

Expressions of Interest

Development Opportunities for Helicopter, General Aviation and Freight & Logistics Facilities in the Eastern Aviation Precinct at Cairns Airport



Expression of Interest: Development Opportunities for Helicopter, General Aviation and Freight & Logistics Facilities in the Eastern Aviation Precinct at Cairns Airport

Issued by: Cairns Airport

In Partnership with: Cairns
Aviation Skills Centre (CASC) and
Aviation Australia

Date: October 31, 2025

EOI Reference Number:
CNS-EAP-MRO-2025-01

Closing Date: December 15, 2025

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	P. 02
Introduction and Background	P. 03
Project Overview: Eastern Aviation Precinct and Available Sites	P. 04
Development Opportunities and Options	P. 05
Strategic Value for Proponents	P. 06
Scope of Development and Operations	P. 07
Proponent Qualifications	P. 07
Assessment Criteria	P. 08
Submission Guidelines	P. 08
Timeline and Next Steps	P. 09
Contact Information	P. 09
Disclaimer and Confidentiality	P. 09
Masterplan and Renders	P. 10-11



Executive Summary

As the steward of Tropical North Queensland's premier aviation gateway, Cairns Airport invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) from property developers, investors, operators and consortia with expertise in helicopter (rotorcraft), general aviation (GA), and freight & logistics sectors. We are seeking visionary proponents to collaborate on developing purpose-built facilities within the Eastern Aviation Precinct — a transformative \$60 million project designed to alleviate capacity constraints, bolster resilience, and cement Cairns Airport as Australia's leading northern aviation hub.

Leveraging TNQ's strategic advantages, the precinct taps into a booming aviation ecosystem: Cairns Airport handled 4.8 million passengers in FY 2024, tourism generated \$4.72 billion in visitor expenditure, and the national air freight market is poised to reach USD \$3.60 billion by 2033 at a 7.41% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR). The Australian aviation sector is projected to grow at 3.50% CAGR from 2025-2034, with revenue hitting US\$11.76 billion by 2025. This development will unlock economic diversification, supporting tourism, mining, agriculture, and defence while creating up to 400 full-time jobs.

This EOI positions Cairns Airport as a proactive property developer, offering prime ground lease opportunities on designated sites. Proponents are encouraged to propose innovative developments — whether self-funded builds or co-investment models — that align with our masterplan. We aim to foster long-term partnerships, with successful expressions leading to direct negotiations for lease agreements and development approvals.

We welcome creative, sustainable proposals that maximise the precinct's potential. This is an opportunity to shape the future of aviation in Australia — let's build it together.



Introduction and Background

Cairns Airport operates as the vital link to Tropical North Queensland, fuelling tourism, trade, and connectivity. Our region excels in helicopter tourism, general aviation, and freight logistics, serving a diverse array of domestic and international stakeholders. With over 4.8 million passengers in FY 2024 and more than 100 GA aircraft (including 40+ helicopters), Cairns Airport supports escalating freight demands tied to regional exports and a tourism sector contributing \$4.72 billion annually.

Challenges such as capacity limitations, flood vulnerability (highlighted by Tropical Cyclone Jasper in 2023), and untapped growth potential have prompted this precinct development. Backed by a \$155 million Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) loan, the Eastern Aviation Precinct will deliver resilient infrastructure, adding up to \$60 million yearly to the economy. Aviation in Cairns already generates \$404 million directly, with significant flow-on benefits.

In this EOI, Cairns Airport acts as a forward-thinking developer, seeking proponents to lease and develop sites for helicopter, GA, and freight & forward logistics facilities. This collaborative approach ensures developments are market-driven, innovative, and aligned with our sustainability goals, including net-zero operations in 2025.



Project Overview: Eastern Aviation Precinct and Available Sites

The Eastern Aviation Precinct is a landmark development on a prepared site adjacent to Airport Avenue, enhancing Cairns Airport's general aviation and logistics capabilities. With Stage 1A earthworks advancing, the precinct targets operational elements by 2027, prioritising flood resilience above the 1-in-100-year level.

Key components include:

- **Four New Aeronautical Stands:** Enabling efficient GA and freight operations.
- **Aeromedical and Emergency Response Facilities:** Complementing helicopter services, such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service and QGAir.
- **Dedicated Heliport Zone:** Featuring aprons, helipads, and support infrastructure for tourism and scenic flights.
- **Renewable Fuel and Energy Production Area:** Advancing our net-zero ambitions.
- **Flexible Development Sites:** Including lots for hangars (up to 10,000m²), freight & logistics hubs, and ancillary spaces with options for storage, offices, and training integration.

The masterplan designates specific lots (e.g., Lots 1-12) for tailored developments, ensuring seamless integration with existing infrastructure like fuel lines and taxiways.

Precinct Component	Description	Expected Benefits
Heliport Zone	Aprons, helipads, and rotorcraft facilities.	Elevates tourism; supports 40+ helicopters; adds to \$51.6 million in business events.
GA Hangars	Customizable spaces for aircraft storage and operations.	Eases constraints for 100+ GA aircraft; drives 100 construction and 400 ongoing jobs.
Freight & Logistics Hubs	Areas for cargo handling, warehousing, and distribution.	Boosts exports; aligns with 7.41% air freight CAGR to USD \$3.60 billion by 2033.
Training and Support Spaces	Opportunities for integrated skills facilities via CASC.	Addresses global need for 690,000 technicians by 2042.
Resilience Measures	Elevated design and renewables.	Ensures reliability amid climate challenges.

