

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT AUSTRALIAN AIRSPACE POLICY STATEMENT 2025

The Victorian Government welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts' Draft Australian Airspace Policy Statement (AAPS) 2025.

AAPS 2025 will set new strategic direction for Australia's airspace through refreshed policy objectives and priorities to guide the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), other aviation agencies and industry on the administration of Australian airspace.

The Victorian Government welcomes the proposed strengthened policy focus on enabling regulatory certainty for the safe, coordinated and sustainable integration of Advanced Air Mobility (AAM), drones and other emerging zero-emissions aviation technologies into the Australian airspace. We acknowledge that this important work will enable safe regulatory pathways for the sector to grow sustainably, unlock commercial barriers to entry, enable commercialisation of operations and stimulate market activity.

The AAPS aligns with the vision set out in the Victorian Government's AAM Industry Vision Statement (2022) and AAM Action Plan (2024) that highlights the State's commitment to creating a coordinated aviation ecosystem, regulatory pathways and planning for associated enabling infrastructure that will support investment in the emerging aviation sector. This in turn, will grow sovereign manufacturing capability and jobs, support efficiencies across a range of critical functions and unlock efforts to decarbonise our economy.

Airspace policy settings that support the safe and coordinated growth of AAM is also expected to unlock new regional routes in Victoria and across Australia which have previously been unserved by traditional aviation. Victoria is committed to improving regional connectivity through the utilisation of AAM that will stimulate market development and boost economic growth in our regions.

We also welcome new policy objectives to support collaboration between the Department of Infrastructure, Airservices Australia, Defence and industry to enable and facilitate safe flight testing of new aircraft technologies and capabilities within Australian-administered airspace, which will enable significant advancements in innovation, supply chain resilience and sovereign manufacturing.

The Victorian Government is supporting an operational feasibility trial using a drone to replicate future operations of larger AAM aircraft in the Latrobe region. The trial will deliver strategic insights into the regulatory, policy and operational barriers facing AAM industry development in Victoria for a range of use cases and inform the development of new policies, frameworks and initiatives. Equally, testing and trialling is crucial for the development of novel products, services or concepts that can stimulate market development, encourage domestic and international investment and highlight Australia as a leader in R&D.

The Victorian Government is committed to working with Australian Government agencies, industry, academia and councils to unlocking barriers facing existing drone and future AAM use cases that have a high community benefit, such as medical delivery, regional service delivery, natural resource management, resilience and preparedness activities, public safety and emergency management. Enabling fit-for-purpose airspace frameworks could expedite delivery of significant high-benefit societal and economic benefits and build stakeholder confidence.

Additionally, certain regional airports have the unique opportunity to co-locate the ability to support safe and sustainable flight-testing activities alongside manufacturing, which can result in cost savings and promote accelerated industry growth, partnerships and research and development. Stimulating industrial opportunities in the regions will also enable other clean energy industries to flourish, support diversification of regional economics and strengthen sovereign manufacturing opportunities.

The Victorian Government remains committed to working in partnership with Commonwealth aviation agencies to advocate Victoria's best interests in the growth of a safe, sustainable and nationally coordinated AAM sector.

Please contact Zoltan Csernatony, AAM Industry Engagement Lead at zoltan.csernatony@invest.vic.gov.au should you have any questions regarding this submission.

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