
Regional Development Australia – Darling Downs and South-West

Aviation White Paper Submission

March 2023

RDA DDSW is a peak industry body and part of the Australian wide RDA Network. RDA DDSW is a federally funded, but independent Incorporated Association. Our charter, as directed by the Federal Government, is to facilitate economic development outcomes working with all levels of government, business and community groups to advocate, collaborate, inform and help to transform our region. The RDA-DDSW Committee Board is representative of the entire region, comprised of strong community leaders with connections to business and industry.

RDA-DDSW's purpose is to drive a thriving region for future generations, and it does this in-part through collaboration – connecting and partnering with key stakeholders to advance collective goals and outcomes. It aims to build and mobilise cooperative alliances across three levels of government, business, industry. It also advocates to national audiences on behalf of our region and provides region intelligence through to the Department of Infrastructure.

Regional Development Australia – Darling Downs and South West (RDA-DDSW) garners a regional perspective across a vast geography from Toowoomba down to the New South Wales and South Australian borders, across an area approximately half the size of NSW and 1.6 X the size of Victoria. It has strong connections with:

- Commonwealth Government agencies
- State Government agencies
- 10 local Councils including
 - Balonne
 - Bulloo
 - Goondiwindi
 - Maranoa
 - Murweh
 - Paroo
 - Quilpie
 - Southern Downs
 - Toowoomba
 - Western Downs
- Regional collaborative organisations including:
 - South West Queensland Council of Mayors
 - South West Regional Organisation of Councils
 - Border Regional Organisation of Councils
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Industry Groups such as Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise
- Social Enterprises

The RDA DDSW is well placed to provide a perspective on the needs, opportunities, and requirements for the aviation industry across our regional and remote community.

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Terms of Reference

Needs

In an Island nation with a vast geography and dispersed population, the National Aviation Roadmap to 2050 must consider regional and remote area aviation needs, and Aviation as a provider of services as follows:

- Business and Markets
 - Minerals and energy
 - Agribusiness seeking markets and supplying markets
 - Wider industry connectivity
- Air Transport and Freight – scheduled and un-scheduled services.
 - Fly-in/Fly-out workforce
 - Passengers – Business and Leisure/Tourism in RPT and Charter settings
 - Freight
 - Parcel freight and online Purchase delivery
 - Medical supplies and Transplant Organs
 - Perishable Primary Industry exports, e.g., Live Seafood, fresh vegetables, etc., where time to market and end user quality assurance are paramount
- Medical and Emergency services
 - Emergency Medical Retrievals
 - Remote Area and Indigenous Health Clinics
 - Patient Transfer following treatment in larger centres, both commercially and privately provided (e.g., Angel Flight)
- Disaster Response
 - Search and Rescue
 - Aerial Firefighting
 - Fire and Flood Relief, including fodder drops for livestock, airlifting residents from hazardous situations
- Agriculture and Other Primary Industries
 - Aerial application
 - Crop protection
 - Soil and Pasture improvement
 - Forestry Maintenance
 - Farming Operations
 - Mustering
 - Farm Management
 - Aerial Survey
 - Mineral Deposits
 - Agriculture
 - Forestry and Natural Resources
- Aviation as an employer
 - Aviation provides employment in regional and remote areas in all the areas listed here for
 - Pilot's
 - Air Traffic Controllers
 - Refueller's
 - Airport Ground Staff – Check-in and Baggage Handlers, Airport Management and Maintenance,
 - Cabin Crew
 - Aircraft Maintenance Engineers (Mechanics)
 - Flight and Ground Instructors