Available sites offer scalability, with proponents able to propose developments that fit their vision while complementing the precinct.

Development Opportunities and Options

As the precinct's developer, Cairns Airport offers flexible pathways for proponents to realise high-value projects:

- **Ground Leases (Primary Option):** Secure long-term leases on prime sites, allowing you to design, finance, and construct facilities tailored to helicopter, GA, or freight & logistics needs. Leases provide stability, competitive rates, and access to airport utilities, with terms negotiable based on proposal strength.
- **Purpose-Built Scenarios:** For select proponents, we consider co-development models where Cairns Airport contributes to infrastructure or construction. This could include build-to-lease arrangements or joint ventures, ideal for complex projects requiring specialised features like advanced cargo systems or rotorcraft bays.

Proponents should detail their preferred option, including site preferences (referencing masterplan lots), conceptual designs, investment plans, and operational strategies. We encourage innovative proposals that incorporate sustainability, such as renewable energy integration, to align with our net-zero goals. Hybrid approaches combining leases with collaborative builds are welcome, fostering mutual success.



Strategic Value for Proponents

Partnering with Cairns Airport offers unparalleled advantages in a high-growth region:

- **Economic Momentum:** Capitalise on Cairns' Asia-Pacific proximity for tourism and exports. Helicopter operations contribute towards a total \$4.72 billion in visitor spend, while GA and freight support mining/agriculture, amid 8.4% global air cargo growth.
- **Market Expansion:** Address gaps in scenic flights, emergency services, and logistics, with the Australian aviation market's continual growth.
- **Resilience and Sustainability:** Develop on flood-proof sites with renewable energy access via the airport's sustainability supply chain, enhancing operational sustainability.
- **Collaborative Ecosystem:** Integrate with CASC for workforce training, mitigating global shortages of 649,000 pilots and 690,000 technicians by 2042.
- **Investment Returns:** Contribute to \$60 million annual economic uplift and 400 jobs, with scalable revenue from operations, sub-leases, or value-added services.

This is your chance to invest in a thriving precinct — propose boldly to secure a stake in TNQ's aviation future.



Scope of Development and Operations

Successful proponents will develop and operate under lease agreements, focusing on:

- **Site Development:** Design and construct facilities, ensuring compliance with aviation standards (CASA/ICAO) and precinct guidelines.
- **Operational Management:** Handle daily operations, maintenance, and scheduling for heliport, hangars, or logistics hubs.
- **Capability Enhancement:** Incorporate innovative features like cargo tech or training spaces.
- **Sustainability Integration:** Implement eco-friendly practices, including renewables.
- **Performance Reporting:** Track economic impacts, such as jobs and revenue, for shared success.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Engage with airport teams and partners for seamless integration.

Proponent Qualifications

We seek capable partners demonstrating:

- Proven experience in helicopter/GA operations, or freight & logistics.
- Ability to display financial robustness to fund developments.
- Commitment to sustainability and regional growth.
- Track record in workforce development and partnerships.
- Alignment with proposed options (e.g. lease readiness).

Consortia and international proponents with local ties are encouraged.

Assessment Criteria

Expressions of Interest will be reviewed holistically:

Criterion	Weight	Description
Development Expertise	25%	Experience in similar projects and sectors.
Proposal Vision and Fit	30%	Innovation, alignment with precinct, and option execution.
Financial Viability	20%	Investment plans, projections, and funding.
Risk and Delivery Approach	15%	Management of development risks and timelines.
Sustainability and Impact	10%	Environmental focus, job creation, and community benefits.

Strong proposals will advance to negotiations.

Submission Guidelines

Submit:

- **Cover Letter:** Expressing interest, qualifications, and preferred option(s).
- **Proponent Profile:** Experience, financial overview, references.
- **Concept Proposal:** Site preferences, designs, business case, and vision.
- **Supporting Materials:** Plans, financials, certifications.
- **Format:** PDF to [patrick.bellot@cairnsairport.com.au], subject "**EOI: CNS-EAP-DEV-2025-01**".

Due by December 15, 2025, 5:00 PM AEST.

Timeline and Next Steps

Milestone	Date
EOI Release	October 31, 2025
Questions Deadline	November 14, 2025
EOI Closing	December 15, 2025
Review Period	January 30, 2026

Notifications and Negotiations February 1 2026 onward.

Clarifications shared anonymously; promising proponents invited for discussions.



Contact Information

Contact: Patrick Bellot
Email: patrick.bellot@cairnsairport.com.au
Phone: +61 (7) 4080 6703
Address: Level 2, Airport Administration Centre (AAC), Caudron Avenue, Cairns Airport, QLD 4870, Australia



Disclaimer and Confidentiality

This EOI invites interest without creating obligations. Cairns Airport may modify or withdraw without liability. Information is confidential; submissions become our property. We adhere to Queensland procurement principles for transparency.

Master Plan and Renders





Need more information?

For more information and to watch the Eastern Aviation Precinct fly-over video, visit cairnsairport.com.au/eastern-aviation-precinct

or scan the **QR code** below.

