

Cairns Airport
Community Aviation Consultation Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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1. Background

Community Aviation Consultation Groups (**CACGs**) give the local community, airport operators, and aviation businesses a way to engage with each other, and enables discussions about airport operations, development and associated impacts. CACGs are a regulatory requirement for leased Federal airports. Other airports may also choose to establish CACGs, or community forums. Cairns Airport is not required to establish a CACG but has established a CACG (**Cairns Airport CACG**) as part of its commitment to best-practice community engagement.

This Terms of Reference establish the common scope and intent for the Cairns Airport CACG and applies to all individual and organisational members.

2. Purpose and Role of the CACG

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Cairns Airport CACG is to enable collaboration and dialogue between Cairns Airport and the community on various topics, including airport operations, development, and related impacts and opportunities. It provides a forum for open, respectful and timely engagement, and early issue resolution among members, participating agencies and the airport operator.

2.2 Role

The Role of the Cairns Airport CACG includes:

- Distribute clear and accurate information on planning, development, and operations to affected residents, local authorities, airport users and interested parties.
- Exchange information on operational issues and impacts, including aircraft noise and environmental matters.
- Enable community members and local representatives to raise issues, ask questions, and express views with a focus on resolving concerns.
- Engage local communities in planning, development and operations, and identify emerging opinions and feedback.
- Report and provide recommendations to the airport regarding community concerns and perceptions.

2.3 Authority

The Cairns Airport CACG is not an arbitration or decision making body and has no power to direct or implement Commonwealth, State/Territory, Local Government or airport policy in regards to Cairns Airport.

3. Topics for Discussion

Topics discussed at Cairns Airport CACG may include:

- Impacts of existing development and operations at the airport;
- Plans for future development;
- Proposals to increase or change aviation services;
- Noise (including aircraft noise) and environmental issues;
- Ground transport and access issues;
- Accessibility for passengers, including people with disabilities;
- Planning, regulatory and policy changes affecting the airport;
- Improvements or changes to airport facilities;
- Airport procedures for effective complaints handling;

- Reports from Airservices Australia and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority on issues affecting the community;
- The airport's contribution to regional, state and national economies;
- Strategies to ensure the broader community is informed of issues discussed in the Cairns Airport CACG.

4. Governance Structure and Operations

4.1 Meeting Frequency and Agenda Management:

- The Cairns Airport CACG will meet at least three (3) times per year; alternative frequency may be agreed by the Chair where appropriate to local circumstances.
- CACG meetings will be held on site at Cairns Airport, in a venue that is accessible, and support virtual attendance where possible.
- The agenda is not set by Cairns Airport alone. Cairns Airport welcomes a minimum of 25 per cent of the agenda originating from the members. Where no agenda contributions are received from the members, standard non-specific agenda categories will still be tabled for discussion in the meeting.
- An agenda will be circulated by the Secretary at least ten (10) business days prior to meetings.
- Draft minutes of meetings will be distributed to members for review not later than five (5) business days after each meeting.
- Members have a further five (5) business days to provide comments, after which the minutes will be adjusted if required, and considered as being formally accepted.
- Minutes of meetings will be provided to members by the Secretary within fifteen (15) business days after meetings.
- Matters proposed for discussion as agenda items should be proposed with sufficient time to enable community consultation prior to the meeting.

4.2 Meeting Procedures

- Meetings are for Cairns Airport CACG members, and occasional guests invited through the Chair.
- Apologies should be made through the Chair and/or Secretary.
- All presentations must be provided to the Secretary at least five (5) business days prior to each meeting for review by the Chair and Cairns Airport.
- Any pre-reading material will be provided to members (via the Secretary) at least five (5) business days prior to each meeting.
- All correspondence sent and received to be tabled is to be included by description or annexure in the meeting minutes.
- A proxy is a stand-in for a member who is unable to attend and shall fulfil the function ordinarily incumbent to that member. The Chair may approve a proxy appointment prior to a meeting, by written agreement with the absent member (**Approved Proxy**). Only an Approved Proxy may attend and participate in meetings.
- Members must conduct themselves respectfully and follow the Chair's directions during meetings. The Chair may intervene, redirect discussion, or call a pause if conduct becomes disruptive, disrespectful, or inconsistent with the Code of Conduct. Repeated breaches may trigger a review of the member's continued participation.

