47 – Continue working with state, territory and local governments to encourage increased national consistency and collaboration in regulatory arrangements for drones, including through the drone rule digitisation project.

Initiative 48 – Implement a new system to enable air traffic management to communicate electronically with drones and other uncrewed aircraft. Initial capabilities of the Flight Information Management System will roll out in 2025

to support the safe integration of drones into controlled airspace, with additional features added over time.

Initiative 49 – Continue to work with industry on the introduction of Remote ID requirements for drones to improve safety and enable responsible and accountable drone use. It is expected that legislation will be introduced and a mandate will in place by 2030, subject to a regulatory impact analysis process.

Initiative 50 – Introduce new legislation by 2030 to protect Australian communities, infrastructure and businesses from security risks of drones and AAM.

Initiative 51 – Consult on regulatory amendments to manage noise impacts from AAM aircraft on communities.

Initiative 52 – Work with stakeholders to develop AAM infrastructure planning guidance to support the introduction of AAM.



Connecting Australia to the world

International aviation is critical for maintaining Australians' connectivity with the rest of the world, deepening labour pools for high-skilled jobs and attracting visitors that support our economy. The Australian Government's vision is for a competitive and efficient international aviation sector that serves Australia's interests, including the sustainability of sovereign long-haul capabilities. The Australian Government will:

Initiative 53 – Pursue additional capacity ahead of demand in bilateral air service agreements and negotiate for 'open skies' style agreements where to do so is in Australia's interests. The department will continue to consult with government agencies, including the ACCC, DFAT and industry stakeholders when providing advice to the Minister for Transport on proposed bilateral air services negotiations.

Initiative 54 – Update the Framework for New and Redeveloping International Ports. The Australian Government will review the process for designating new, and making major changes to, international airports and seaports to ensure critical border security and biosecurity standards continue to be met. The revised framework will be designed to ensure appropriate planning, establishment and resourcing requirements can be put in place by border agencies when a new international port is designated, while providing a transparent process to be followed by airport and seaport operators.

Initiative 55 – Develop new approaches to cargo screening, for border control purposes, at Australia's high-volume air and sea ports, aiming to improve the scalability, adaptability and security of screening arrangements.

Initiative 56 – Deepen Asia-Pacific regional aviation capability-building through DFAT funded development transport assistance programs across the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in the Pacific.

Find out more → Visit our website to read the Aviation White Paper: infrastructure.gov.au/AviationWhitePaper