



Hobart Airport Submission

Draft Community Aviation Consultation  
Group guidelines

October 2025



This submission is provided by Hobart Airport in response to the Australian Government's consultation on the draft Community Aviation Consultation Group (CACG) guidelines (the draft guidelines). At Hobart Airport, connecting communities is central to our mission, and meaningful engagement is embedded throughout our operations, planning, and risk management. We recognise the importance of early and effective engagement and have developed a comprehensive approach that prioritises collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders.

Our submission draws on extensive experience convening and participating in community engagement forums, including the CACG, Planning Coordination Forum, Accessibility Advisory Group, Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, and various environmental and industry bodies. We believe that robust community consultation is both a driver and a reflection of our reputation and operational success.

In this document, we outline our perspectives on the draft guidelines, share insights from our engagement activities, and propose recommendations to strengthen the CACG framework. Our aim is to ensure that CACGs remain inclusive, transparent, and effective forums for genuine community input—balancing the needs of all stakeholders and supporting open, constructive dialogue on airport operations and their impacts.

## Community engagement at Hobart Airport

At Hobart Airport, engagement is a critical business tool and is prioritised at every stage of operations, planning and review. Engagement activities at Hobart Airport seek out the depths of specialist community knowledge through engagement with a wide range of specialist stakeholder groups. A summary of the major stakeholder engagement groups is outlined below:

Community Aviation Consultation Group (CACG): Hobart Airport convenes the CACG quarterly to enable airport operators, neighbouring residents, local authorities, airport users, and other interested parties to exchange information on issues relating to airport operations and their impacts

Planning Coordination Forum (PCF): Hobart Airport convenes the PCF quarterly to foster strategic discussions between the airport, Commonwealth, state and local governments to improve the planning for the airport site and surrounding areas. Representatives from state and regional tourism organisations attend, and meetings are held quarterly both in person and online.

Accessibility Advisory Group: Hobart Airport convenes this group to conduct consultation concerning access and inclusion across the airport. Representatives from peak bodies attend bi-annual meetings to provide feedback and input into current operations and future developments and are compensated at an agreed rate for their participation.

Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group: Hobart Airport convenes this group to increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights and to build positive relationships with the communities in which the airport operates.

Environmental groups: Hobart Airport engages with a range of community and not-for-profit groups focussed on the environment and conservation activities. The Seven Mile Beach Landcare Group leads regular projects and provides input and feedback to the airport's environment team as required. Other groups are engaged and empowered to manage environmentally sensitive areas, such as native grasslands, and to contribute regularly to the Tasmanian Natural Values Atlas.



Peak bodies: Hobart Airport engages closely with industry peak bodies, providing resources and support to their members and sharing intelligence where required. These groups provide opportunities for businesses and industry representatives to provide input and guidance to the airport on issues relating to aviation access, operations and future infrastructure planning.

Community Social Responsibility Committee: This group engages with community and not-for-profit organisations and empowers them to pursue their own goals and objectives. Through sponsorships and funding, Hobart Airport enables communities to determine and implement their own solutions at the highest level of community impact.

Community engagement is both a driver and a reflection of the airport's reputation, awareness, and operational success. The findings of independent Community Sentiment Surveys show that where engagement is visible and relevant, sentiment and favourability are higher, and feedback is more constructive. Conversely, gaps in engagement or communication correlate with lower awareness and critique.

The impact of Hobart Airport's comprehensive, multifaceted engagement efforts as measured by a community favourability score indicate that sixty four percent of community members have a favourable perception of Hobart Airport, the second highest level of favourability in Tasmania<sup>1</sup>.

## Background and context for Hobart

The Hobart Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group (CACG) activities and focus have changed significantly over the past decade, reflective of the contextual changes and engagement activities of both the airport, government departments and agencies such as Airservices Australia.

In recent years, communities surrounding Hobart Airport have expressed significant frustration in the difficulty experienced when engaging with Airservices Australia about aircraft noise. Technical airspace design reviews for Hobart Airport runway commenced in 2017, and new flight paths for departures and arrivals commenced operation on 7 November 2019<sup>2</sup>. These flight path changes altered many communities' experiences of aircraft noise.

A series of community engagements, surveys, assessments, post implementation reviews, and noise abatement trials led by Airservices Australia fomented further community frustration resulting in a breakdown of trust. The process is ongoing, with engagement recently concluding in August 2025 on Option Assessment Outcomes for local communities to provide feedback<sup>3</sup>.

