
General Aviation Strategy 2024

General Aviation Advisory Network
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About the Authors

This document is a product of the General Aviation Advisory Network (GAAN), which serves to provide advice to the to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport Regional Development and Local Government on matters affecting the general aviation (GA) sector.

The GAAN also operates as a forum where industry representatives can identify opportunities to work collaboratively to respond to pressures, trends and issues facing the GA sector; and make a positive contribution to assist in the development of GA policy.

The GAAN is comprised of thirteen members and its Chair, who are appointed by the Minister for their skills, experience, expertise and representation of subsectors within the GA sector, reflecting its operational diversity; and to ensure the representation of regional areas.

Members are drawn from a broad cross-section of GA operations, including training, charter, maintenance, sport and recreation, rotorcraft and fixed wing aircraft, aerial application, remotely piloted aircraft systems and aeromedical operations.

Executive Summary and Synopsis

Consistent with its role and through its regular meetings, the GAAN has developed this strategic paper to assist government in its consideration of general aviation issues and opportunities, on behalf of the general aviation sector as a whole.

The GAAN's vision for general aviation in Australia is as follows:

A sustainable and critical sector of the Australian aviation industry, contributing to the national economy, job creation and the well-being of communities.

A sector strengthened by government policies and cooperative regulation underpinned by deep engagement with industry, that is fair, risk-based, responsive to cost and innovation and which promotes the value of the sector.

As it did in the original version of this strategy¹, members of the GAAN have looked to the sector's contribution to Australian economy and society and canvassed the sector's strengths, and opportunities for improvement, understanding the unique characteristics of Australian general aviation. In doing so, it faces the sector's weaknesses and threats, especially those related to GA's wide diversity, limited political influence, high sensitivity to market pressures, over-regulation and lack of incentives to investment.

The extensive economic, environmental and social benefits to the Australian economy have been listed with a view to further study and analysis. Nevertheless, it is clear from the listing provided that general aviation is an over-achiever in terms of national contribution, yet too-often ill-considered in policy formulation and related settings.

The strategic position of the general aviation sector as an enabler of many national benefits has been reconsidered in light of progress made since 2020, and six revised strategic initiatives have been derived.

These strategic initiatives are arranged in issues-solutions-actions themes to support practical consideration. They are as follows:

- 1. Training pathways to ensure the ongoing availability of skills and competencies** for the sector by dealing with student support programs, inconsistencies between government agencies, better outcomes for trainees and reduced cost and complexity for industry;
- 2. Airports and infrastructure facilities** to support general aviation flight and ground-based activities for all aspects of the sector;
- 3. Economic study of the sector's contribution** to identify its value to the economy, looking behind frontline participants to the users of, and demand for, GA services and to provide all levels of government and industry with better information for supportive policy implementation;

¹ General Aviation Advisory Network (GAAN): *A New Strategy for the Australian General Aviation Sector*, December 2020

4. **Continued development of CASA's GA Workplan and program of improvement** for a better, risk-based regulatory environment for general aviation, particularly in service delivery improvement, support for innovation, facilitating new entrants, and removing unnecessary requirements that act as obstacles to growth;
5. **Airspace for GA operations**, including a complete review of the Australian strategic airspace model, to address equitable airspace access and support new technologies, national security, safety and operational efficiency;
6. **Reposition the sector for opportunities presented by the global drive to sustainability and digital technologies**; support, extend and leverage Australia's aeronautical engineering, aircraft maintenance, manufacturing, design, research and development capabilities; fostering innovation and realising economic, environmental and social benefits.

GAAN has addressed each of these issues with practical initiatives that will reposition general aviation to take advantage of its opportunities and to make an even greater contribution to the Australian community and the national interest.

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1. Introduction

General aviation does not exist as an end in itself, but rather serves a variety of downstream purposes including rural and regional freight and transport, community safety, tourism, recreation, training and education; as well as executive and specialist mobility for primary and secondary industries, along with many others.

The national and local economies, job creation and communities - both rural and city - benefit from the facilitating and services roles played by general aviation.

To maintain the benefits of a safe and viable general aviation sector, a strategic plan is needed that establishes a long-term vision and identifies initiatives that can be taken to secure the sector's viability. The GAAN recognises that these necessarily extend to economic considerations, across the whole industry. There is also much to do to improve the effectiveness of safety regulations and the efficiency of the regulator and while they are not the only imperatives, they are critical to the sector's long-term success.

General aviation operations include:

- Low-capacity charter
- Private operations
- Business operations
- Sport and recreational operations
- Aerial Work operations, including aeromedical operations, emergency services, law enforcement, agriculture, firefighting and survey
- Remotely Piloted Aircraft operations
- Pilot and maintenance personnel training
- Maintenance, repair and overhaul activities
- Design and manufacturing of aircraft and aeronautical components.

The general aviation sector is often recognised by its flight operations; however, these are only one aspect of the sector's economic significance. The sector also drives demand for aircraft design, manufacturing, maintenance and overhaul, training and education, airports and infrastructure. All these components must be kept fit and capable to ensure the health of the sector as a whole.

This updated version follows the GAAN's first strategy publication in late 2020. Since that time, the GA landscape has changed markedly, particularly in the areas of regulation, skills and training, technology and sustainability and aeronautical design and manufacturing.

The GAAN's strategy that follows has been developed in conjunction with its contributions to the development of the Australian Government's Aviation White Paper.

A healthy, innovative and well-regulated general aviation (GA) sector is fundamental to the Australian national interest and a springboard to growth for the wider aviation industry through its contribution to skills, regional communities and dependent services.

2. The GAAN's Vision for Australian General Aviation

A sustainable and critical sector of the Australian aviation industry, contributing to the national economy, job creation and the well-being of communities.

A sector strengthened by government policies and cooperative regulation underpinned by deep engagement with industry, that is fair, risk-based, responsive to cost and innovation and which promotes the value of the sector.

3. General Aviation’s Contribution to Australia

Past efforts to estimate the value of the general aviation sector to the Australian economy have not considered that general aviation provides critical services to other sectors of the economy. Consequently, attempts to understand the GA sector and its economic potential have fallen short of validating the sector’s worth and perhaps more importantly, its future potential.