4.3 Operations

The Cairns Airport CACG will be managed by a Chair, with support from the Secretary.

4.4 Conflicts of Interest

Members must avoid any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in relation to their participation in the Cairns Airport CACG. Members must declare to the Chair and Secretary any personal, financial or professional interests, including any relationships with Cairns Airport, or organisations involved in Cairns Airport operations, that may reasonably be viewed as influencing their contributions. Cairns Airport may give directions on how a conflict is to be managed, and members must comply with those directions. Failure to disclose or appropriately manage a conflict may result in a review of membership.

5. Independent Chair

Cairns Airport will appoint the Chair of the Cairns Airport CACG.

The Chair will be independent of Cairns Airport's executive management team and must be capable of managing deliberations of the Cairns Airport CACG impartially.

The Chair will be appointed for a term of three (3) years, which may be extended by agreement between Cairns Airport and the Chair.

The role of the Chair may include:

- Seek agenda input from members and allow discussion of unanticipated business.
- Ensure adequate discussion time across issues; avoid disproportionate focus on any single issue.
- Ensure agenda materials are meaningful and enable effective member engagement.
- Encourage open discussion and a frank exchange of views.
- Monitor effective follow-up of action items.
- Ensure presentations from the airport operator account for no more than half the meeting duration.
- Establish succession arrangements (e.g., deputy/acting Chair, accessible documentation) to ensure continuity.
- Disclose any interests or associations that may give rise to perceived conflicts of interest.

6. Secretary

A Secretary will be appointed by Cairns Airport, and may be a Cairns Airport employee. The role of the Secretary may include:

- Maintain governance documents (procedural arrangements, Terms of Reference/Guidelines/Code of Conduct) and communicate arrangements to members.
- Prepare, distribute and publish meeting agendas and records (summaries/minutes).
- Notify members of meetings and support preparation.
- Support the Chair's activities as required.
- Coordinate policy/technical support where agreed.
- Maintain comprehensive records of CACG business and activities.
- Prepare and publish an annual summary on CACG operations and achievements on the airport's website.

7. Membership and Appointments

7.1 Composition of Members

Members should reflect parties with a genuine interest in the local community and airport operation. Cairns Airport management should not outweigh community representation; balance and diversity of views is prioritised.

Members of the Cairns Airport CACG may include:

- Local residents and community group representatives;
- Local businesses and tourism operators;
- Local council members or local government officials;
- State and territory government officials;
- Airport operator;
- Chair;
- Secretary; and
- Aircraft operators.

At the discretion of the Chair, other individuals, or organisations may be permitted admission to as a member.

7.2 Membership generally

- The total number of members will be determined by the Chair, from time to time, having consideration of the following matters (which are not intended to be exhaustive):
 - the importance of representation and experience in the composition of the Members;
 - the duration of tenure of current Members; and
 - potential risks of the number of Members becoming too large or too small.
- Cairns Airport will advertise for Expressions of Interest (**EOI**) for Members when required by the Chair. This may include advertising through open source media channels, existing stakeholder distribution channels, or direct approach.
- Applications in response to the EOI will be taken via online form on the Cairns Airport website, and assessed against the selection criteria in the EOI.

7.3 Selection and Endorsement

- Applications will be reviewed by Cairns Airport. Selection will be undertaken at the sole discretion of Cairns Airport, considering a balance of community representation and diversity of views.
- Members may be appointed on an open-ended basis, for specified terms, or as observers.
- Members will be appointed by written notice from Cairns Airport, confirming:
 - commencement date;
 - term of appointment;
 - expectations and obligations;
 - requirement to sign the Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference.

7.4 Acceptance of Appointment:

- Membership takes effect upon the member acknowledging acceptance of the Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference in writing.

7.5 Term of Membership:

- Members are appointed for a term of three (3) years, unless otherwise specified in writing.
- Members may be reappointed following an EOI process or by invitation at the discretion of Cairns Airport.

7.6 Suspension and Removal of Members

Grounds for Removal

A member may be suspended or removed where they:

- breach the Code of Conduct;
- breach these Terms of Reference;
- behave in a manner that is disrespectful, discriminatory, or disruptive;
- disclose confidential information without authorisation;
- repeatedly fail to attend meetings without reasonable explanation;
- no longer meet eligibility criteria;
- engage in conduct that may bring the Cairns Airport CACG into disrepute.