Improvement to Airservices Australia engagement practises is essential, and Hobart Airport has worked closely with our community groups to try and support better engagement. The complexity of airspace design, and long-running processes involved mean that many community members have sought support from Hobart Airport through participation on the CACG. While aircraft noise is one aspect of consideration for the CACG, during the intervening years since the commencement of the PIR, the focus of CACG discussions has increasingly been dominated by the impacts of aircraft noise. Indeed, the membership of the Hobart Airport CACG increased in number significantly, due to members attending in an effort to address the

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<sup>1</sup> EMRS Market Research | 2025FY Q4

<sup>2</sup> [Hobart Airspace Design Review](#) | [Engage Airservices \(airservicesaustralia.com\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Hobart Community and Industry Suggested Alternatives](#) | [Engage Airservices](#)



impacts of aircraft noise, due to an apparent perception that there was a lack of any other opportunity to engage with Airservices.

Establishing the independence of the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO) has been well received by communities around Hobart Airport. Given sufficient time, the independent ANO has the potential to afford greater scope for community members to engage and be informed about aircraft noise and its mitigation.

Given the improvements implemented by Airservices Australia to engage with communities, and the establishment of an independent ANO, community members now have full recourse to address aircraft noise issues with the accountable agencies. These contextual changes should provide clear space for CACGs to consider broader input and discussion about airport operations and their impacts.

While Hobart Airport supports the discussion of a range of airport operational impacts including aircraft noise as proposed under the draft guidelines, ongoing engagement with Airservices Australia must be highlighted as the appropriate channel for these discussions. Community members use the forum of CACG as an alternative complaints resolution platform, and an opportunity to address officers of Air Services in person. An unfortunate outcome of the Hobart Airport CACG becoming focussed on aircraft noise has been the loss of other members, who's interests are in other areas of airport operations.

## Response to draft Community Aviation Consultation Group Guidelines

### Purpose

Hobart Airport is committed to fostering broad and transparent participation in Community Aviation Consultation Groups (CACGs), recognising them as important forums for genuine community engagement and collaboration. We support the strengthening of CACGs to ensure diverse voices—including airport operators, neighbouring residents, local authorities, airport users, and other community representatives are heard and their contribution valued. Through these groups, we aim to facilitate the exchange of a broad range of information, encourage constructive discussion, and seek input on Master Plans and Major Development Plans (MDPs), as well as discussing issues that impact our community. Our ongoing focus is to create an environment where all stakeholders can understand and inform the planning, development and operations at Hobart Airport.

All CACG members are volunteering and as such a clear CACG purpose is critical to make effective use of member's time. The purpose of the CACG must balance the needs of all members and support open and genuine discussions across all aspects of airport operations, community impacts and opportunities. If the needs of a small group of members are crowding out the time allocated for CACG meetings, membership can decline and recruitment of new members to CACGs can be challenging.

It is important that CACG meetings are a safe and respectful space for all members. The guidelines and Terms of Reference are the mechanisms that set the tone and enable reinforcement of this basic principle.

In considering the purpose of the CACG it is important to recognise official and alternate channels for community and consumer input to airlines, the Australian Government departments and agencies involved in the operation of an airport. Larger, national organisations can be perceived as 'hard to reach' by local or regional communities, and an airport often plays the role of the facilitator or concierge to guide inquiries, complaints or information. The CACG can often be perceived as an opportunity for direct access to these large national organisations.



The CACG should serve as a forum to share experiences and insights, fostering a culture of learning and mutual understanding, rather than revisiting prior lines of questioning or debate. For matters raised in CACG meetings where more appropriate or direct channels for feedback/inquiries exist, these channels should be the first port of call and CACG members directed toward them. For matters previously raised through the appropriate channels such as Air Services Australia, CACG should not be used as members as an alternative dispute resolution forum or decision-making body.

It would be very helpful for the guidelines to set expectations by making clear what the CACG is, and as importantly, is not. Page 3 of the existing guidelines has two paragraphs that are valuable to clarifying the purpose of the CACG and we recommend that they should not be lost in the revision:

*CACGs are just one avenue through which matters can be raised and should not replace other forums and complaints handling mechanisms established by the airport operator or other authorities (such as the handling of aircraft noise complaints by Airservices Australia and the Department of Defence). The full suite of consultation mechanisms used by an airport should be commensurate with the relative size and operational complexity of that airport.*

*A CACG is neither an arbitration nor a decision-making body and discussion at CACG meetings should not be allowed to be dominated by a single topic or an individual member.*

We recommend that airport accessibility issues not be included in the CACG's formal purpose. These matters are best addressed through dedicated forums that offer specialist or peak body representation. At Hobart Airport, for example, accessibility engagement is undertaken through the Hobart Airport Access Advisory Group, which ensures feedback and consultation comes directly from those with lived experience or their representative organisations. This targeted approach results in more effective outcomes and would allow the CACG to remain focused on its broader community engagement mandate.