A detailed economic study of the general aviation sector, its potential and its constraints will be a key step in understanding the sector and so unlocking a pathway to more jobs, more exports and even better support of the industries and cities and communities that rely on general aviation.

The following table explores the value of general aviation to the wider economy:

General Aviation Activity	Other Economic Sectors and Industries Served and Supported	Economic Benefits	Environmental Benefits	Social Benefits
Low Capacity Services charter and scheduled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Mining² • Agriculture • Freight • Mail • Banking • Media • Oil platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business productivity and capacity • Rapid and timely transfer of personnel and materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced demand for roads and land clearing • Reduced environmental impact at tourist attractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting families and communities • Safer than surface transport, especially for remote and rural locations

² For example, Fly-In, Fly-Out (FIFO), and other specialist technical and management personnel transfer operations.

General Aviation Activity	Other Economic Sectors and Industries Served and Supported	Economic Benefits	Environmental Benefits	Social Benefits
Freight and Delivery Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Postal industry Road trunk and last mile delivery Medical Retail and eCommerce Mining Ports Emergency services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient freight package delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable infrastructure in remote locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community safety
Marine Pilot Transfers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shipping Ports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ship operational efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced demand for port works such as dredging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vessel, personnel and community safety
Target Towing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced workload for Defence personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced demand for ground based ranges and equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defence preparedness and training
Aerial Photography and Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Real estate Art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Productivity Real estate sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced road vehicle usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unique positioning, views, reach and art
Business and Corporate Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple industries with particular transport needs (e.g., mining, manufacturing, construction, finance, engineering, media, other industries) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment Business facilitation Productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced road vehicle usage Reduced demand for road and other land infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment Regional jobs Prosperity for regional towns and cities

General Aviation Activity	Other Economic Sectors and Industries Served and Supported	Economic Benefits	Environmental Benefits	Social Benefits
Airborne Law Enforcement, Surveillance, Search and Rescue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMSAR • Police • Emergency services • State and Federal law enforcement • Road safety accident investigation • National and industry asset protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower costs • More timely operations with mortality and trauma reduction • Industry asset protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced road vehicle and maritime vessel usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International treaty obligations • Community safety • National security
Aeromedical Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Emergency services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient health sector service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced road vehicle usage • Reduced demand for road and other land infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural, regional and remote Australians
Airborne Communications including pseudo satellite services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land, environment and infrastructure management • Rural and remote access to services • Emergency response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National resilience to disasters • Service delivery efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced demand for land infrastructure • Sustainability compared with fixed towers or satellite launches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community safety

General Aviation Activity	Other Economic Sectors and Industries Served and Supported	Economic Benefits	Environmental Benefits	Social Benefits
Aerial Application Firefighting Plague/insect control Agricultural Oil Spill Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency services including firefighting • Support of ground firefighters • Public health disease vector control • Agriculture including crops and pastures • Forestry • Grain storage sector • Exporters • Food processors • Grocery supply chain • Food and fibre consumers • Oil industry • Offshore industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial loss aversion – houses, towns, crops, parkland • Public health cost reduction • Productivity, multiple industries • Crop yield increase • Loss avoidance • Emergency response cost and efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior application of crop protection chemicals by highly trained, accountable and licensed personnel • Environmentally sensitive location protection • Environmental protection through land clearing reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public amenity • Industrial safety • Community safety
Aerial Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping • Information services • Mining • Land planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bushfire mitigation • Land management • Mining lease management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public amenity • Industrial safety • Community location services and safety

General Aviation Activity	Other Economic Sectors and Industries Served and Supported	Economic Benefits	Environmental Benefits	Social Benefits
Helicopter Aerial Work Aerial Mustering Spotting Dropping Animal Control Frost Protection, Powerline Stringing Powerline Cleaning Helicopter Sling Loads Rappelling Winching Hoist Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture – cattle, goats etc • Agriculture - Flood relief • Aquaculture • Food • Exporters • Fishing • National Parks • Crop protection • Emergency response • Community • Lifesaving • Energy supply and consumers • Emergency services and police • Construction • Telecommunications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity gains for multiple industries • Productivity • Agricultural crop yield • Grazing and fishing yields and operational cost reduction • Stock saved • Energy and communications network expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmentally sensitive location protection • Reduced usage of land vehicles and maritime vessels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public amenity • Industrial safety • Community safety • Powerline safety and continuity of supply
Training Pilots Aircraft maintainers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aviation and consequently all other sectors listed here • Agriculture • Communities and rural homes • Food consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational quality and productivity • Aircraft reliability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aviation industry viability, reducing road and other surface transport environmental demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety outcomes for industry and wider community

General Aviation Activity	Other Economic Sectors and Industries Served and Supported	Economic Benefits	Environmental Benefits	Social Benefits
Recreational and Sport Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National and international competitions Tourism and adventure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aviation workforce growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public environmental awareness, especially of remote locations Reduced impact of ground-based tourism transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social inclusion Physical and mental health outcomes Entertainment
Private and Business Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional and industrial sectors with particular transport needs (e.g., veterinary, medical, other technical) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business support and facilitation Productivity Individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public environmental awareness, especially of remote locations Reduced road vehicle usage and reduced demand for roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural and remote community interests Rural and remote access to services

Table 1: Economic benefits arising from General Aviation activity

4. Economic Characteristics of the Australian GA Sector

The general aviation (GA) sector in Australia has an unusual combination of characteristics, which arise from being highly specialised, widely diverse and heavily regulated. These are tabulated below:

Characteristic	Effect	Examples
Varying risk profiles among different operational types.	Safety exposures differ, even within the same sector.	<i>Civil Aviation Safety Regulations</i> apply differently to commercial and non-commercial flying.
Highly regulated.	High fixed costs, barriers to entry, constraints to flexibility.	Legislated requirements govern entire operational spectrum and supply chain.
Dependent on specialist markets.	Exposure to economic variation.	Agriculture, firefighting, recreational, tourism and scenic flying.
Community and local orientation.	Typically, small enterprises suited to local market needs.	Aeromedical, regional charter, flying clubs, firefighting.
Dependence on limited set of suppliers and providers.	High costs due limited competitive sourcing.	Airports, maintenance providers, air traffic services.
Workforce training requirements and skills shortages.	Cost and availability of staff.	Pilots, maintenance personnel and operational management.
Agility, flexibility and adaptability.	Intrinsically capable of adjusting to demand.	Unscheduled, on-demand services available in varied locations.
Undercapitalised small enterprises.	Inability to pursue innovation, business diversification and to adapt to changing conditions.	Average fleet age, high maintenance costs, susceptible to disruption.
Lack of government and community awareness.	Not prioritised, previously inadequately considered.	Aviation infrastructure management, particularly airport development that is not compatible with general aviation needs.

