

## Aviation White Paper puts passengers first

Australia's airports say measures to make the nation's aviation industry more accessible, sustainable and fair will deliver long term benefits to people and communities across the country.

The Australian Airports Association welcomes the release of the federal government's Aviation White Paper as a once-in-a-decade opportunity to create a world-class aviation system in Australia.

Enhanced international and domestic airline competition coupled with improved consumer protections will ensure more people can access affordable and reliable travel, while also providing business with more opportunities to export quality Australian products.

Rex Airlines recently entered voluntary administration, months after the collapse of Bonza; both clear examples of how critical it is to remove barriers for new competitors in Australia's domestic aviation market.

The establishment of an independent Aviation Industry Ombuds Scheme will be reassuring for passengers who have been left frustrated by airline performance and the uncertainty around refund rights. The aviation sector is complex and any guidelines for delays and cancellations need to be sensible and realistic.

Airports proudly deliver high levels of service to passengers across the country, with recent surveys and the ACCC's latest monitoring report showing good satisfaction ratings from travellers.

Improved clarity around delivery of accessible airport facilities and services will help provide a more consistent experience for passengers, while prioritising environmental sustainability measures and aircraft noise will focus industry efforts on achieving positive outcomes on the ground and in the air.

At the same time, the White Paper provides a unique opportunity to modernise the Airports Act to create better outcomes for passengers through timely investment in airport infrastructure and capacity.

"The travelling public must be at the forefront of decision making, and the past 12 months have highlighted the critical role Australia's airports play in facilitating aviation competition," Australian Airports Association Head of Policy and Advocacy Natalie Heazlewood said.

"We welcome continued support for regional and remote airports, vital for connecting these communities to key transport infrastructure and dealing with mounting debts after Rex's collapse.

"Airports remain dedicated to fostering a fair and competitive aviation environment and the current regulatory regime sustains a robust and equitable framework for all parties.

"We'll participate constructively in a review of the pricing model by the Productivity Commission and look forward to demonstrating how the current principles continue to work for airports, airlines and, most importantly, passengers.

"Many of Australia's airports support the superannuation funds of millions of hardworking mums and dads and provide an annual gross value add of \$105 billion to the Australian economy.

"We look forward to working with government on these initiatives to deliver a resilient, sustainable and customer-focused aviation system."

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