

16 Oct 2024

Mr Jim Betts
Secretary
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Mr Betts,

The Aviation Industry Ombuds Scheme - Consultation

On behalf of Australia's 537 councils, which collectively operate more than 200 regional airports and aerodromes across the country, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts' consultation on the Aviation Industry Ombuds Scheme.

Aviation connections are crucial for many Australian communities. Air travel between regional and urban locations facilitates accessibility for business, health, recreation, employment and social connection. Airports and aerodromes are critical infrastructure in times of natural disasters and other emergencies. Without the connections that aviation creates, the quality of life and economic resilience of regional communities can be severely affected.


Despite their importance, many council-owned airports are run on a break-even basis, or at a loss. ALGA's [2024 National State of the Assets report](#) highlights the impact of these funding constraints, with 12% of local government airport and aerodrome assets in poor condition. Often maintaining and upgrading these facilities is beyond the capacity of local government and requires state or federal support.

Councils are cognisant of their requirement to abide by the Aviation Customer Rights Charter. However, given the additional cost pressures the Ombuds Scheme is likely to impose, we are concerned that this may lead to further cost pressure, and possible closures of these vital facilities.

ALGA asks that the Government considers the exemption of council-owned airports from the Ombuds Scheme for airports with low passenger volumes or makes allowances for the financial shortcomings and capacity of these regional airports.

Please contact ALGA's Director Policy Transport & Infrastructure Robert Knight at [REDACTED] if you require further information.

Yours sincerely



Amy Crawford
Chief Executive Officer