



Supporting regional aviation

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

We recognise the critical role of aviation for regional and remote communities in supporting essential services such as healthcare, education and freight. Improving connectivity between regional and remote communities and larger centres will help promote the growth and prosperity of Australia's regions to 2050.

Through the Aviation White Paper, we are strengthening regional and remote aviation through a range of initiatives.

The government will continue to act to protect regional aviation through our ongoing response to the voluntary administration at Regional Express (Rex).

Productivity Commission review into regional airfares

The review will seek to identify policy and regulatory interventions that could be implemented by governments to reduce regional airfares.

The review will focus on:

- competition across the sector
- the impact of current Commonwealth, state and local government interventions on competition
- how connectivity can be improved.

Extending the Remote Airstrip Upgrade Program

The Remote Airstrip Upgrade Program has been extended and expanded to provide an additional \$50 million over 3 years from 2024–25.

The program aims to improve the safety and accessibility of remote airstrips across Australia.

It recognises aviation's important role in connecting Australians and providing support for remote aviation where it is not commercially viable, but essential for the social and economic wellbeing of communities. The program will be expanded to include improving accessibility for people with disability.

Extending the Regional Airports Program

The Regional Airports Program (RAP) has been extended and expanded to provide an additional \$40 million in competitive grant funding over 3 years from 2024–25.

The RAP will continue to invest in safety and accessibility upgrades of regional airports and will also consider the infrastructure required to transition to net zero, such as electric chargers, hydrogen fuelling or storage facilities.

Applicants seeking high value grants will be asked to provide their airport financial management framework to support efficiency of government support, to help ensure upgraded airports can meet community needs over the long term and enable sustainable management of regional airport assets.

Funding the Remote Aerodrome Inspection Program

The Australian Government will provide \$0.5 million funding per year (indexed) from 2024–25 to the Remote Aerodrome Inspection Program (RAI) program.

The RAI provides critical inspection services to ensure the safe operation of regional airports. This includes annual aerodrome inspections and reports for a number of remote aerodromes across the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia that are predominately located in, or adjacent to, First Nations communities.

The RAI supports First Nations community aerodromes to meet their aviation safety obligations, while providing the ability for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and other service providers to safely land in remote communities to provide critical community services.



Image credit: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Supporting Closing the Gap outcomes

Reporting on how the regional and remote aviation programs contribute to Closing the Gap outcomes, such as providing increased training, employment and procurement opportunities for First Nations businesses and communities will also be required.

Securing the future of regional services

This Aviation White Paper is being released at a time when Rex, a significant airline servicing regional Australia, remains in voluntary administration. The Australian Government's actions throughout this period of administration, as well as after, will be guided by our clear understanding of the essential nature of reliable and affordable air services across regional and remote Australia.

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

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