Revocation of membership

Except in cases of serious misconduct, the following process applies:

- The member will receive written notice outlining the behaviour or issue.
- The member will be given an opportunity to respond in writing within ten (10) business days.
- Cairns Airport, in consultation with the Chair, will consider the response and determine whether:
 - no action is required;
 - a written warning should be issued;
 - the member should be suspended; or
 - the member should be removed.

Immediate Removal

Cairns Airport may immediately remove a member in cases of:

- aggressive, abusive or threatening behaviour;
- serious breach of confidentiality;
- conduct posing a safety risk;
- conduct that is unlawful.

Decision Maker

- All decisions to suspend or remove a member are made by Cairns Airport.
- The decision is final.

Notification

- The Secretary will notify the member of the decision in writing.
- Members are volunteers and participate at the invitation of Cairns Airport.
- Removal does not give rise to any entitlement to compensation, damages or review.

8. Reporting and Transparency

To ensure transparency and accessibility, the Secretary will ensure timely distribution of agendas, minutes and meeting schedules, plus contact details for agenda submissions to the members.

The Secretary will publish governance arrangements including this Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct on the Cairns Airport website.

The Secretary will also:

- Publish agendas prior to each meeting.
- Report at each meeting all items nominated for the agenda, noting acceptance or deferral.
- Provide instructions for community members to apply to attend or nominate agenda items;
- Provide meeting minutes to members after each meeting.

9. Code of Conduct

All Cairns Airport CACG members must comply with the Cairns Airport CACG Code of Conduct as a condition of their appointment.

The Code of Conduct sets out the behavioural, participation and integrity standards required for the Cairns Airport CACG to operate respectfully, constructively and transparently. Its purpose is to ensure:

- a safe and respectful environment for discussion;
- constructive and evidence-based engagement;
- fair representation of community interests; and
- protection of the Cairns Airport CACG's credibility and effectiveness.

Members must accept the Code of Conduct before commencing their appointment and follow its requirements throughout their membership, including expectations relating to respectful behaviour, confidentiality, conflicts of interest and responsible participation.

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in warning, suspension or removal from the Cairns Airport CACG, in accordance with the membership exclusion provisions in this Terms of Reference and the procedures set out in the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct will be published on the Cairns Airport website and may be amended by Cairns Airport from time to time.

10. Function of Cairns Airport

For the purposes of these Terms of Reference, Cairns Airport means Cairns Airport Pty Ltd, being the airport operator of Cairns International Airport. Any function, responsibility or decision allocated to Cairns Airport under these Terms of Reference may be exercised by its executive management team, or by any member of that team, as determined internally by Cairns Airport. References to actions or decisions of Cairns Airport include actions or decisions made on its behalf by authorised personnel.

11. Terms of Reference Review

The Cairns Airport CACG Terms of Reference will be reviewed by Cairns Airport at least once every three (3) years in line with the Chair's appointment.

Cairns Airport may amend these Terms of Reference from time to time following consultation with the Chair. Updated versions will be published on the Cairns Airport website.

If there is any inconsistency between these Terms of Reference and the Code of Conduct, these Terms of Reference prevail.

12. General Provisions

12.1 No Legal Relationship

Cairns Airport CACG membership is voluntary and at the discretion of Cairns Airport. Participation does not create any employment, agency, or legal relationship between members and Cairns Airport. Members act in their own capacity and not as representatives or agents of Cairns Airport.

12.2 Confidentiality

Members must not disclose internal drafts, preliminary documents, internal comments, correspondence, disputes, or any other non-public information shared through the Cairns Airport CACG unless authorised by Cairns Airport or the Chair. All materials circulated to the Cairns Airport CACG are provided for Cairns Airport CACG purposes only and must not be distributed externally.

12.3 Media and Social Media

Members must not use media or social media to criticise, misrepresent or disclose Cairns Airport CACG discussions, documents or disputes. Personal comments must not present or imply they reflect the views of the Cairns Airport CACG.

12.4 Dispute Resolution

Where disagreements arise between members, the Chair will first facilitate an informal resolution. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, Cairns Airport may determine an appropriate process, which may include mediation, clarification of roles, or other steps necessary to restore effective group functioning. Decisions of Cairns Airport on dispute resolution are final.

12.5 Attendance Requirements

Members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings where reasonably possible. Failure to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation may result in Cairns Airport reviewing the member's appointment and determining whether their membership should continue.