



## **Territory Aviation Skills Centre**

*response to Aviation Green Paper.*

### **Preliminary**

Congratulations on the development of the Aviation Green Paper and progressing this towards a White Paper. It is generally recognised in industry that a deliberate approach to aviation development is critical in de-risking the future, and improving the sector's capability and capacity. Additionally, we very much appreciate the cooperative approach towards moving both large commercial business and smaller SMEs forward. Against this, we would like to acknowledge the opportunity presented to us in submitting this response.

### **Who is TASC?**

The Territory Aviation Skills Centre (TASC) is an industry led association, primarily promoting local aviation training (LAMEs, Cabin and Ground crew). We do also work for the greater Advocacy, Representation, Communications, and advisory Services for the NT aviation community. We are industry funded, but supported by the Chamber of Commerce NT, and supported in many projects by a cooperative approach with the Northern Territory Government.

### **Importance of Regional and GA operations is much higher in remote areas than east coast Australia.**

Regional Aviation in remote places in Australia is intrinsically of a much higher social and economic value than on the major East Coast centres. In many locations, aviation is not a matter of convenience as road transport is not a viable option all year around, and certainly not for contingency transportation. General Aviation also plays a more significant role in remote locations, not being the preserve of wealth or convenience, but rather a key work tool.

Against the above we, as TASC, feel a greater sense of responsibility to best represent this aspect of aviation, advocating for a greater consideration in the proposed White Paper.

### **Regional Role in developing aircrew and skilled workers.**

As Australia has a relatively unique combination of great distances, remote locations and a strong economic base, we have a unique basis of our aviation industry. GA and Regional have traditionally been a major pathway to Air crew experience, the other being through the RAAF / Army. Basically, without GA and Regional, there would not be enough pilots for Airlines. Although this is well recognised at multiple government levels, such as was highlighted in the recent senate enquiry into regional aviation, this has not been recognised within the Green Paper. References to training in the Green paper is limited, and the critical role of developing flight experience through GA and regional is poorly represented. The QANTAS academy which does feature in the Green Paper is more reminiscent of the British system, yet receives more attention in the paper than the myriad of private schools and GA pathways

Currently, Australia is a global provider of pilots. If we don't protect our GA and Regional airlines, and the operating environment in which they work, we will become a gross importer of pilots. Our airlines will be paying much more for aircrew. Our costs for all service delivery will go up.

If the Federal government is going to pursue academies as a training pathway, then they should be prepared to assist financing enough academy capacity to maintain the current output of aircrew, otherwise the White Paper needs to more comprehensively address the operating environment for flying schools, GA and Regional aviation in context of skills development as they are very much part of the aviation workforce future.

### **Regional and GA current and future needs.**

The following are issues within the Regional and GA aviation industry. Although these are immediate, many of these need to be addressed for the long term and should see consideration in the White paper.

It is important to note that the industry does not have a steady demand. This requires carrying high fixed costs that allow workforce and infrastructure to support peak demands, but are a burden in low peak. Although this is true of most businesses, the costs associated with aviation are, by and large, much greater. The greatest needs are therefore the reduction in fixed costs.

- *Operational compliance costs*  
Streamlined compliance and compliance costs are addressed in the Green Paper. We ask that it is made even easier for smaller operators, whether through a common accepted systems structure or through less of a user pays approach, recognising the contribution that smaller users make towards the career pathways of the workforce that the larger airlines enjoy the products of.

- *Lease and operational costs*  
Hangar lease as a sublessee on a commonwealth airport is at premium rates, and not appropriate for an industry we wish to see prosper for general socio-economic outcomes. Consideration for reduction of reduced costs for smaller operators is essential.
- *Fuel costs*  
Although these are not fixed costs, they do reflect the same need for future technology as already highlighted in the Green Paper. We would encourage the inclusion in the White Paper for more inclusion of GA stakeholder interactivity in this area.
- *Workforce – aircrew and maintenance*  
Workforce will always migrate up to the higher paying positions. Therefore, the Regional and GA aviation companies are constantly training new staff. Accessible and flexible training that is locally based is incredibly important – this must become a priority of the future of Aviation. Training incentives should also be encouraged.
- *Insurance*  
Although considered a high-risk activity, statistically aviation is low risk. An enquiry into insurance charges for aviation is overdue. Inclusion of aviation transport into the MAC system should be considered.

### **Local training**

Local training for skills based training has proven to be highly effective. The establishment of the Cairns Aviation Skills Centre transformed both training accessibility and participating businesses in the 10 years that it has been operating. Averaging 2 LAME graduations per year prior to CASCs beginning in 2013, Cairns Regional and GA aviation have now seen the graduation of nearly 700 LAMEs through CASC's prime RTO tenant, Aviation Australia. Furthermore, Hawker Pacific was transformed from a moderate SME to a major service centre for Alliance.

TASC is based on the same principles as CASC, and is slowly establishing itself in Darwin. TASC provides a base for Aviation Australia to conduct local training for apprentices who would otherwise have to travel interstate, VET in School to encourage career pathways for local school children, and Cabin Crew short courses. TASC also provides a base for other RTOs to conduct short courses or vendor training.

TASC is underfunded, and will not receive enough income to meet lease costs, let alone build new and more appropriate facilities.

I highly commend the writers of the Aviation White Paper to review the workforce development pathways for aviation. This needs to be a core fundamental for the future success of aviation in Australia. I also highly recommend an assessment of success of CASC and the current operation and potential of TASC as examples of where infrastructure investment has proven to be successful, and should be supported and replicated.

In making the above recommendations, I would like to restate our appreciation of opportunity and the genuine inclusion of stakeholders in Australian aviation's future.

Yours,

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