Table 2: Characteristics of the GA Sector

In combination, these characteristics correspond to threats and opportunities for the sector and highlight areas in which government can facilitate industry recovery, economic contribution and community value. The community is dependent on the fragile GA sector in many ways.

The sector's high level of specialist diversities limits its ability to develop unified strategies, when compared to the outcomes for other aviation industry sectors, such as the airline sector's achievements through the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

5. Strategic Goals

At the highest level, the GAAN’s strategic goals for the GA sector remain largely unchanged and may be summarised as follows:

Strategic Goals	Solutions
<p>Achieve and maintain world standard levels of safety commensurate with sector risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be regulated under a just and competitive legal framework that is clear and concise, administered transparently and efficiently, by a regulator committed to just culture, industry engagement, collaboration and administrative efficiency.
<p>Deliver increasing economic, environmental and social benefits to citizens of Australia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve the Australian community by supplying flexible, economically efficient and competitive aviation services for a wide range of purposes, including rural and regional freight and transport, aerial application, survey and remote sensing, community safety, medical transport and evacuation, tourism, recreation, training and education, executive and specialist mobility for many primary and secondary industries.
<p>Achieve and maintain sustainable economic growth within the general aviation sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver benefits to the nation at costs that are competitive with other forms of transport and utilities and comparable to those of other economies, where the costs to government are balanced by the national benefit delivered by the sector to the community and other industries. • Improve the sector’s carbon footprint by adopting technologies for fuel efficiency and alternative fuels, whilst safeguarding jobs and industry service outcomes.
<p>Build and develop resilience in the sector to ensure its future sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract domestic and foreign investment. • Increase the capacity of the Australian general aviation fleet and reduce fleet age averages. • Partner with governments to support Australian providers of services essential to community safety. • Increase the number of persons, beyond employment, able to benefit from a viable general aviation sector as participant and direct and indirect beneficiaries.

Strategic Goals	Solutions
<p>Be innovative and support innovation by others in technology, practices and operating models that support complementary strategic goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage new technology and deliver operational safety and capability enhancements to be a world leader, creating export opportunities for Australian products, people and expertise.
<p>Work closely and collegiately with government, community and sector stakeholders to foster shared and collaborative safety regulation to support complementary strategic goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate collaboratively between government and industry to graduated, risk-based levels of safety that places maximum emphasis on protections for persons on the ground and non-participant consumers of aviation services, particularly passengers, who are not well-informed of the attendant risks.

Table 3: Strategic goals and solutions for general aviation

Giving effect to these strategic goals requires:

- Strategic initiatives that can effect meaningful change from the current economic and regulatory situation
- Coordinated participation by both industry and government, in recognising the value of these strategic goals, and implementing initiatives and programs that support them.

6. Refocus: Updated Strategic Initiatives for the General Aviation Sector

In its previous strategy document³, the GAAN proposed eight strategic initiatives for the sector's success.

Since its publication, a range of developments have altered the environment in which the Australian general aviation sector operates. Among many others, these include:

- The preparation and actioning of the CASA GA Workplan⁴, which covers a series of measures targeted specifically at the GA sector to improve its efficiency by adjusting regulatory requirements to be more proportionate to risk and reducing red tape
- Implementation of a major suite of new regulations covering all commercial aviation operations, which consolidated hundreds of historic and outdated rules into six Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (CASR) Parts and five Manuals of Standards (MOS)
- The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in its effects on supply chains, aviation training and maintenance, and the economy generally
- Focus by the Australian Government on the industry through the *Future of Australia's Aviation Sector*⁵ issues paper (late 2020), the *Future of Aviation Reference Panel* (2021), the *Aviation Recovery Framework – Flying to Recovery*⁶ paper (2021), convening of the Aviation Roundtable within the *Jobs and Skills Summit 2022*⁷, and the development of the *Aviation White Paper* (2023)
- Increased focus on climate policy and sustainability, including emerging alternative aviation fuels and electric and hybrid-electric propulsion systems
- Continued technology developments in general aviation aircraft, including the formulation of the FAA MOSAIC rules⁸, sophisticated avionics capabilities including emergency autoland, small turbine powered aircraft; and uncrewed aircraft, including advanced air mobility, drone delivery services, and rapid uptake in the use of drones for business and recreational purposes
- Further loss of aerospace manufacturing capability following the decision of Mahindra Aerospace to cease manufacturing of the GippsAero Airvan
- Further reductions in capacity and capability due to supply chain issues and withdrawn local support, leading to long lead times and parts shortages, and loss of skills, which has negatively impacted aircraft maintenance and engineering activities
- Continued growth in sport and recreational aviation under the CASA Approved Self-Administering Aviation Organisations (ASAO) framework.

³ General Aviation Advisory Network (GAAN): *A New Strategy for the Australian General Aviation Sector*, December 2020.

⁴ Refer to section 6.2

⁵ *The Future of Australia's Aviation Sector Flying to Recovery Issues Paper 2020*, Australian Government, August 2020

⁶ *Aviation Recovery Framework Flying to Recovery*, Australian Government, December 2021

⁷ The GAAN was represented at the Aviation Roundtable by member Adrienne Fleming, OAM.

⁸ *Modernization of Special Airworthiness Certification A Proposed Rule by the Federal Aviation Administration* web page, retrieved from <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/07/24/2023-14425/modernization-of-special-airworthiness-certification>

In its remaining sections, this document is therefore focused on six strategic initiatives that take account of these changes and are consistent with the GAAN's strategic goals for the sector.

