



Community Aviation Consultation Groups (CACGs) MEMBER INDUCTION PACKAGE

Overview of CACGs – What, why and your role

Background

- Major Australian airports, operated by the Commonwealth through the then-Federal Airports Corporation, were privatised through long-term leases (50 years plus 49-year option) between 1997 and 2003. There are 21 such airports across Australia.
- Leases are administered by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (Infrastructure); the *Airports Act 1996* regulates ownership, planning and operation of these airports.
- Since 2009, 19 of these airports have established and maintained a CACG. In 2011, Infrastructure published guidelines to assist with consideration of matters such as meeting frequency, membership and chairing arrangements.
- CACGs are an important part of the airports' broader stakeholder engagement activities.

Why CACGs?

- Airports and air travel are integral to the Australian economy and way of life. It is important that sensible development – both aeronautical and non-aeronautical – of our airports is supported.
- Many of the leased federal airports are located quite centrally to their communities, including residential areas. As such, the *Airports Act 1996* (the Act) requires airport operators to demonstrate, in their master plans, how the land use plan for the airport site is consistent with “*planning schemes in force under a law of the State in which the airport is located*” and to provide justification for any inconsistency.
- A CACG is a regular meeting of airport stakeholders (e.g. the airport operator, government agencies of various levels, community representatives, aviation and business representatives, etc.). It allows the flow of information from the airport operator and its tenants to the community and vice versa and, as such, affords the community an opportunity to make comments and suggestions regarding the operation and development of its airport.

- The establishment and maintenance of CACGs recognises the importance of informing and involving the community throughout the course of each development, so that any impact on the community is identified and the views of the community can be taken into consideration.
 - CACGs, while not decision-making bodies, are an important link between the airport operator, airport users and the community. The way in which each CACG, its chair and its members facilitate the two-way flow of information will directly affect the community's perception of each development. CACGs are permitted, and even encouraged, to write submissions to their airports during public consultation on master plans and major development plans.
 - CACGs are not intended to be the only stakeholder engagement mechanism for an airport operator. Rather, airport operators are encouraged to use a range of mechanisms including technical noise working groups, planning coordination forums (PCFs), websites, media and social media, etc. as appropriate.
 - Importantly, CACGs are not intended as mechanisms for airing individual grievances with a particular airport and the discussion at a meeting should not be dominated by a single topic or individual member.
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Your Role

- Your role as a CACG member is vital in involving and engaging the community in discussion regarding the planning and development of our airports and surrounding areas. In this capacity, you are encouraged to engage with residents, businesses and the broader community (as appropriate, taking into consideration your specific representation role within your CACG) on issues such as aircraft and ground-based noise, disability access, the environment, ground transport and future developments. Options for engagement might include face-to-face meetings, newsletters, email distribution lists, a CACG website, local newspapers, etc.
 - In doing so, the community will be presented with information given by the airport operator and other stakeholders about specific developments. CACG members then relay community feedback to the airport operator via CACG meetings.
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Master Plans and Major Development Plans

- **Airport Master Plans:** A master plan is a requirement under the Act for 19 of the leased federal airports (not Mount Isa or Tennant Creek) and presents the airport's 20-year strategic vision for the airport site and business, with a particular focus on the first five years. This vision generally includes development of air services and the upgrades and extensions necessary to facilitate this, as well as precinct planning for the airport site. The master plan also considers matters such as ground transport planning and incorporates a 5-year environmental management strategy. Currently, master plans must be revised every five years and the review process includes a 60 business day public consultation period.
 - **Major Development Plans:** A major development plan (MDP) is required by the Act for any proposed project which meets one or more of the triggers set out in the Act. An MDP must be consistent with the airport's current master plan and must demonstrate how matters such as impact on the community or the environment and increased vehicle traffic will be addressed. Like a master plan, an MDP is subject to a 60 business day public consultation period.
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Aviation Industry & Roles of Government Agencies

