



Australian Government  
Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development

# Community Aviation Consultation Groups (CACG) Guidelines



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines are provided for those establishing, running and participating in a Community Aviation Consultation Group (CACG).

CACGs are a mechanism to ensure appropriate community engagement on airport planning and operations.

The following leased federal airports have established and maintain permanent CACGs:

Adelaide	Darwin	Moorabbin
Archerfield	Essendon	Parafield
Alice Springs	Gold Coast	Perth
Bankstown	Hobart	Sydney <sup>1</sup>
Brisbane	Jandakot	Townsville
Camden	Launceston	
Canberra	Melbourne	

These airports vary in size and activity, operate in different communities and have different development and operational plans. The arrangements put in place for one CACG will not necessarily be appropriate for another. Accordingly, these guidelines are intended to be read as potential arrangement options.

As neither Mount Isa nor Tennant Creek airports are subject to the planning provisions of the *Airports Act 1996*, these airports have not established CACGs.

## 2 ROLE AND PURPOSE

The intended role of CACGs for leased federal airports is:

- to enable airport operators, residents affected by airport operations, local authorities, airport users, and other interested parties to exchange information on issues relating to airport operations and their impacts;

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<sup>1</sup> The Sydney Airport Community Forum (SACF) functions as Sydney Airport's CACG, but is limited to the discussion of aircraft noise and the Sydney Airport long-term operating plan (LTOP).

- to allow matters to be raised and taken into account by the airport operator, with a genuine desire to resolve issues that may emerge;
- to complement and support the consultative requirements already established for Master Plans and Major Development Plans (MDPs); and
- to discuss and share information between the airport and the communities affected by its operations and plans.

The goal is that an airport's CACG will assist in ensuring discussion on a wide range of matters is well-informed and undertaken in a spirit of collaboration.

Airport operators are expected to give serious consideration to recommendations made by their CACG, particularly in relation to Master Plans and MDPs.

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.

### 3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

It is recommended each CACG establish terms of reference consistent with the role and purpose outlined above.

Terms of reference might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- impacts of existing development and operations;
- plans for future development and steps being taken to implement the airport's Master Plan or develop a new plan;
- proposals to increase or change aviation services;
- noise (including aircraft noise) and environmental issues;
- ground transport and access issues;
- access issues for passengers, including people with disabilities;
- planning, regulatory, and policy changes affecting the airport;
- improvements or changes to airport facilities;
- airport procedures for effective complaints-handling;

- reports from Airservices Australia and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority on issues affecting the community;
- the contribution of the airport to the local, regional and national economy; and
- strategies to ensure the broad community is informed of issues discussed in the CACG.

It is expected the terms of reference for each CACG will be made available on the airport operator's website, or on the CACG's own website where one exists, along with summary meeting records and annual reports.

## 4 COMPOSITION AND BUSINESS

CACGs should meet at least three times per year; however, alternative arrangements have been agreed by the Minister in cases where an airport operator has demonstrated a reduced frequency of CACG meetings is appropriate for specific communities.

The constitution and procedural arrangements adopted by a CACG should be clear and transparent.

CACGs are encouraged to develop strategies to ensure the broader community is informed of any major issues and provided an opportunity for appropriate input.

### INDEPENDENT CHAIR

The CACG should be convened by a person who is independent of the airport's management and able to manage the deliberations of the CACG in an impartial manner. This is not to suggest an airport cannot remunerate their CACG chair. A CACG chair may be appointed for a specified term to be determined by the agreement of the airport operator and the appointee.

An airport operator may wish to consult with the membership of the CACG in appointing a Chair; however, the final decision should rest with the airport operator.

The independence of the Chair is critical for the effective functioning of the Group. An independent Chair will:

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

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

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

CACGs where an independent Chair has not yet been appointed should consider their chairing arrangements to determine the chairing format which best suits their group and the needs of their community. Alternative chairing arrangements may include a rotating Chair.

## MEMBERSHIP

How members of a CACG are selected and appointed is a matter for the airport operator and the CACG chair. This may occur in consultation with elected representatives, residents' groups and the like. Members may be appointed on an open-ended basis or for specified terms.

The size and membership of the CACG will depend upon local circumstances but should be both manageable and sufficient to achieve its objectives.

Membership of the CACG should include persons who can contribute views representative of:

- aviation services and operators at the airport;
- community organisations, resident groups or individuals, ensuring the representation of residents affected by airport development and operations;
- representatives from state, territory or local government bodies; and
- local tourism bodies and business groups.

## SECRETARIAT

Airport operators are expected to organise and resource appropriate secretariat support for the CACG.

Duties attached to the secretariat will include:

- communication of arrangements made for the CACG, including any framework documents such as procedural arrangements and terms of reference, to the membership
- preparation, distribution and publication of records of CACG meetings;
- preparation and distribution of meeting agendas;
- ensuring that CACG members are notified of meetings and given an opportunity to prepare for meetings;
- supporting the activities of the chair, as required;

- coordinating input to assist the CACG on policy, technical and other support issues, where agreed;
- maintaining comprehensive records of the business and activities of the CACG; and
- preparing an annual report on the operations and achievements of the CACG, and publishing this report on the airport's website (or the CACG's own website where one exists).

#### THE ROLE OF AIRPORT MANAGEMENT

It is important that the airport management participate fully in CACG proceedings, offering items for the agenda, attending meetings and providing relevant information on the operation and development of the airport.

#### THE ROLE OF OFFICIALS AND PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVES

Commonwealth officials, including officers of the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (Infrastructure) will attend meetings of the group as appropriate. Officials from other Commonwealth agencies (e.g. Airservices Australia, the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority) as well as state or local government organisations and elected parliamentary representatives may also be invited to participate.

While it is noted that many of the CACGs have become an important element of Airservices' community engagement strategy, it is a matter for the airport management and the Chair of the CACG to determine whether officials and parliamentary representatives attend as members or observers of the CACG.

## 5 FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on these guidelines, or other issues relating to the Federal leased airports, please contact Airports Branch, Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, on (02) 6274 7111 or visit [www.infrastructure.gov.au](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au)