1. **Training pathways and workforce sustainability to ensure the ongoing availability of skills and competencies** for the sector by dealing with student support programs, inconsistencies between government agencies, better outcomes for trainees and reduced cost and complexity for industry.
2. **Airports and infrastructure facilities** to support general aviation flight and ground-based activities for all aspects of the sector.
3. **Economic study of the sector's contribution** to identify its value to the economy, looking behind frontline participants to the users of, and demand for, GA services and to provide all levels of government and industry with better information for supportive policy implementation.
4. **Continued development of CASA's GA Workplan and program of improvement** for a better, risk-based regulatory environment for general aviation, particularly in service delivery improvement, support for innovation, facilitating new entrants, and removing unnecessary requirements that act as obstacles to growth.
5. **Airspace for GA operations**, including a complete review of the Australian strategic airspace model, to address equitable airspace access and support new technologies, national security, safety and operational efficiency.
6. **Reposition the sector for opportunities presented by the global drive to sustainability and digital technologies**; support, extend and leverage Australia's aeronautical engineering, aircraft maintenance, manufacturing, design, and research and development capabilities; to foster innovation and realise economic, environmental and social benefits.

6.1 Training Pathways for Critical Skills

The GAAN's highest strategic priority is to address ineffective training pathways and workforce sustainability for skilled personnel, particularly for aircraft maintenance personnel and pilots.

6.1.1 GA Sector Trains the Industry

It should not be forgotten that general aviation's flying training services are critical to the availability of pilots for the airline sector. Even the nation's largest airline contracts the training of its cadet pilots to a general aviation organisation.

General aviation businesses are at the coal face when it comes to bringing new entrants to the industry. Failure to train and develop technically competent people in GA will have undesirable flow-on effects on airlines and other sectors, harming productivity and growth. Flight training is also a valuable export that benefits the Australian economy⁹.

6.1.2 Workforce Diversity

For too long, careers in aviation have been inaccessible to many women. The absence of half the population from participation in the aviation industry has left it with fewer candidates for skilled and professional employment and exacerbated personnel shortages. Increasing workforce diversity would alleviate these issues and support the sector's growth.

6.1.3 Training Accessibility

Access to suitable training pathways remains a continuing issue for general aviation, which is highly dependent on skilled personnel as pilots, maintainers, administrators and managers. Access to available student loans program, clarity and alignment of CASA and ASQA requirements and objectives have significant impacts on both pilot licensing and maintenance licensing regulations.

Whilst there have been encouraging developments recently (particularly CASA's modular licensing proposal) progress is not being made as quickly as the sector needs.

Among several undesirable outcomes, the industry is unable to source the skills it needs, whilst young people aspiring to an aircraft maintenance career are confronted by inconsistencies between course funding rules and CASA's requirements.

6.1.4 Solving the Aviation Skills Crisis

The following directions are recommended to drive and support a skilled and productive GA workforce:

- Implementation of the modular Part 66 licensing scheme, and modular training and licensing programs more broadly, and for pilots, to:
 - Remove impediments to entry, such as inflexible and siloed training pathways
 - Allow early income
 - Leverage modular concepts to support cross-sector approvals
 - Create resilience in the existing workforce and enable greater workforce mobility
 - Enable access to HELP funding.

⁹ It is estimated that approximately 4,000 international students undertake courses of about 18-months's duration at Australia's high quality flight training schools.

- Alignment of the objectives and requirements of ASQA and CASA in the Australian Skills Qualification Framework
- Funding and recognition for CASA-authorized technical training schools, particularly to be consistent with the Australian Government's Industry Skills Australia initiative
- Review of the prescribed competencies and requirements for general GA training and 'specialised' GA training, as well as those prescribed in Parts 61, 141 and 142
- Holistic review of CASR Parts 42, 66, 145 and the future 43 for opportunities to streamline LAME training and licensing and support efficient course completion
- Direct and positive encouragement of greater diversity in the aviation workforce, including via, but not limited to, programs for women in aviation, through Jobs and Skills Australia, and at schools, TAFE, universities and other educational institutions
- Policy and initiatives to attract more skilled people to the aviation workforce, particularly in regional Australia, through:
 - Support for scholarships and work placement programs
 - Continued reform of the skilled migration program, so that international skilled aviation workers are attracted to Australia, including pilots, aircraft maintenance personnel and professional aeronautical engineers
 - Encouraging technically skilled personnel to stay and make their careers in regional Australia, which might include direct incentives, scholarships, internships, and assistance to regional employers to find qualified technical staff.
- Incentives to promote access to and support for, aviation maintenance businesses and employment in regional areas, including offsets for business and scholarship grants.

6.2 Airport and Infrastructure Facilities

6.2.1 National Airports Safeguarding Framework

All airports should receive consistent and effective protection from the National Airports Safeguarding Framework (NASF), regardless of the state or local government area in which they are located. NASF protections do not just apply to aircraft noise management, but also to development planning controls by government at every level.

It should be government policy to strengthen NASF with measures that include pro-active inspections, assessments and interventions when the interests of airports clash with incompatible property development and other competing objectives.

6.2.2 Capital City Secondary Airports

Experience has shown that the Department's "light touch" approach to the management and governance of the leased secondary airport airports, in some cases, has led to refused renewals for GA airport tenants, steep increases in rent, inadequate facilities and shrinking areas of land on these airports for future aeronautical use, reducing the utility, and future growth of airport operations that are critical to the national interest.

Strengthening the existing framework, to achieve transparency in the airport master planning process, and to implement more rigorous controls, is urgently needed.

The GAAN recommends that airports policy be adjusted to:

- Closely scrutinise all leased secondary airport master and major development plans to ensure that the interests of the GA sector are adequately protected
- Ensure that aviation sub-tenancies are offered for periods equal to those applicable to non-aeronautical developments, so that general aviation businesses have security of tenure and can plan, finance and grow their operations for long term success
- Amend the *Airports Act 1996* to:
 - Separate the planning provisions applicable to secondary airports used by general aviation from the provisions that govern major capital city primary airports, with separate development planning approval thresholds and specific provisions to protect the GA sector
 - Establish robust and enforceable rules to ensure that transparency of all draft master and major development plans at leased airports used by general aviation, including accountabilities to keep them open to public scrutiny, so that the current version of such documents is visible at all times to all stakeholders, including the community generally and the GA sector
 - Create enforceable land use planning obligations on the operators of leased secondary airports to demonstrate conclusively that all proposed measures which:
 - Allocate land or buildings to any purpose
 - Change the allocation of land or building allocation or create, revise, or remove zones and their planned or intended purposes (however described)

- Change or initiate aeronautical zone boundaries (however described) and/or aeronautical facilities

are fully justified and demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Minister to be in the interests of general aviation and other users of the airport and surrounding community.