In addition to the topics proposed in the draft guidelines, opportunities for support of community groups, and jobs and training associated with airport and precinct operators should be considered for inclusion. As a major employer in their surrounding communities, airports through their CACGs can strengthen the connections between local jobs and local people.

## Structure

We support the appointment of an independent chair for the CACG with flexibility regarding their term, as well as the importance of succession planning and transitional skills exchange for the chair position. In light of this, it is essential to acknowledge that the Chair position is filled by a volunteer, so any expectations or obligations placed upon the Chair should be reasonable and not place excessive demands on their time or capacity.

We caution against too stringent requirement for deputy or acting chair appointments as an impost onto volunteers, in the experience of the Hobart Airport CACG, on the few occasions where the Chair was not available meeting dates have been changed well in advance to accommodate their needs.

Input from CACG members for agenda items while supported, requires the provision that no one issue is dedicated more time than other issues. Balancing the needs of CACG members, time and important engagement such as that on MDPs is required, and indeed the prioritisation of critical stakeholder engagement issues must inform what is incorporated into the CACG agenda.



While a 25% target for community nominated agenda items is supported, if set as a minimum standard as the draft guidelines suggest, this may lead to items being included that lack relevance for the CACG's purpose and not be an effective use of the member's time. As already noted, if the CACG lacks relevance for a broader membership, then attendance is likely to reduce as a result.

Inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders that represent the local communities surrounding the airport is an important aspect of the CACG. Rather than prescribing a specific list of members, it is recommended that membership of the CACG reflects representation from recognised groups or broader community interests. This approach helps to ensure that the CACG remains focused on collective perspectives and constructive community engagement.

Membership selection through an annual EOI process is recommended, this will also drive increased awareness in the community of the existence of a CACG and its purpose. A Terms of Reference to clarify the purpose of the CACG and the role and responsibility of members is important to support this. The link provided in the draft guidelines regarding Terms of Reference is useful, and individual CACGs have developed Terms of Reference documents tailored to their region. The draft guidelines mention development of a constitution, but as the CACG is a communication forum only, and not an incorporated association, or a legal entity in its own right, a Terms of Reference is appropriate as a core governance document.

An upper limit on the size of CACG must be considered and able to be applied by the airport with agreement from the Chair. While the CACG group is an important forum for community engagement, there are many other channels and opportunities for community engagement driven by Hobart Airport which may be more convenient and personally preferable for community members. Good engagement practices at Hobart Airport endeavour to provide a range of engagement opportunities to meet the needs of our diverse community. These channels can be social media polls, online surveys, face to face at community events, digital feedback kiosks in terminals or written correspondence.

The attendance at CACG meetings of government agencies and departments provide an opportunity to provide wholesome and informative update on any current or upcoming consultation, policy or legislative changes that have an impact on the CACG membership and/or airports. A proactive and informative approach by government and agencies in these forums would build community trust and further reinforce understanding of the various roles and responsibilities of these departments and agencies.

Open and transparent reporting on the activities of the CACG is supported and publication of meeting minutes, agendas, and membership on the airport or CACG website is appropriate. Availability of access via Teams or Zoom is already occurring and will continue to be a channel for access at all future Hobart Airport CACGs. An annual report could be optional, particularly if only three meetings are held per year and minutes and meeting details are published online.

Historically, the DITRDSCA hosted an annual meeting of CACG chairs as a forum to share insights. We believe that this annual meeting should be reinstated. At this event the CACG Chair and an airport representative should be able to provide feedback to the DITRDSCA regarding the effectiveness and purpose of CACGs. In these forums, the CACG Chairs and airports could also provide useful insights into unresolved issues that federal government departments and agencies may not be aware of and collaboratively identify solutions. This forum could also serve as a valuable development and networking opportunity for the volunteer Chairs, to learn from each other and work towards best practice and continual improvement.



Should you require any further information on this submission, please contact

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