

11 December 2025

Attention: Committee Secretary  
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee  
Parliament House  
[rrat.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:rrat.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Committee Secretary

***RE: Senate Inquiry into the State of Australia's Aviation Sector and Ability to Deliver Reliable and Affordable Services to Rural, Regional and Remote Communities***

### **Introduction**

The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to this inquiry. Aviation access is vital to South Australia's prosperity. It enables population connectivity, supports the tourism industry, facilitates economic development, and underpins access to essential goods and services in rural, regional and remote locations.

The SATC's objectives include increasing international and domestic capacity into Adelaide and securing reliable and affordable access to South Australian regions. These aims are essential to support the State's visitor economy growth and ensure that regional communities remain well connected.

### **Regional access challenges**

Regional aviation is often commercially marginal in South Australia. Smaller catchment areas, distances between destinations, limited airline competition and strong seasonal variations all present challenges. Routes of high strategic importance, such as those serving Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln, require appropriately structured support to ensure continuity.

### **Affordability and access barriers**

Airfare pricing on regional routes can fluctuate significantly throughout the year. High costs limit community mobility, restrict access to services, constrain workforce movement and create obstacles for tourism growth. Affordable air travel is essential to maintain liveability and competitive positioning for regional South Australia.

### **Regional airport funding pressures**

Regional airports deliver essential public benefit yet often operate with limited financial sustainability. Requirements such as enhanced security screening, runway strengthening, terminal upgrades and general regulatory compliance place substantial pressure on local governments and airport operators.

Without support, increased costs for regional aviation infrastructure ultimately fall to airlines and travellers, further elevating fares and reducing accessibility.

### **Regulatory and security cost impacts**

Enhanced security requirements have improved national safety outcomes. However, the ongoing cost burden on regional airports is disproportionate and continues to escalate. This creates a risk of reduced services or higher-than-acceptable fare levels. A balanced approach is needed to maintain both safety and connectivity.

### **Competitiveness and airline decision-making**

South Australia faces heightened competition from larger states to secure airline capacity and market development. The SATC continues to leverage strong partnerships with airlines and Adelaide Airport to pursue new and growing routes.

### **National charging considerations**

The national approach to aviation charging does not always reflect the operational realities of smaller markets. Review of these areas would better support the national objectives of regional access and affordability.

### **Assessment of previous government measures**

Federal aviation support provided through the pandemic was effective in maintaining essential air links. However, the national system continues to lack a comprehensive and enduring framework that ensures equitable and sustainable regional connectivity into the future. The reliance on short-term or reactive programs limits certainty for communities and industry.

### **Opportunities for national improvement**

The SATC sees significant opportunity for the Commonwealth to work collaboratively with states and industry to achieve better outcomes for regional aviation. Long-term

policy and funding settings that improve price fairness, protect minimum access standards and grow visitor and resident demand would strengthen service continuity and regional wellbeing.

### **Recommendations**

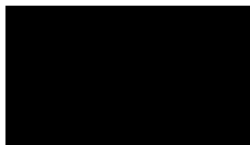
The South Australian Tourism Commission respectfully recommends that the Committee consider the following.

- The establishment of a nationally coordinated approach that protects regular and affordable air connectivity for regional and remote communities
- Reform of security and aviation regulatory cost settings to ensure that low volume markets are not disproportionately affected
- Creation of a long term regional airport funding framework that supports essential capital and operational needs
- Strong recognition of aviation's role in tourism and economic development when developing Federal funding and policy settings
- Continued support for aviation workforce development and capability, noting South Australia's strengths in training and education
- Policy settings that ensure competitive aviation markets, while safeguarding community access needs in regional Australia

If you would like to discuss any matters in this submission in the meantime, please contact Andrew McKinnon, Director, Cruise, Aviation and Access via

[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



**EMMA TERRY**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**