

Question on notice no. 346

Portfolio question number: SQ25-002690

2025-26 Supplementary Budget estimates

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts
Portfolio**

Senator Bridget McKenzie: asked the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts on 12 December 2025—

(1. The Aviation White Paper refers to the Minister issuing a Statement of Expectations to airport operators to guide conduct, governance and protection of aviation capability. Has a Statement of Expectations been formally issued to Moorabbin Airport Corporation?

(a) If yes, on what date was it issued?

(b) If not, why not?

2. Has a Statement of Expectations been issued to all federally leased airport operators?

(a) If yes, provide the dates of issue for each airport.

(b) If not, which airports have not yet received one, and why?

3. Is the Statement of Expectations publicly available?

(a) If so, where is it published?

(b) If not, why has it not been made public?

4. What legal or regulatory status does the Statement of Expectations have?

(a) Is it binding on airport leaseholders?

(b) Is compliance with it monitored by the Department?

(c) Are there any enforcement consequences for non-compliance?

5. Does the Statement of Expectations include explicit requirements in relation to:

(a) Protection of General Aviation activity

(b) Retention of aviation land and infrastructure

(c) Replacement of demolished aviation facilities

(d) Limitation of non-aviation commercial development

(e) Engagement with State and local planning authorities

6. Has the Department assessed whether the actions of Moorabbin Airport Corporation, including the demolition and non-replacement of seven aviation buildings are consistent with the Minister's Statement of Expectations?

(a) If so, provide the outcome of that assessment.

(b) If not, why has no such assessment occurred?

7. If the Statement of Expectations has not yet been issued, how is the Department currently giving effect to the Minister's commitments in the Aviation White Paper in relation to General Aviation protection and airport governance?

Answer —

Please see PDF attachment.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2025-2026

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Committee Question Number: 346

Departmental Question Number: SQ25-002690

Division/Agency Name: DIV - Domestic Aviation and Reform

Hansard Reference: Written (12 December 2025)

Topic: Statement of Expectations for federally leased airports

Senator Bridget McKenzie asked:

1. The Aviation White Paper refers to the Minister issuing a Statement of Expectations to airport operators to guide conduct, governance and protection of aviation capability. Has a Statement of Expectations been formally issued to Moorabbin Airport Corporation? a) If yes, on what date was it issued? b) If not, why not?
2. Has a Statement of Expectations been issued to all federally leased airport operators? a) If yes, provide the dates of issue for each airport. b) If not, which airports have not yet received one, and why?
3. Is the Statement of Expectations publicly available? a) If so, where is it published? b) If not, why has it not been made public?
4. What legal or regulatory status does the Statement of Expectations have? a) Is it binding on airport leaseholders? b) Is compliance with it monitored by the Department? c) Are there any enforcement consequences for non-compliance?
5. Does the Statement of Expectations include explicit requirements in relation to: a) Protection of General Aviation activity b) Retention of aviation land and infrastructure c) Replacement of demolished aviation facilities d) Limitation of non-aviation commercial development e) Engagement with State and local planning authorities
6. Has the Department assessed whether the actions of Moorabbin Airport Corporation, including the demolition and non-replacement of seven aviation buildings are consistent with the Minister's Statement of Expectations? a) If so, provide the outcome of that assessment. b) If not, why has no such assessment occurred?
7. If the Statement of Expectations has not yet been issued, how is the Department currently giving effect to the Minister's commitments in the Aviation White Paper in relation to General Aviation protection and airport governance?

Answer:

1. Page 9 of the Aviation White Paper – Towards 2050 states:

'The government will protect GA's access to LFAs by setting clear expectations for airport master plans and establishing a clear statement of expectations for how the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts will fulfil its function as a regulator under the *Airports Act 1996*.'

On 26 August 2024, the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government wrote to all Airport Lessee Companies (ALCs) setting clear expectations of the Australian Government for airport master plans with Leased Federal Airports (LFAs). This included Moorabbin Airport Corporation (MAC) and outlined a number of matters she will have regard to in considering draft master plans and draft major development plans (see **Attachment A**).

Additionally, as outlined in the Aviation White Paper, on 17 December 2025, the Statement of Expectations for how the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts will fulfil its function as a regulator was made publicly available at <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/transport-strategy-policy/regulation-department>.