- Australia's civil aviation industry comprises a number of participant groups including individual general and sport aviation participants, charter operators utilising both propeller and jet aircraft, and regular public transport operators (airlines). Helicopters are commonplace in a variety of roles including scenic joyflights, helifarming, firefighting and offshore oil and gas. In addition, Australia has a reputation for world-class flight training schools and relies heavily on aeromedical and other critical aviation operations catering for remote communities.
- The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) is the industry's safety regulator. CASA oversees all Australian-based aircraft, aircraft maintenance and airport operators as well as matters such as pilot licensing and airspace design. CASA also maintains a watching brief over foreign airlines operating in Australian airspace. Visit www.casa.gov.au for more information on CASA's role.
- Airservices Australia (Airservices) is the air traffic services provider for Australia, encompassing both air traffic control and aviation rescue and firefighting services. Airservices' area of responsibility for air traffic control covers 11% of the world's airspace. Visit www.airservicesaustralia.com for more details. Airservices has prepared a range of fact sheets covering various aspects of airport and aircraft operations; these are available at www.airservicesaustralia.com/aircraftnoise/factsheets/.
- The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) is responsible for transport incident investigations in aviation as well as in maritime and rail. The ATSB is independent of all other government agencies with responsibilities for aviation regulation and policy. More information is available at www.atsb.gov.au.
- The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (Infrastructure) is the agency charged with overall policy responsibility for aviation in Australia, including liaison with CASA and Airservices. Other roles include international air services agreements and foreign carrier approvals, oversight of leased federal airports, and coordinating efforts in regards to aircraft noise, airport safeguarding and disability access facilitation. Go to www.infrastructure.gov.au/aviation to learn about the Australian Government's aviation policy and the Department's current priorities.
- The Department of Defence (Defence), most notably the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), is another key participant in Australian aviation. The RAAF operates from 15 air bases around Australia, including two leased federal airports (Darwin and Townsville). Defence is also involved in aviation policy development and provides air traffic services to civilian aircraft operating at RAAF Bases. Visit www.defence.gov.au and airforce.gov.au for more information.
- The Aircraft Noise Ombudsman is charged with investigating noise complaints from the public which cannot be, or have not been, resolved by Airservices and Defence. Likewise, the Airline Customer Advocate was established to help resolve complaints about airline services. Visit www.ano.gov.au and www.airlinecustomeradvocate.com.au for more details.
- The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), an agency of the United Nations, promotes the advancement of global aviation safety initiatives and facilitates the adoption of standards and recommended practices for air navigation, aviation security, border-crossing, etc. ICAO also establishes protocols for air accident investigations. ICAO is governed by a 36-member Council, of which Australia is a member. Visit icao.int to learn more about ICAO's role in global aviation.

Current 'Hot Topics'

- **Aviation Noise:** Aircraft noise and 'ground-based noise' (noise from ground-based operations within an airport precinct, and from aircraft ground-running) are among the most commonly discussed topics at most CACGs. Airservices (through its Noise Complaints and Information Service) and Defence have primary responsibility for investigating and resolving aircraft noise (but not ground-based noise). Changes to flight paths including approach and departure procedures are complicated and cannot be achieved in all cases to alleviate noise.
 - **Airport Safeguarding:** The National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group (NASAG) comprises federal and state government representatives and is considering planning responses to common aviation issues in the vicinity of airports. The National Airports Safeguarding Framework (NASF), developed by NASAG, addresses seven of these issues: noise; building-generated windshear and turbulence; wildlife strikes; wind turbine farms; pilot distraction by extraneous lighting; intrusions into protected airspace; and the protection of aircraft navigational infrastructure. More information about NASAG is at www.infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/environmental.
 - **Land Use Planning:** The concept of CACGs stems from the idea that federal airports should not exist as 'islands', completely separate from the planning schemes of their local councils. Amendments to the Act in 2010 required that airport master plans and major development plans demonstrate how the land use planning for the airport in question is consistent with planning practises in the airport's immediate surrounds. More detailed information can be found at www.infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/airport/planning.
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2015 Review of Airport Consultative Arrangements

- In 2011, the Productivity Commission recommended an independent review of leased federal airport consultative arrangements be carried out in 2015.
 - Infrastructure engaged an independent specialist consultant to conduct this review. The consultant's research included attendance at a number of CACG and PCF meetings (13 in total), interviews with CACG and PCF chairs and Departmental representatives (49 in total), and an online survey which generated 321 responses.
 - The majority of airport operators indicated they would continue their CACG even if the Commonwealth no longer expected airport operators to maintain their CACGs.
 - The results of the survey and interviews showed a general feeling across all stakeholder groups that CACGs: achieve their purpose; facilitate effective dialogue between an airport and its community; are chaired effectively; and are adequately supported by airport operators.
 - The report recognised that one size does not fit all in relation to airport consultative arrangements and made recommendations that encouraged flexibility in airports' approaches to community consultation.
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Attachments

- A. CACG Guidelines
- B. List of common acronyms
- C. XXX Airport CACG: Important information
- D. XXX Airport CACG: Terms of Reference
- E. XXX Airport CACG: Most recent meeting summary