



Australian Government

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

Community Aviation Consultation Group (CACG) Guidelines



Revised November 2025

Introduction

Community Aviation Consultation Groups (CACGs) provide the community with a mechanism to engage with airport operators and aviation businesses on the operations, development and impact of their airports. CACGs give the community a pathway to engage early on any matters that impact the community, including safety, aircraft noise, land use planning and site development. CACGs are intended to work alongside other consultation processes led by the airport, including planning coordination forums, and to complement the consultative requirements for Airport Master Plans and Major Development Plans under the *Airports Act 1996*.

The Aviation White Paper – Towards 2050 (AWP) identified a need to strengthen existing CACG Guidelines to enable greater community input into work programs, increase community involvement in meetings and improve the flow of information to the community from CACG meetings.

These guidelines build on the CACG guidelines first issued in February 2011 and later revised in November 2016. The guidelines aim to ensure CACGs bring the local community and airport operators together to discuss and resolve issues that impact airport operations and the community.

Each airport and its community are unique. These guidelines are intended to be applied with due consideration to the circumstances of each site and support consistency across the operation of CACGs, providing for differences in how they operate, particularly in relation to frequency and membership.

What are CACGs?

Purpose

The role of a CACG is for the airport operator to work collaboratively with the local community on airport planning, development and operations, and related impacts and opportunities. CACG meetings provide a forum for open discussion between members, representatives from key participating organisations and airport operators.

CACGs should encourage open channels of communication, engage genuinely and promptly to allow meaningful input and early issue resolution, and work to prevent misinformation and unnecessary misunderstandings between the community and the airport. CACGs should complement the formal consultation requirements of Master Plans and Major Development Planning (MDP) processes required under the *Airports Act 1996*.

CACG meeting agendas should be set collaboratively, with all members having the opportunity to put items on the agenda for discussion. As a guide, it is expected a minimum of 25 per cent of agenda items should be those raised by the community.

CACGs should facilitate opportunity for:

- airport operators to disseminate information regarding the planning, development and operations of airports to residents affected by airport operations, local authorities, airport users, and other interested parties
- an exchange of information on issues relating to airport operations and their impacts
- community members and local representatives to raise issues and questions, and express opinions regarding airports, with a genuine desire to resolve issues that may emerge
- engagement with local communities about planning, development and operations of airports, and
- reporting and providing recommendations to airports regarding community concerns, discussion and perceptions relating to the airport.

Topics discussed at CACGs may include:

- impacts of existing development and operations at the airport
- plans for future development (including Major Development Plans) and steps being taken to implement the airport's Master Plan or develop a new plan
- proposals to increase or change aviation services
- noise (including aircraft noise) and environmental issues
- ground transport and access issues
- access issues for passengers, including people with disabilities
- planning, regulatory, and policy changes affecting the airport
- improvements or changes to airport facilities
- airport procedures for effective complaints-handling
- reports from Airservices Australia and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority on issues affecting the community
- the contribution of the airport to the local, regional and national economy, and
- strategies to ensure the broader community is informed of issues discussed in the CACG.

How should CACGs be structured?

Structure

CACGs should meet at least three times per year. However, alternative arrangements can be agreed where an airport operator has demonstrated a different frequency of CACG meetings is appropriate for specific communities.

The constitution and procedural arrangements (including the terms of reference) adopted by a CACG should be clear and transparent. CACGs are encouraged to develop strategies to ensure the broader community is informed of any major issues and provided an opportunity for meaningful input.

Chairing

Airport operators are responsible for appointing the CACG Chair but should do so in consultation with the membership of the CACG and should ensure the CACG Chair is independent of the airport's management. The CACG Chair will need to demonstrate a capability to manage the deliberations of the CACG in an impartial manner. A CACG Chair may be appointed for a specified term to be determined by the agreement of the airport operator and the appointee.

An independent CACG Chair will:

- ensure the input of the full membership is sought as to agenda items
- ensure adequate discussion time is devoted to issues of significance, and discussions cover all issues evenly with no particular issue given priority
- allow for discussion of unanticipated 'other business' at CACG meetings
- ensure agenda materials and papers are meaningful and facilitate effective engagement of members in CACG discussions
- encourage open discussion and a frank exchange of views and
- monitor effective follow-up of action items.

The Chair should ensure that community representatives and aviation operators are accorded sufficient time to speak at each meeting. Presentations from the airport operator should account for no more than half the meeting duration.

CACG Chairs, in consultation with the airport operator, should ensure appropriate succession arrangements are in place to ensure continuity of the group in the Chair's absence or at the end of their term. This might include nominating a deputy or acting Chair, having relevant documentation easily accessible, or offline 'catch-up' meetings, etc. The appointment of a deputy or acting Chair would provide continuity in the absence of the Chair or where the Chair's position is vacant, but should not be interpreted as designating the future Chair of the CACG.

