



A better passenger experience

The Aviation White Paper sets out long-term policies and actions to guide the next generation of growth and innovation across Australian aviation.

We will facilitate competition and growth in the commercial aviation market, while regulating the sector to ensure appropriate safety, security, consumer and environmental outcomes.

Under Australian Consumer Law, airline customers have existing rights and airlines have existing obligations, yet customers continue to report long delays in airline responses to complaints. Through submissions to the Aviation Green Paper, we have heard how the performance of airlines in handling flight cancellations, delays, refunds and flight credits remains well below what Australians expect.

In addition, we have heard how people with disability face barriers when travelling by air – including inaccessible facilities and services at airports, and unhelpful practices and systems adopted by airlines.

Wide-ranging consultations that led to the development of the Aviation White Paper have informed us of weaknesses in:

- the information available to customers about their rights
- the interpretation of legal obligations by industry
- the processes for complaints and dispute resolution
- the standards for ensuring people with disability can access air travel that is free from discrimination.

It is clear that the current Airline Customer Advocate, established in 2012, is not delivering effective dispute resolution in the way it was intended.

Actions from now until 2050

To deliver a better passenger experience, the Australian Government will:

- ✓ **Establish an independent Aviation Industry Ombuds Scheme to replace the Airline Customer Advocate.** We will create a new scheme to apply to airports and to domestic and international airlines operating in Australia. The ombudsperson will have powers to:
 - deliver an external dispute resolution service in relation to airlines and airports' conduct in a way that is accessible, fair and accountable
 - direct airlines and airports to provide specific remedies to customers
 - issue public guidance on the obligations of airlines and airports to their customers
 - publish reports on airline and airport conduct and make policy recommendations to the Australian Government to implement measures that would further protect consumer rights
 - refer instances of misconduct that may raise concerns under the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) for potential investigation and enforcement.
- ✓ **Deliver a new aviation customer rights charter, produced by the ombuds scheme.** The charter will set out the fair and appropriate treatment of customers by airlines and airports. The charter will outline minimum customer service levels, give customers greater certainty about what they can expect when flights are cancelled and delayed and when passenger journeys are disrupted, including in relation to the prompt payment of refunds, across all fare types.
- ✓ **Improve access to aviation services for people with disability.** For more information, see the Accessible air travel for people with disability fact sheet.
- ✓ **Promote competition in the domestic airline sector – delivering better services and prices for consumers.** For more information, see the A competitive and efficient aviation sector fact sheet.

Find out more → Visit our website to read the Aviation White Paper: infrastructure.gov.au/AviationWhitePaper

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