6.2.3 A Bold, New Approach to Regional Airports

Many regional airports face an uncertain future and precarious financial position. A bold and innovative approach to revitalize regional airports, based on a sustainable model, is needed to protect, maintain, and grow business and employment opportunities.

The GAAN considers that the Commonwealth's divestment of regional airports was a major policy mistake. In many cases, local government lacks the financial capacity to cover the recurrent costs of maintaining the airports, and the ability to grow and promote aviation industries at the airports. As a result, the Commonwealth has provided grants through the Regional Airports Program, Regional Aviation Access Program and the Building Better Regions Fund, which while helpful and well-intentioned, are ad-hoc and not tied to a central plan or industry strategy. A new approach is needed to support and expand regional airports and the GA and businesses that operate there.

Before any meaningful reform can be achieved, it should be accepted that smaller regional airports are critical national infrastructure, just like rail, roads and shipping ports. They are needed for air transport and GA activities, particularly aeromedical, emergency and agricultural services. Local government can, and should, be used to provide support services, but over time it has become clear that most lack the capital and expertise to operate airports, evidenced by the state of some facilities.

6.2.3.1 Direct Funding for Regional Airports

The best way to sustain these assets and provide high-quality facilities and consistent, ongoing compliance with regulatory standards is through direct, recurrent Australian Government funding. Funding for capital expenditure should be distinguished funds required for airport maintenance, to avoid the latter necessitating large capital injections to cover neglected facilities that have become unusable.

6.2.3.2 Aviation-Compatible Development at Regional Airports

Extensive existing services including power, water, drainage and roads, coupled with under-utilised land that sometimes surrounds regional airports, may provide the ingredients for business development opportunities.

Recurrent funding requirements could be alleviated by businesses prepared to commit capital and enter subsidised long-term leases.

It would be important to ensure that future commercial investments for surplus airport land were made in a way that would remain fully compatible with the ongoing use of the site as an airport, since allocation of airport land to non-aviation businesses could diminish the airport's viability.

Annual lease payments could be linked to performance indicators that require businesses to sustainably grow, employ and train staff and support regional communities. Emphasis on youth employment for apprentices and traineeships should be targeted. Annual auditing of performance indicators would provide the basis to reset or adjust lease payments. The related investments

should be used to support innovation, such as expanded electrification for recharging, to reposition for future growth opportunities.

6.2.4 Aviation Security Identification Card Program

The impact of the Aviation Security Identification Card scheme on general aviation should be reviewed. It ought not be difficult to separate the requirements for secure identification of a GA pilot from one employed in an airline, just as the Maritime Security Identification Card has two-, or four-year terms, depending on the sensitivity of the applicant's employment. Extension of the term of the current card to four years for GA pilots could include appropriate mitigations to maintain the security of airline operations, whilst reducing the cost and burden of the current arrangements.

6.3 GA Sector Economic Review

The true economic value of general aviation to the Australian economy is often underestimated. Whilst direct demand for GA services does not feature across all industries and most Australian consumers, the indirect impacts of aviation extend well beyond the sector, with benefits being reaching almost every member of the Australian public.

6.3.1 Rationale

Unless the economic benefits of the sector are understood, it cannot be expected that government policy will reflect the sector's national importance.

As detailed in Table 1, general aviation offers a solution to many economic, environmental and social problems that arise from geographic distance and isolation, as well as specialist solutions for many industries.

General aviation also brings social and environmental benefits. Bushfire mitigation, eco-friendly tourism, cultural environment protection, safer agricultural practices and better land and resources management are examples of environmental benefits that flow from the GA sector. Additionally, people who engage in aviation activities for sport, recreation or enjoyment gain direct social benefits from the sector's existence and create economic activity.

6.3.2 Appropriate Scope

It is essential that the economic study measure the whole Australian GA sector, not just within the narrow definition prescribed in ICAO Annex 6.

An equivalent study conducted in the United States¹⁰ defined general aviation as “...the manufacture and operation of any type of aircraft that has been issued an airworthiness certificate by the FAA, other than aircraft used for scheduled commercial air service or operated by the military. For this study, the general aviation industry is defined to include aircraft and component manufacturing, flight operations, maintenance and other activities.” A 2015 study conducted in the United Kingdom¹¹ adopted largely the same definition, noting that it included business aviation. These broad definitions also consistent with appointments to the membership of the GAAN, which are made by the Minister.

¹⁰ Price Waterhouse Coopers, LLP (prepared for multiple client organisations): *Contribution of General Aviation to the US Economy in 2018*, February 19, 2020. Retrieved from [https://gama.aero/wp-content/uploads/General Aviation s Contribution to the US Economy FINAL 20200219.pdf](https://gama.aero/wp-content/uploads/General%20Aviation%20s%20Contribution%20to%20the%20US%20Economy%20FINAL%2020200219.pdf)

¹¹ York Aviation LLP (prepared for the UK Department of Transport): *The Economic Value of General Aviation in the UK*, Final Report, February 2015. Retrieved from [https://gama.aero/wp-content/uploads/Economic Impact of General Aviation in the UK-1.pdf](https://gama.aero/wp-content/uploads/Economic%20Impact%20of%20General%20Aviation%20in%20the%20UK-1.pdf)

6.3.3 Informing Better Decisions

A detailed economic study of the sector will support and inform better decision-making by government in many aspects of the sector's interaction with the community and government.