Any interests, arrangements or associations of the Chair which might reasonably give rise to perceptions of a conflict of interest should be disclosed to the members of the CACG.

Membership

Membership should consist of parties with a genuine interest in the local community and airport operation. This may include local residents, community group representatives, local businesses and tourism operators, local council members and or local government officials, state and territory government officials, the airport operator and the CACG chair. Airport operator members should not outnumber community members. A balance of membership should be prioritised where possible to ensure adequate views across the community are represented.

Selection and recruitment of new members

Membership selection may occur in consultation with elected representatives and residents' groups or similar local community groups. Members may be appointed on an open-ended basis, for specified terms or as observers. Members should declare any conflicts of interest to the Chair.

Size

The size and membership of the CACG will depend upon local circumstances but should be both manageable and sufficient to achieve its objectives. The airport operator is responsible for providing a venue in collaboration with the CACG Chair, including provision of a secretariat. The venue should be accessible for all members. Virtual attendance should also be facilitated where possible to improve accessibility.

Diversity

CACG membership should be related to the unique characteristics of the airport and any local issues of community concern. Membership should be diverse in its representation and include a mix of the following:

- airport management
- aircraft operators
- community organisations or representatives
- representatives from state, territory or local government bodies
- local tourism and business groups
- traditional owners and First Nations advocacy groups.

To ensure these groups have an opportunity to participate, they should be given an invitation to join or observe the CACG.

Role of airport operators

Airport operator management should participate fully in CACG proceedings by offering items for the agenda, attending meetings and providing relevant information on the operation and development of the airport. Airport operators should always provide an update at meetings about relevant on-airport planning activities for members to consider. If relevant, the airport operator should send information out-of-session to members if operational impacts or deadlines impact relevance (e.g.: where new development planning approval occurs between meetings).

Matters proposed to be discussed at a CACG meeting should be notified to CACG members with sufficient time to allow community representatives to consult the community and canvas views prior to the meeting. In general, the agenda should be agreed and circulated a minimum of two weeks prior to the meeting date.

Role of officials and parliamentary representatives

It is a matter for airport management and the Chair of the CACG to determine whether officials and parliamentary representatives will be invited to attend as members or observers of the CACG.

Officers of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts may attend CACGs as appropriate.

Officials from other Commonwealth agencies (e.g. Airservices Australia, the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority) as well as state or local government organisations may also be invited to participate.

Secretariat

In recognition of the significant impact an airport has on the community surrounding it, airport operators are expected to organise and resource appropriate secretariat support for the CACG. Duties attached to the secretariat will include:

- communication of arrangements made for the CACG, including any framework documents such as procedural arrangements and terms of reference, to the membership
- preparation, distribution and publication of records of CACG meetings
- preparation and distribution of meeting agendas
- ensuring CACG members are notified of meetings and given an opportunity to prepare for meetings
- supporting the activities of the chair, as required
- coordinating input to assist the CACG on policy, technical and other support issues, where agreed
- maintaining comprehensive records of the business and activities of the CACG and
- preparing an annual report on the operations and achievements of the CACG and publishing this report on the airport's website (or the CACG's own website where one exists).

Reporting and transparency

It is critical for transparency, accessibility and community attendance that all information regarding CACG's can be easily accessed in a timely manner. The CACG secretariat should place all information regarding CACG meetings on the airport operator website including:

- information about the CACG's structure and membership
- governance arrangements (e.g.: terms of reference, the CACG guidelines, code of conduct)
- participating members
- meeting summaries/minutes (to be published/disseminated within 10 working days of each CACG meeting)

- agendas (to be published/disseminated 10 working days prior to CACG meetings)
- scheduling of upcoming meetings
- how community members may apply to attend CACGs
- contact details for the Secretariat to allow the submission of agenda items
- reporting at each meeting of all items nominated for the agenda, whether accepted onto the agenda or not.

Engagement

To maximise community involvement and diversity of CACGs, airport operators are encouraged to call for new members annually via appropriate public communication methods, e.g.: advertisements on social media, in local newspapers and community newsletters, invitations to local residents' groups, advertisements inside the airport and on the operator's website. The CACG Chair and members are encouraged to participate in the annual call for new members, using networks available to them.

How should CACGs be governed?

Terms of Reference

It is recommended each CACG establish a Terms of Reference consistent with the roles and purpose outlined above. Guidance on developing a Terms of Reference can be found [here](#). It is expected the Terms of Reference for each CACG will be made available on the airport operator's website, or on the CACG's own website, where one exists.

The terms of reference might include:

- background of the CACG
- role of CACG
- role of Chair
- membership
- appointments
- responsibilities
- operation
- reporting
- expenses

Who can establish a CACG?

Leased federal airports should establish and maintain CACGs. Other airports may also choose to establish CACGs or community forums and utilise these guidelines.

Need more information?

For further information on these guidelines, or other issues relating to leased federal airports, please contact the Airports Branch in the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, on 1800 075 001, or visit www.infrastructure.gov.au