2. Refer to Question 1 response.
3. Refer to Question 1 response.
4. The department continues to fulfil its function as a regulator, ensuring ALCs are compliant with their obligations under the *Airports Act 1996*. Both the Statement of Expectations and the letter of 26 August 2024 do not alter any of the delegated authorities' requirements to perform legislated functions and they are to be read alongside the laws that apply to the department and the laws administered by the delegated authorities.
5. Yes, the Statement of Expectations for how the department will fulfil its function as a regulator includes the expectation that the department ensure Master Plans and Major Development Plans (MDPs) include appropriate access for all civil aviation airport users including general aviation. This is reiterated in the letter of 26 August 2024, the minister wrote advising all ALCs that when she considers MDP's and Masterplans that she would have regard to *'whether appropriate access to the airport site has been provided for General Aviation users, consistent with the requirements of the Airport Act 1996 that I must have regard to 'the extent to which carrying out the plan would meet present and future requirements of civil aviation users of the airport... for services and facilities relating to the airport concerned'*.
6. No, under the *Airports Act 1996*, the ALC is responsible for overseeing development and building activities at the airport it operates. The demolition of buildings or other structures on leased federal airport sites requires demolition authorisation, which the proponent must submit to the Airport Building Controller (ABC) through the department's electronic lodgement facility. Aside from the demolition authorisation process, there is no requirement for the proponent or the ABC to inform the department of a proposed demolition.
7. Refer to Question 1 response.

Attachments

- A: Letter from Min C King to Moorabbin Airport Corporation



The Hon Catherine King MP

Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
Member for Ballarat

Ref: MS24-001451

Paul Ferguson
Chief Executive Officer
Moorabbin Airport
66 Bundora Parade
MOORABBIN VIC 3194

via: pferguson@moorabbinairport.com.au

Dear Mr Ferguson

Paul,

I will shortly release the Australian Government's Aviation White Paper, which will set out the Government's policies to support the next generation of growth and innovation in the aviation sector to 2050.

The White Paper will include new policy initiatives to improve the processes for planning and development on and around Australia's leased federal airports, including Moorabbin Airport. The Government aims to support the efficient and productive use of airport sites, meet the needs of airport users, and minimise the impact of airport operations on nearby communities and the environment.

To this end, the Government will amend the *Airports Regulations 2024* to require airport master plans and major development plans (MDPs) to include additional information about how development of the airport will:

- support appropriate access for people with disability
- minimise carbon emissions
- enhance resilience to climate impacts
- address the requirements of the National Airport Safeguarding Framework.

In addition to these new regulatory requirements, I am writing to advise you that – in deciding whether to approve future master plans and MDPs for leased federal airports – I intend to have regard to:

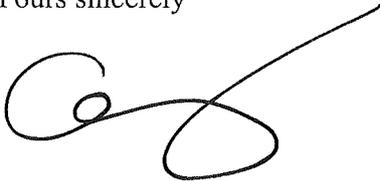
- the appropriateness of the airport's community consultation processes, including consultation with First Nations people and, where developments involve changes to flight paths, consistency with the Airservices Australia 2023 Community Engagement Standard
- how the airport will build and maintain resilience to climate impacts
- the suitability of the airport's sustainability and decarbonisation initiatives
- whether the airport's disability access arrangements comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and relevant disability standards

- whether appropriate access to the airport site has been provided for General Aviation users, consistent with the requirements of the *Airports Act 1996* that I must have regard to ‘the extent to which carrying out the plan would meet present and future requirements of civil aviation users of the airport ... for services and facilities relating to the airport concerned.’

For master plans or MDPs that involve new or changed runways, I also intend to have regard to the suitability of the airport’s plans for noise mitigation.

I encourage you to review the Aviation White Paper, which includes 56 new policy initiatives addressing matters including: consumer protection; disability access; competition; skills and workforce; decarbonisation; regional connectivity; General Aviation; airport planning and noise; safety, security and airspace regulation; new aviation technology; and international aviation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a series of loops and a long, sweeping tail that extends upwards and to the right.

Catherine King MP

26 / 8 /2024