Specifically, government should fund and support continuation of BITRE's work, with appropriate external support, if necessary, to:

- Identify and quantify those areas of the economy that are heavily dependent on GA, for which estimate of jobs and industry value should be key outputs
- Identify and quantify additional benefits arising from general aviation, including a breakdown to identify and quantify its positive value, particularly to regional communities and its links to education, healthcare and other business activity
- Identify different labour market roles in GA and produce a breakdown of employment demographics, for example, by city, regional and rural, states and territories; and the type of people and qualification levels in those jobs; for example, university graduates, technical college qualification holders, school leavers and related analysis
- Develop scenarios and sensitivity analysis modelling to understand outcomes
- Develop and deliver modelling and assessment tools for use by Commonwealth, state and local governments. This information would directly assist planners and policy makers assess the impacts of policy on aviation. It would include data such as export income, taxation, depreciation, land-use, access, opportunity costs, regulatory service charges and fuel excise for a better understanding of the national, regional and local value of a viable general aviation sector and to promote awareness of GA's vital services, and the broader benefits it brings to the Australian people.

BITRE should be encouraged to engage deeply with GA industry associations to ensure the comprehensive scope of economic, social and environmental benefits associated with GA are captured.

6.3.4 Models for Analysis

A proven model¹⁰ for analysing the associated economic impact, structured around four categories, is as follows:

6.3.4.1 Direct Impact

Direct impact is economic activity within the general aviation sector. In economic terms, direct economic impact arises from all GA flight operations, maintenance, aircraft and component manufacturing and other activities.

6.3.4.2 Indirect Impact

Indirect impact is economic activity occurring throughout the supply chain associated with general aviation. The initial round of output, income and employment generated by general aviation leads to successive rounds of re-spending throughout its supply chain. The "multiplier" impact of general aviation activity may be measured using input-output models.

6.3.4.3 Induced Impact

Induced impact is economic activity resulting from household spending of wages, salary and proprietors' income earned directly or indirectly from general aviation-related activities.

People employed in services ranging from the operation and maintenance of aircraft, airports, air traffic control, ground handling and other services generate induced impacts. It is estimated that some 90,000 jobs² exist in the sector.

6.3.4.4 Enabled Impact

Many industries choose to use aviation as an input to production because doing so brings valuable commercial advantages. Some industries would not exist in Australia in the absence of a healthy aviation sector.

By way of example, South Australia's seafood export sector relies on the timely delivery of freshly caught produce to overseas markets. Traditional surface transport methods would result in delays and as such, aviation is a critical component to their success.

Similarly, other industries could use surface transport to achieve similar outcomes, although the ability to send goods and services in a timeframe sensitive to the needs of the recipient would render some of these industries unviable. At best these local industries would face significant additional hurdles to overcome compared to their international counterparts whose geographic location offers a natural competitive advantage. More locally, the transport of goods and people to enable industries such as firefighting and medicine clearly delivers benefits in terms of the avoidance or minimisation of catastrophic loss and a reduction in injury and loss of life.

When the broader economy and other sectors such as tourism, business travel, transport of goods and others are considered, it becomes clear that GA enables much more in terms of benefits to the Australian taxpayer. Earlier estimates of \$20b² arising from the aviation industry may fall short of the true figure¹² when enabled impact is taken into account.

Enabled impact also results from destination expenditures associated with GA flights for business and personal transport.

¹² The agricultural sector's gross value of output was \$60b (Australian Bureau of Statistics item 75030DO001_201819 *Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, 2018-19*). GA's role in the application of fertiliser, pesticides, mustering, asset inspections and many other services is widespread in this sector. If the agriculture sector's use of GA accounted for only a 1% productivity boost to agriculture in Australia, in just this one sector alone, GA would have generated \$600m in national economic benefits.

6.4 Building on CASA's GA Workplan and Program of Improvement

In its 2020 strategy, the GAAN highlighted the need to address the sector's standing and relationship with the regulator. Members pointed to a range of factors that inhibited the regulator's effectiveness in improving safety for the sector and called for a more collaborative, focused approach to CASA's relationship with the industry.

Since that time, the Regulatory Reform Program has been largely completed and the new regulatory suite embedded in aviation law and practice across all parts of the GA sector.

6.4.1 Moving Beyond the Regulatory Reform Program

Recent implementation of CASA's regulatory operational suite has been challenging, and both the sector and CASA have had to adjust to the new regulations. GA operators have been required to update large volumes of documentation, apply for new approvals, and adapt to changed processes; whilst CASA has reorganised its functions for better efficiency and taken positive steps to work with the sector going forward.

The new regulations are not perfect, and several transitional and readiness issues remain unresolved from the implementation. However, communications with CASA senior management have been vastly improved, and the regulator's stance has become considerably more positive than the environment that prevailed three years ago.

Accordingly, the GAAN's priorities for the regulator have shifted from those that it sought in 2020.

6.4.2 CASA's GA Workplan

CASA has established a General Aviation Workplan, which states:

"...how and when CASA will optimise the regulatory framework for the general aviation sector. This will provide advice to stakeholders when regulatory changes impacting general aviation will likely occur among the range of other priority safety initiatives for government and industry.

Ensuring regulation is proportionate to risk and responsive to implementation challenges identified by industry helps to maximise flexibility for the sector and support commercial sustainability, while maintaining an appropriate level of safety.

CASA also recognises that safety regulations, including the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (CASR), need to be compatible with the role of general aviation in the broader industry. This is particularly relevant with regard to the challenges faced in regional and remote Australia as well as the sport and recreational sector."¹³

With these principles accepted and in light of visible progress, the GA sector looks to the regulator to continue and extend its program of improvement, and to redouble its efforts for administrative efficiency.

As part of a highly regulated industry, aviation businesses and individual must engage with the regulator for a range of approvals, licences and other regulatory services. To support safety and the sector's growth potential, it is essential that these are delivered to the highest standards of quality and timeliness.

¹³ *General Aviation Workplan* (web page), retrieved from [https://www.casa.gov.au/resources-and-education/publications-and-resources/corporate-publications/general-aviation-workplan - Overviewoftheworkplan](https://www.casa.gov.au/resources-and-education/publications-and-resources/corporate-publications/general-aviation-workplan-Overviewoftheworkplan) September 2023.

The GAAN believes it is essential that CASA continue to review and evolve the applicable regulatory framework in a collaborative manner; that industry be engaged as early as possible in this process to help identify priorities, and align on policy direction for GA regulatory reform.