- Flight Training¹
 - Forecast requirements for Pilot's, Cabin Crew and Technicians across Asia and China, include
 - **China:** 128,500 pilots; 126,750 technicians; 147,250 cabin crew
 - **Southeast Asia:** 48,500 pilots; 54,000 technicians; 76,250 cabin crew
 - **South Asia:** 42,750 pilots; 35,000 technicians; 43,250 cabin crew
 - Many of these professionals are trained in Australia, including regional centres such as Toowoomba's Wellcamp Airport, Port Macquarie, Mildura, Wagga Wagga, Mangalore
- Social connections in remote communities
- Tourism
- Defence synergies
- Biosecurity and Border Control
 - Littoral and offshore Customs and Border security surveillance
- New Opportunities
 - Sustainable Aviation Fuels Manufacturing and supply
 - Aerospace Manufacturing
 - Space Exploration
 - Satellite Launch

Opportunities

Aviation is an enabling industry. It connects industry to supply chains, and businesses to their people and customers across other sectors. This extends beyond traditional aviation related sectors, such as tourism, to freight and worker movement for the broader agricultural, manufacturing, and resource industries, to name but a few. The defence industry is also related to the broader aviation industry in terms of transferrable skill and manufacturing capabilities, for example.

The roadmap should consider how aviation does, can and will economically impact Australia's wider industry to prosper. Economic modelling should examine best and worst-case Aviation scenarios in terms of impact on the broader economy and related sectors.

Innovation at pace and flexible, iterative technologies will be required to adapt quickly and comprehensively across the aviation industry over coming decades.

¹ <https://investors.boeing.com/investors/news/press-release-details/2018/Boeing-Forecasts-Greatest-Demand-for-Pilots-Technicians-Cabin-Crew-in-Asia-Pacific-Region/default.aspx> - **"Boeing Forecasts Greatest Demand for Pilots, Technicians, Cabin Crew in Asia Pacific Region"**

Requirements

To ensure the ongoing provision of these vital needs to Regional and Remote Australia, Governments need to provide:

- Ongoing funding arrangements to regional airport operators, to ensure the ongoing availability of these valuable infrastructure resources
- Consistent licencing procedures between different levels of government to ensure providers and workers can readily provide cross-border services without needless government “red tape”
- A review of CASA licencing requirements to recognise primacy of qualifications and reduce “double” qualification requirements, and provide pathways for training providers
- Research, Development and Seed Capital for new opportunities and technologies. Funding for mass adoption at pace of sustainable and emerging technologies. Industry wide adoption of more sustainable technology and practices will need government incentives to encourage mass adoption, especially in smaller capacity aircraft, which in turn, will ultimately reduce the maintenance and replacement costs of new technologies.
- Industry wide Workforce planning on a scale similar to the Defence Industry to ensure industry wide coordination of the future workforce, including training pathways and solutions to maintain key roles such as Instructors and LAMEs. This is of particular importance given the capital expenditure required to train and keep current a skilled aviation worker.
- Consider the Australia’s aviation industry in the context of international competition. For example, leverage our strengths such as Australia’s safety and innovation record, recognition of international threats including competition for a skilled workforce, and seek opportunities to import international best practice quickly.
- Integration with other transport infrastructure, i.e. develop multi-modal transport hubs where freight is seamlessly and efficiently moved from one transport type to another
- Develop strategies to utilise regional airports as a resource including freight hubs, training facilities, technology pilot sites in order to reduce workload on capital city airports and mitigate noise and environmental issues. Airlines should be encouraged to recognise the role regional airports can play during flight disruptions given lack of curfews at regional airports, cheaper accommodation and road transport options to recover passengers to original planned destinations. For example, Toowoomba Wellcamp to Brisbane.
- Account for increased climate variability by improving weather detection and reporting technologies.
- Consistency of airport standards for same category airfields – security, border control
- The review will need to account for evolving Airline customer appetites to be more environmentally conscious and, post COVID, to be more lifestyle and ‘experience’ orientated with the highest levels of cleanliness / hygiene / safety / security expectations.
- The industry requires certainty that General Aviation, which provides most of these services and is a major supplier of trained workforce to the industry, will have the policy and regulatory settings to thrive and flourish, rather than drown in increasing red tape that cannot justify a beneficial purpose.
- The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the Aviation industry should be closely examined for lessons to be included in future aviation policy, particularly to prepare for unexpected global shocks.

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