



PREMIER OF TASMANIA

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Aviation White Paper Branch  
Domestic Aviation & Reform Division  
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts  
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Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed Terms of Reference for the Australian Government's Aviation White Paper. The Tasmanian Government is pleased to provide the following comments for consideration.

#### *Background*

Tasmania received 966,500 visitors in the year ending December 2022, which represents 72 per cent recovery of the same period for 2019.

The significance of aviation to the Tasmanian visitor economy is evidence by the fact that 88 per cent of visitors to Tasmania travel by air. Of these, 67 per cent travel through Hobart Airport and 31 per cent through Launceston Airport, with the remainder arriving into regional airports.

Visitor expenditure in the year to December 2022 was \$3.49 billion, the highest annual visitor spend on record. Tourism directly and indirectly supports around 33,600 jobs in Tasmania or about 13.0 per cent of total Tasmanian employment - higher than the national average and the highest in the country.

The Tasmanian Government has developed the T2I Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy in partnership with the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania to promote responsible and sustainable tourism to the state as part of a strategy to rebuild the sector from the effects of COVID. This will result in greater numbers of visitors and increased pressures on vital infrastructure to accommodate this.

It is recognised that aviation plays an essential role in tourism both in terms of services provided by airlines and essential infrastructure provided by airports – both in the larger cities as well as those operating in regional and isolated areas. With the introduction of direct flights from Hobart to Auckland, as an example, the scope for future expansion of services and the upgrade of infrastructure to support this becomes vitally important. The Tasmanian Government continues to work to establish a direct link into South East Asia, noting the success of the seasonal freight flights operated by Cathay Pacific between Hobart and Hong Kong from 2020-21. This goal will be further advanced by the Australian Government's commitment of \$60 million in the 2022-23 budget to complete strengthening work of the Hobart Airport runway.

In addition, the Tasmanian Government is refreshing its Population Strategy which will look at planning and managing expected future population growth, recognising this is a major driver of economic development and aviation services as a critical component to both business and livability for the Tasmanian community. This will inevitably have implications for the growth and development of airports and the need to manage infrastructure to cope with an increase in population and therefore passenger numbers and flights.

Aviation plays an important role in the movement of time sensitive freight both interstate and nationally, particularly for live seafood and horticultural products. Local producers rely on fast efficient delivery of goods ranging from seafood to fruits and vegetables that are susceptible to spoilage to customers interstate and in the lucrative Asian market.

Aviation also provides access to essential services for many Tasmanians living in isolated regions, such as King and Flinders Islands. In recognition of this, the Tasmanian Government provides a number of programs to assist residents access health and education facilities via flights where there are no alternative services available to be accessed by road.

Airports play a vital role in facilitating access to Tasmania – particularly in relation to accessing regional and remote locations. Many regional airports are owned and operated by Councils who find the on-going fixed costs and compliance obligations with safety regulations financially challenging.

#### *Scope of the Terms of Reference for the Aviation White Paper*

The Tasmanian Government endorses in principle the areas listed for consideration by the Australian Government in the Terms of Reference for the Aviation White Paper.

In particular, an examination of the following areas listed in the Terms of Reference is considered important for the Tasmanian Government:

1. aviation's role in economic development, trade and the visitor economy – general, domestic, regional and international aviation;
2. airport development planning processes and consultation mechanisms that consider the impact and changing nature of aircraft noise and related expectations on the role of noise sharing and noise mitigation;
3. how to support and regenerate Australia's general aviation sector;
4. appropriate consumer protections and access to services;
5. maintaining fit-for-purpose aviation safety, air navigation and aviation security systems and service delivery agencies; and
6. the role of airlines and airports in supporting regional economies.

The Tasmanian Government would also seek to have considered the issue of the funding of regional airports. Regional airports provide essential connections to isolated regions and communities and are mostly owned by Local Councils. Local Councils have limited expertise in running airports and find it challenging to invest in infrastructure and comply with safety requirements. The current funding support is made available to airports through a number of competitive Australian Government programs. It is essential that the funding model for regional airports provides appropriate support to airport owners, and facilitates forward planning of critical infrastructure maintenance and upgrades.

#### *Conclusion*

Aviation provides a vital contribution to Tasmania's visitor economy and the delivery of time sensitive freight and essential services. In addition, our regional airports face considerable funding challenges. The sustainability of their services is vital for our isolated regions.

We look forward to providing further assistance to the development of the Aviation White Paper.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy Rockliff MP  
**Premier**