



Community Aviation Consultation Group & Planning Coordination Forum – Terms of Reference

August 2026

Background

Darwin International Airport's Community Aviation Consultation Group (CACG) and Airport Development Group's (ADG) Planning Coordination Forum (PCF) were established in response to the 2009 Aviation White Paper and have operated for more than 15 years.

Established in 2011, the Darwin International Airport CACG provides an independently chaired forum for engagement between the airport, key stakeholders and the local community on airport planning, development, operations, and associated impacts and opportunities. It enables discussion on matters such as aircraft noise, safety, land use planning and airport development.

ADG's PCF, formed in 2010, facilitates strategic discussions between ADG and Australian Government, Northern Territory Government and local government representatives to support coordinated planning of ADG's airport sites and surrounding areas. To improve efficiency and stakeholder engagement, the PCF was integrated with the Darwin International Airport CACG in 2021.

Purpose

Community Aviation Consultation Group

Guidelines issued by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts highlights that the CACG should facilitate opportunity for:

- airport operators to disseminate information regarding the planning, development and operations of airports to residents affected by airport operations, local authorities, airport users, and other interested parties
- an exchange of information on issues relating to airport operations and their impacts
- community members and local representatives to raise issues and questions, and express opinions regarding airports, with a genuine desire to resolve issues that may emerge
- engage with local communities about planning, development and operations of airports, and
- reporting and providing recommendations to airports regarding community concerns, discussion and perceptions relating to the airport.

The CACG is intended to work alongside other consultation processes led by Darwin International Airport and to complement the consultative requirements for airport Master Plans and Major Development Plans under the *Airports Act 1996*.

Darwin International Airport is also a joint-user airport under the Airports Act, with both civil and military aircraft operations. A Joint User Deed governs planning and operation of the co-located RAAF Base Darwin and Darwin International Airport aviation activities. The Department of Defence is therefore integral to the functioning of the CACG.

Topics discussed at the CACG may include:

- impacts of existing development and operations at the airport
- plans for future development (including Major Development Plans) and steps being taken to implement the airport's Master Plan or develop a new plan
- proposals to increase or change aviation services
- noise (including aircraft noise) and environmental issues
- ground transport and access issues
- access issues 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 contribution of the airport to the local, regional and national economy, and
- strategies to ensure the broader community is informed of issues discussed in the CACG.

The CACG is for consultation purposes only. It is not there to resolve airport or aircraft related complaints or resolve aviation related commercial disputes. Nor is the group an arbitration or decision-making body.

Planning Coordination Forum

The PCF facilitates consultation between ADG and senior Northern Territory, local government, and Australian Government representatives responsible for town planning, transport, and infrastructure. These discussions support better integrated planning of ADG's airports with surrounding urban and regional communities.

Given that most planning resources for both ADG and the Northern Territory Government are based in Darwin, ADG has traditionally convened a single PCF to cover both Darwin International Airport and Alice Springs Airport.

In 2021, the Darwin International Airport CACG and PCF meetings were combined into a single concurrent session, replacing separate meetings held over two days. This streamlined approach improved the overlap in meeting content and membership, while providing PCF members with the opportunity to engage directly with CACG members. Under this arrangement, PCF members participate in the CACG meeting and share updates where appropriate for public discussion. A closed PCF session may then be held to discuss matters not suitable for a public forum.

For Alice Springs Airport, local council representatives have traditionally attended CACG meetings. More recently, Northern Territory Government planning representatives based in Alice Springs have also joined, further broadening planning and stakeholder engagement discussions.

Membership

Membership of the Darwin International Airport CACG consists of parties with a genuine interest in the local community and airport operation. Membership is via invitation only by Darwin International Airport management.

The following membership reflects Darwin International Airport's CACG:

- Independent Chair
- Darwin International Airport management
- general community members, organisations or representatives
- environment / landcare group
- aviation industry / airport business representatives
- tourism sector
- business community
- traditional owners
- accessibility / disability representatives
- Department of Defence / RAAF Base Darwin
- ADG's Planning Coordination Forum members (see section below)

Members may be appointed on an open-ended basis, for specified terms or as observers. Members should declare any conflicts of interest to the Chair.

Reports will also be provided to the CACG from Australian Government agencies including the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts, Airservices Australia and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) as and when required.

The Planning Coordination Forum members that attend the Darwin International Airport CACG are:

- Department of Defence, Estate Planning Branch
- Northern Territory Government department responsible for lands planning
- Northern Territory Government department responsible for transport
- City of Darwin.

Responsibilities

Role of the Chair

The role of the Chair (in addition to the expectations of all members) is to:

- provide leadership to the group, including providing guidance to members as required
- ensure the input of the full membership is sought as to agenda items
- ensure agenda materials and papers are meaningful and facilitate effective engagement of members in CACG discussions
- ensure adequate discussion time is devoted to issues of significance, and discussions cover all issues evenly with no particular issue given priority
- ensure that community representatives and aviation operators are afforded sufficient time to speak at each meeting
- allow for discussion of unanticipated 'other business' at CACG meetings
- encourage open discussion and a frank exchange of views
- monitor effective follow-up of action items.

The Chair will disclose any interests, arrangements or associations to CACG, which may be perceived as a conflict of interest.

Role of all members

The following principles/practices shall govern the internal workings of the CACG:

- positions taken by the CACG are arrived at by consensus. However, that does not mean every member must agree in order for the group to arrive at a position. Any member who wants their view recorded on a group position is entitled to do so
- the CACG will function in a collegiate atmosphere under the guidance of the Chair
- group confidentiality and external solidarity will be respected in order to be conducive to the free flow of information and frank exchange of views.

Secretariat

Darwin International Airport will provide the secretariat position for the CACG, as well as provide administrative and technical support to the Chair as required.

The role of the secretariat is to:

- communicate arrangements made for the CACG, including any framework documents such as procedural arrangements and terms of reference, to members
- prepare, distribute and publish records of CACG meetings
- prepare and distribute meeting agendas
- ensure CACG members are notified of meetings and given an opportunity to prepare for meetings
- support the activities of the Chair, as required
- coordinate input to assist the CACG on policy, technical and other support issues, where agreed
- maintain records of the business and activities of the CACG
- prepare an annual report on the operations and achievements of the CACG.

Role of airport management

Darwin International Airport's management will offer items for the agenda, attend meetings and provide relevant information on airport developments and operations.

Meeting frequency

The Darwin International Airport CACG (including PCF) normally meets 3 times a year.

Reporting

CACG meeting summary

A summary report of each meeting will be endorsed by the Chair and published on the Darwin International Airport website.

CACG annual report

The secretariat will prepare an annual report on the operations and achievements of the Darwin International Airport CACG, that will be published on the Darwin International Airport website.