

Mr Jason Dymowski  
Assistant Secretary,  
Aviation White Paper Branch, Domestic Aviation & Reform Division  
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts  
GPO Box 594  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: [aviationwhitepaper@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:aviationwhitepaper@infrastructure.gov.au)

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### **Aviation White Paper –Terms of Reference**

The Transport Australia Society (TAs) is a learned society of Engineers Australia, and we welcome the opportunity to comment on the Terms of Reference to the Aviation White Paper.

TAs' membership consists of technical and transport professionals actively involved across the transport lifecycle from concepts and planning to implementation and operations. We are volunteers who collaborate to develop and share ideas, knowledge and opportunities for effective transport in air, land and maritime domains. We develop and publish discussion papers on future transport strategies in response to changing societal needs.

In March 2021, TAs issued its *Aviation Discussion Paper*, outlining the key concerns of TAs in regard to aviation. [Aviation infrastructure: discussion paper \(engineersaustralia.org.au\)](https://engineersaustralia.org.au/aviation-infrastructure-discussion-paper). We believe the findings and recommendations of the Discussion Paper map over well to the White Paper's Terms of Reference as follows:

1. 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 – with an emphasis on safeguarding of airports through land use planning that protects airports from encroachment by inappropriate urban development, particularly through the use of safeguarding tools such as the National Airports Safeguarding Framework and its associated guidelines.
2. The role of airlines and airports in supporting regional economies – particularly through ensuring that the nation's regional airports have asset management plans and systems in place to ensure this stock of infrastructure is in the right condition for the level of service and that the right information on asset condition and quality is available to allow sound, strategic investment by government in infrastructure upgrades at regional airports.
3. Changing aviation technologies and ways to position our policies, regulations and systems to encourage uptake and manufacturing of new, more efficient, transport technologies – it is vital for governments and the aviation industry to collaborate on the planning and implementing of new and emerging technologies for aviation investment and operation, particularly where opportunities are available to apply engineering skills and technology for onshore manufacturing of new transport technologies. Additionally, aviation safety and network regulators need to develop guidelines, standards and regulations for new aviation technologies including advanced air mobility (AAM) systems using electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft and uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAV). In this process it will be essential to maintain Australia's high levels of aviation safety and public amenity.
4. How to maximise the aviation sector's contribution to achieving net zero carbon emissions including through sustainable aviation fuel and emerging technologies – An integrated and multidisciplinary approach is required to develop a permanent solution to manage the aviation sector's emissions and other environmental impacts across the whole aviation value chain, which includes airport operators, airlines, industry and universities.
5. Appropriate consumer protections and access to services – Australian airports, airlines and the aviation ecosystem must rethink their business models, focusing on new technologies and systems to improve the passenger experience, including for people with disabilities to ensure everyone can access the aviation network, as well the operational efficiency. Technology deployment should not jeopardise travellers' privacy protection. A mechanism is needed to ensure travellers' rights are protected.
6. Future industry workforce skills and training requirements – Governments, airlines, and airports in conjunction with education providers should develop and implement workforce strategies and plans to ensure the availability of skilled staff at the right time and place. In addition, aviation and aerospace engineering program providers need to work collaboratively with industry to define the skills set required and to co-design their program delivery to ensure the aviation/aerospace engineering graduates are job and future ready. All levels of Government and private sector interests should collaborate so that there is more diversity in the aviation workforce.

7. Other significant issues raised during the consultation process – Air freight is a significant unaddressed issue in the terms of reference. To ensure air freight remains a key component of Australia’s aviation value chain, States and territories need to strengthen strategies for protecting air freight corridors and airports consistent with the Australian Government’s *Freight and Supply Chain Strategy*. All actors in the air freight value chain (airlines, airports and freight forwarders) need to emphasise reduced handling times and costs for freight (particularly inter-modal transfers and inter-aircraft transfers) to provide more opportunities to move time-critical, high-value air freight in and out of Australia.
8. Aviation’s role in economic development, trade and the visitor economy: Australia is one of those states that have fully liberalised its domestic air transport market and concluded a handful of liberalised or partially liberalised bilateral air services agreements with its counterparts. Australian communities have benefited from such liberalised arrangements, resulting in increased provisions of airline capacity, increased demand for air travel, which subsequently contributed to visitor economy. However, there is a need to consider broader engagement with local communities, destination organisations both domestically and internationally to ensure air services play a pivotal role in regional development and international trade. Limited air services are provided by both Australian and international carriers to countries in the Indian subcontinent, Oceania, South America, and Africa. Significant improvement of air connectivity is needed to facilitate the economic and people flows between each other.
9. General Aviation – The General Aviation (GA) sector is relatively broad, embracing recreation aviation activities to flight training, agriculture, and aerial surveying. The addition of UAVs such as drones, to the GA category has brought new challenges to the efficient use of air space and safety operations. Clear evidence has shown a considerable decline of businesses operating in traditional GA domains, although a significant increase in drone operations. Significant challenges also exist in heliport design and operations which could be used for urban air mobility purposes. A holistic systems approach is urgently needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the GA sector.

This submission has been prepared by the TAs Aviation Working Group comprising TAs members around Australia, all of whom work in professional, technical and leadership capacities within the public and private sectors. We appreciate the opportunity to provide this submission on the Terms of Reference and look forward to continuing TAs’ involvement in the White Paper process. Should you have further questions regarding this submission, please contact [REDACTED] on email: [REDACTED]

Regards, [REDACTED]



Deputy Chair, Aviation Working Group



Transport Australia society, Engineers Australia