6.4.3 Benefits of Appropriate Self-Administration

The GAAN notes that CASA continues to provide flexible and simpler pathways for operations conducted under the auspices of self-administering bodies¹⁴.

Where appropriate, opportunities to adopt similar processes in operations that do not justify airline-standard rules and procedures should continue to be explored, for example, in private pilot medical certification.

6.4.4 Improving Safety

Aviation safety is not only good for consumers, the public and government, but that it is also fundamentally good for general aviation businesses. In any industry, nothing destroys customer confidence faster than unsafe outcomes.

Safe outcomes in the general aviation sector are only possible from a financially viable and successful industry. Lack of business success detracts from industry's ability to invest in safety: it constrains the ability of operators to buy new aircraft and establish suitable facilities; and to invest in internal training and standards that surpass the regulatory minima.

CASA recognises that these structures and culture need not mirror those appropriate to large aircraft air transport regulation and policy.

CASA cost recovery from industry must therefore be linked to services which are:

- Specifically identified as necessary for safe outcomes
- Accountable, in a commercial sense, to clients
- Delivered efficiently, transparently, consistently and on-time
- Supported by effective issue resolution processes that operate in a timely manner.

6.4.5 Positive Directions

On behalf of the GA sector, the GAAN looks to CASA to continue and extend its program of improvement, particularly in its relationship with the aviation industry, and to redouble its efforts for administrative and service efficiency.

In specific terms, directions should be set for the industry regulator to:

- Continue CASA's successful GA Workplan initiative, seeking to reduce red tape wherever possible and minimise delays in decisions and approvals that have an impact on GA operations, investment and expansion decisions
- Ensure CASA is adequately resourced, both in management and technical expertise, to continue its programs of improvement, to support new and emerging technologies, and to ensure GA's access to timely regulatory services, delivered to high standards of performance

¹⁴ *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998; Civil Aviation Legislation Amendment (Part 149) Regulations 2018; and Part 149 Manual of Standards.*

- Work with industry to identify and complete repairs and reforms required to key elements of GA regulations, including Part 61 provisions for specialised requirements and flight examiners; Part 135 and non-scheduled Part 121 business aviation approvals, exemptions and limits; Parts 137 and 138; and administrative requirements required by Parts 141 and 142 that are not justified by safety considerations
- Utilise industry expertise to continue to develop cooperative approaches, where CASA cooperatively:
 - Engages industry as early as possible in the regulatory change process
 - Identifies and works closely with industry safety partners (e.g. sector industry associations)
 - Identifies and gathers sound data for improved safety
 - Identifies key risks and safety issues in each relevant sector
 - Identifies risk controls and safety initiatives
 - Develops safety performance indicators to monitor ongoing safety trends
- Work to ensure that information provided to general aviation operators is consistent across all communications and service delivery channels, regardless of geography, or the organisational division of CASA providing the information
- Continue programs for service improvement and quality management across all aspects of CASA's interactions with general aviation.

6.5 Airspace for General Aviation Operations

General aviation access to airspace is critical to its operations.

The GAAN believes that a complete review of the Australian strategic airspace model is necessary, with consideration for existing and emerging airspace user needs.

6.5.1 Airspace Industry Advisory Board

A national body (an enduring Airspace Industry Advisory Board) should be established to advise government, in the national interest, in relation to airspace management, consistent with the Minister's airspace policy statement. Doing so would:

- Maintain a national vision and plan in line with updates to the Minister's Policy Statements, changing stakeholder needs, and emergence of new opportunities for innovation
- Ensure valid and properly representative strategic airspace user input in relation to airspace change proposals.

There is currently no single user group to provide advice on airspace changes. The present arrangement only engages airspace users locally. For example, there is no effective national user consultation in relation to instrument approaches, which are a critical resource that has been affected by significant regulatory change in recent years.

Current airspace change discussions are limited to specific changes and not assessed against a national strategic plan for the evolution of airspace and air traffic management accounting for the changing needs of all airspace users.

Australia lacks a National Air Navigation Program or Plan that would complement our State Safety Program.

A national airspace plan, consistent with this objective, and the ICAO Global Air Traffic Management Operational Concept and Australia's State Safety Program, should be prepared by the new advisory body with appropriate industry engagement.

6.5.2 Airspace Decisions

Currently, airspace decisions are not made in accordance with any strategic vision, transparency of user needs, or input. The CASA Office of Airspace Regulation (OAR) regulates, and Airservices Australia implements. Often, these are not done in a coordinated way; industry is only consulted on specific changes, and too often, by the time it is, the proposal is a foregone conclusion.

The current arrangements present a significant risk, which will only worsen and compound as the number of new airspace users with diverse operational needs increases, including drones, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) aircraft.

Significant changes can be seen on the international horizon, with development in other countries of future strategic airspace operational concepts, encompassing all elements of airspace classifications, rules, air traffic management and more, to ensure safety, capacity, equity of access and operational efficiency, considering continued air traffic growth and complexity.

Whilst past attempts, driven by the aviation industry, have been beneficial in some matters, the future Airspace Industry Advisory Board must be given the authority required for the task, including direct interaction with the Aviation Policy Group and Aviation Implementation Group.

Airspace reform would provide a stimulus to the GA sector, bringing job creation, fleet renewal, improved maintenance facilities and a more supportive environment for flight training.

6.6 Reposition for New Technologies, Design and Manufacturing

Aviation is a global industry. International markets require Australian manufacturing standards to be harmonised with their requirements to facilitate access, compliance and successful exports.

Australia has an opportunity to become a significant manufacturer of specialised aviation products and associated emerging technologies, but a national aviation manufacturing policy to encourage the development of this area of the industry has not emerged. In particular, Australia has a poor track record in maintaining its aircraft certification and manufacturing capabilities.

6.6.1 Environmental Sustainability

General aviation's role in greenhouse gas emission reduction is complex, but progress is being made towards new technologies more quickly than is generally understood. Market and technological realities must be addressed in detail if environmental sustainability benefits are to be realised. These include timeframes for aeronautical certification, feasibility of repowering existing GA aircraft, flight time limitations of electric aircraft and forecast timeframes for their extension. As well, the shift towards turbine aircraft power in larger GA aircraft brings environmental benefits, as these types begin to utilise Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) in future. The opportunity for the government to support extended operational trials of electric aircraft in compatible applications, for example, flight training in the vicinity of aerodromes, should be explored.

