



Community Aviation Consultation Group

Meeting 11 March 2026

Web Report

held at Kilgariff Room, Alice Springs Airport Management Centre & Microsoft Teams

1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

As Eddie Fry's arrival was delayed, Sandra De Kock welcomed members to the meeting and acknowledged the strong attendance following the group's refresh and renewed engagement with members. The CACG plays an important role in shaping the direction of the airport and strengthening ADG's collaboration with the broader community.

Sandra offered a formal farewell to former Chair Rex Mooney, who had led the group for over five years. Airport Development Group (ADG) conveyed its gratitude for his guidance and enduring contribution to the group.

Eddie Fry was welcomed to the group as the incoming Chair. Eddie brings extensive experience across the Australian resources sector, with expertise in Indigenous and Native Title matters. Eddie also serves as Chair of the Darwin International Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group and Airport Development Group's Indigenous Advisory Committee.

2. Summary of previous minutes

The summary record of the CACG meeting on 17 November 2025 had been previously settled by circulation.

3. Airport Development Group

ADG Overview

- ADG has 3 key airport assets: Darwin Alice Springs and Tennant Creek airports and the Darwin Airport Resorts. We see ourselves as leaders in mid-tier regional airport infrastructure. ADG's purpose comprises the 3 core pillars of:
 - Growing the retirement savings of working Australians,
 - Improving the lives of Territorians via the provision of infrastructure, and
 - To enable education and employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians.
- Aviation growth tends to follow population growth, which currently sits at around 1.5%, so aviation growth is currently fairly flat.
- ADG is maintaining its focus on securing the Centre Run, which is critical for the Central Australia region. There is significant potential in the central region to capture FIFO movements and attract visitation.
- ADG is beginning to see positive indicators in the region's resources and mining sectors; however, these opportunities may take several years to fully materialise and will depend on significant infrastructure investment. This makes it critical to unite

industry partners to ensure long-term route sustainability, increased visitation, and a stable economic future.

ADG submission to NT Visitor Economy Strategy

- In October 2025, ADG provided its submission to the NT Government's Visitor Economy Strategy, supporting the strategy's vision for a safer, stronger, and more prosperous territory.
- ADG's submission focussed on 5 key themes: air connectivity; investment in infrastructure; value-for-money products and experiences; authentic Indigenous experiences; 365-day a year tourism season.

4. ADG regulatory & planning matters

ADG provided some context to the CACG for new members. The group was established 15 years ago as an initiative of the 2009 Aviation White Paper and its purpose is to foster engagement and communication between the airport and the local community.

The Australian Government has recently published updated guidelines for CACGs: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/media/publications/community-aviation-consultation-group-cacg-guidelines>. The Terms of Reference for the group is currently being updated to align with the revised guidelines.

Alice Springs Airport updates its master plan every 8 years. The plan outlines a 20-year vision for the airport and takes around two years to develop, including several stages of consultation. The current plan was approved in 2020, and work on the next version will begin in early 2027. The group will be consulted throughout the development of the new plan.

5. Members' feedback

Members broadly discussed topics including:

- tourism and aviation connectivity for the region
- the cost of regional airfares and the direct impact this has to liveability and population growth
- resource sector operations and FIFO considerations in the Central Australia and Barkly regions, along with potential opportunities and challenges
- the unfolding situation in the Middle East and its potential implications for fuel and food security.

Tourism Central Australia

- Tourism Central Australia is preparing a 'sister' document to accompany the NT Visitor Economy Strategy 2032 that will focus on the Red Centre and the Barkly Region.
- Generally, domestic visitation to Central Australia is strongest during winter while international visitation is strongest during summer. Irregularity in aviation services can impact on international market connectivity.

- Opportunities are being investigated to attract the China market by leveraging off the China Southern flights servicing Darwin and Adelaide.
- At the recent National Tourism Awards, Tourism Central Australia received the Gold Award for its 'Stories of the Heart' marketing campaign.

NT Department of Lands, Planning and Environment

- The NT Planning Commission continues to work through the South of the Gap Subregional Land Use Plan.
- The NT Government and Australian Government have recently announced the preparation of an Alice Springs Aquifer Protection Study.

6. Alice Springs Airport Manager's Report

- The traffic layout in front of the terminal is being redesigned to improve safety and vehicle flows.
- There are a number of upcoming sponsorships and terminal activations, including fabAlice and Partjima, both being major visitation drivers to the region.
- Security fenceline improvements are underway and the airport's Transport Security Program is being updated.
- The new Airports (Protection of Airspace) Regulations 2026 will come into effect on 1 April 2026 (replacing the previous 1996 regulations).

7. Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

- For the benefit of new members, a background to the privatisation of Alice Springs Airport was shared along with the regulatory approach, particularly in planning and the environment. Alice Springs Airport has a very good reputation in environmental management.
- The new Airports (Environment Protection) Regulations 2026 will also come into effect on 1 April 2026 (replacing the previous 1997 regulations).
- The airport's novel approach to the control of Buffel Grass using cattle was discussed.

8. Airservices Australia

Airservices advised that no aircraft noise complaints for Alice Springs Airport have been received since the last meeting, and that the current flight paths are sound.

9. Any other business

Nil.

10. Next meeting

The next CACG meeting is scheduled for Thursday 5 November 2026.