6.6.2 Targeting Increased Industry Capabilities

The GAAN believes that the Australian Government should establish programs to reposition the Australian aviation industry's aeronautical engineering, design and manufacturing capabilities, and overcome or remove regulatory, trade and workforce impediments. Australia has an opportunity to become a significant manufacturer of specialised aviation and related products associated with emerging technologies, but a national aviation manufacturing policy to encourage the development of this area of the industry has not emerged.

In particular, Australia has a poor track record in maintaining its aircraft certification and manufacturing capabilities. In the past, general aviation aircraft and component manufacturing has faced excessive cost and time delays caused by regulatory inflexibility.

The GAAN notes with satisfaction work by CASA, with the FAA, for the certification of an Australian designed large RPAS and AAM aircraft. Additionally, CASA has developed the *RPAS-AAM Roadmap*¹⁵, which aims to provide clarity about Australia's future approach to aviation safety regulation and safety oversight for RPAS and AAM. These encouraging signs advance opportunities for a renaissance in aeronautical design and aviation manufacturing opportunities. The GAAN encourages CASA to revise the roadmap regularly, to ensure it remains current with this rapidly evolving space. It should be expected that fleet modernisation will require consequent changes to maintenance personnel skills and training programs.

The following policy areas deserve detailed review and revision:

- The regulatory burden faced by industry in the export, and overseas recognition, of Australian designed, manufactured and certified aeronautical products

¹⁵ Civil Aviation Safety Authority, *The RPAS and AAM Strategic Regulatory Roadmap*, 2 June 2022, ISBN 978-1-921475-98-6, retrieved from <https://www.casa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-06/the-rpas-and-aam-roadmap.pdf>.

- More balanced bilateral arrangements to ensure efficient and timely entry of Australian certified aircraft and aviation products in international markets
- Resources available to government agencies to meet new industry demands and establish the policy, regulatory and infrastructure constructs needed for safe sector growth, particularly for the rapidly growing markets of RPAS, AAM and electrically-powered aircraft
- Prioritisation of national research and development programs for innovations that have the potential to:
 - Deliver safety, efficiency, economic or sustainability benefits across multiple aviation sectors
 - Create new, or enhance existing, commercial, civil or defence applications for GA
 - Create new manufacturing and export opportunities for Australian based industry.

A 2020 economic study¹⁶ by the Department of Infrastructure on drones and air mobility, in its medium uptake scenario, found opportunities equating to \$14.5b impact over the next 20 years, with the employment of an additional 5,500 people in Australia.

6.6.3 FAA Modernisation of Special Airworthiness Certificates

Additionally, the consensus standards to be adopted by the FAA MOSAIC program¹⁷ offer new opportunities for Australian innovation and should be carefully examined by the regulator in close cooperation with industry.

6.6.4 SouthPAN, the Australia-New Zealand SBAS

The Geoscience Australia SouthPAN¹⁸ implementation project will deliver a Space Based Augmentation System (SBAS) for Australia and New Zealand. This is a key strategic element in improving GA safety, operational efficiency, and in supporting regional and remote communities.

SouthPAN will bring the safety benefit of vertical guidance during instrument approach operations to many aircraft operators, particularly those in GA that provide essential aeromedical, freight, business and charter services in regional Australia.

This whole-of-society project will bring national benefits to many industries, and especially to agriculture, construction, resources, tourism and utilities; and for the aviation, maritime, rail and road transport industries.

The support of Australian Government aviation agencies for the SouthPAN project, particularly Airservices Australia and CASA, should be a high, national priority.

¹⁶ *Economic Benefit Analysis of Drones in Australia*, Deloitte Access Economics, October 2020
<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/drones/files/economic-benefit-analysis-of-drones-to-australia-final-report.pdf>

¹⁷ A copy of the proposed rule is available at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/07/24/2023-14425/modernization-of-special-airworthiness-certification>

¹⁸ Information about SouthPAN is provided at: <https://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/positioning-navigation/positioning-australia/about-the-program/southpan>

7. GA: A Critical National Asset

At the highest level, the GAAN intends its strategy to:

- Promote policies and settings that support a strong, sustainable and effective GA sector for all Australians
- Work together on a program to uplift the sector's image and make it an employer of choice for young people.

A safe, strong and sustainable general aviation sector can create opportunities for employment in other industries and bring prosperity and other benefits to the whole nation. This has been evident during the resources boom, during which GA provided links to critical remote worksites and facilities, enabling the rapid movement of management and technical personnel and goods delivery. There are many other examples, and more can follow from a viable, healthy GA sector.

The general aviation sector's strength lies in its flexibility, enabling it to be responsive to community needs and to scale to match demand. General aviation services can grow and be adjusted to serve the nation across a broad spectrum of activity, spanning emergency medical response to sport and recreation.

Unconstrained by requirements for fixed schedules, general aviation operators get sick people to hospital, extinguish bushfires, deliver freight, and educate technical personnel for the entire industry, every day¹⁹.

All of Australia will gain from policy decisions that enable the GA sector to continue to deliver, and build upon its services to the community, with increasing safety, efficiency and environmental and economic sustainability.

¹⁹ Refer to section 3. Other critical services enabled by general aviation include organ transfers, delivery of medical supplies, inspection and protection of powerlines and phone towers in bushfires, support for law enforcement operations including national rapid deployment in emergencies, protecting World Heritage areas from insect and weed infestation, control of feral animals in both agricultural and National Park areas, monitoring of endangered species and habitats, hospital transfers, building infrastructure where access is difficult, urgent parts and engineering staff transfers for airlines, safe movement of ships with marine pilot transfers, aerial survey, border security and surveillance, mail, freight and passenger services to remote communities and stations, scanning firegrounds, aerial filming, photography, survey and mapping, overnight and express freight, prisoner transfers, aerial application, support for military training including parachuting, rapid export of time-sensitive freight such as tuna and lobsters, aerial mustering, search and rescue, scientific research flights, scenic tourism, flight training, sport and recreational aviation, and more.