



29 April 2024

Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

PO Box 6100

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

To whom it may concern,

Re: Inquiry into the *Impact and mitigation of aircraft noise*

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee regarding the inquiry into the *Impact and mitigation of aircraft noise*.

QTIC is the peak industry body and leading advocate for the tourism, hospitality, and events sectors in Queensland, committed to the growth and sustainability of the state visitor economy. Our efforts focus on powerful lobbying, policy development, and collaboration with key industry stakeholders to create a favourable business environment for operators. As a not-for-profit, membership-based organisation, we take pride in ensuring that the concerns and needs of our members and the broader tourism industry inform all relevant policy debates and that businesses have strong representation in decision-making processes. By promoting the value and importance of tourism in government forums and to the wider community, we help to create a vibrant, diverse industry that benefits all.

QTIC offers the following comments in response to the terms of reference, informed by member consultation and industry insights:

The Queensland visitor economy

Tourism is a dynamic and multifaceted industry, comprised of passionate people showcasing Queensland’s rich history, unique destinations, and diverse First Nations cultures. A deep connection to communities is evident through the array of services and commercial opportunities tourism provides. In addition, a commitment to research and innovation means that tourism plays a crucial role in creating new opportunities for Queensland. Tourism is a vital contributor to national, state, and local economies, with international and domestic travellers generating \$34 billion in Overnight Visitor Expenditure (OVE) in the year ending December 2023.¹ The visitor economy accounts for 6.3% of total GSP (directly and indirectly), ranking as Queensland’s fifth largest export.²

Tourism also acts as a catalyst for growth in various industries like agriculture, construction, manufacturing, transport, retail, education, and training. For every dollar spent on tourism, an additional 86 cents is circulated elsewhere in the economy (2022-23).³ The industry is also relevant to many, if not all, government portfolios and involves all three levels of government, contributing \$1.5 billion in net taxes from direct consumption to federal, state, and local revenue.⁴

¹ Tourism and Events Queensland 2024, [Queensland tourism economic key facts](#), viewed 22 April 2024.

² Tourism Research Australia 2024, [State tourism satellite account – Queensland summary](#), Australian Trade and Investment Commission, viewed 23 April 2024.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

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The Queensland tourism industry constitutes 68.4% of total state employment with 260,000 direct and indirect jobs.⁵ Looking ahead, projections indicate employment in accommodation and food services will have the third fastest growth of all industries in Queensland by 2025-26.⁶ Nevertheless, the Queensland tourism industry is confronted by sizable workforce shortages, totalling 4,147 job vacancies across the state.⁷

Beyond economic impact, tourism serves as a cornerstone of social cohesion, uniting communities and fostering cross-cultural exchange. In addition, tourism serves as a catalyst for environmental education and fosters responsible stewardship of our natural resources. Moreover, it offers a platform for empowering First Nations peoples through sharing of rich cultural stories and traditions.

Aviation connectivity and visitor dispersal

Any restrictions limiting aviation capacity are guaranteed to have implications beyond Southeast Queensland. As a highly dispersed state, regional aviation connectivity is critical not just for the tourism industry but the entire economy and society. In the absence of other practical means of travel such as high-speed rail, airports and carriers become a crucial enabler of regional connectivity and commerce, with Brisbane serving as a gateway for 75% of inbound travellers to destinations across the state. Given that 53% of Queensland tourism businesses are located outside of Brisbane,⁸ it is crucial to maintain this connection to avoid isolating the city from regional areas and vice versa.

Visitors to regional destinations are essential to local communities, driving business growth, social and economic development, employment opportunities, and critical infrastructure investments. Notably, 9 out of 10 tourism businesses in Queensland are classified as micro to small enterprises,⁹ underscoring the importance of dependable aviation services for their sustainability and growth. Furthermore, any disruptions to passenger journeys could jeopardise Queensland's global appeal and brand reputation as a premier destination. Reductive approaches to mitigating aircraft noise through caps and curfews, for example, would likely result in decreased services to regional airports as higher-yielding routes are inevitably prioritised.

Queensland is currently working in a highly competitive market to secure new air routes. This is coupled with significant government and industry co-investment. The Queensland Government currently allocates \$100 million annually to the [Attracting Aviation Investment Fund](#), matched by the private sector.

A commitment to sustainability across the supply chain, coupled with initiatives at various planning stages, will also position Queensland as a global leader in Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). By utilising agricultural byproducts, these efforts will create jobs, drive innovation, and boost the economy:

- [JetZero and LanzaJet project](#) to establish the first Australian SAF biorefinery in Townsville. The Queensland government contributed \$760,000 to project feasibility work and site evaluation.
- [Ampol and ENEOS](#) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Queensland Government to assess the feasibility of an advanced biofuels manufacturing plant at the Lytton refinery site.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Jobs Queensland 2023, [Anticipating Future Skills Series](#), Queensland Government, viewed 24 April 2024.

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2024, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - February 2024](#), viewed 15 April 2024.

⁸ Tourism Research Australia 2024, [Tourism businesses in Australia - June 2018 to 2023](#), Australian Trade and Investment Commission, viewed 23 April 2024.

⁹ *Ibid.*

Future opportunities

The topic at hand is not new – it is worth drawing attention to a selection of previous related inquiries that may provide some insights and help to avoid further duplication of efforts:

- **2010:** Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Reference Committee inquiry into the [Effectiveness of Airservices Australia's management of aircraft noise](#)
- **2017:** Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee inquiry into the [Airports Amendment Bill 2016 \[Provisions\]](#)
- **2019:** Productivity Commission inquiry into the [Economic regulation of airports](#)
- **2023:** Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts consultation on the [Aviation Green Paper](#), noting that responses to the terms of reference for the inquiry at hand are already addressed by submissions supporting the development of the *Aviation White Paper*.

This inquiry can function as a catalyst for innovative practices by adopting a holistic, long-term approach. QTIC makes the following recommendations:

- Incentivise aviation sector investment into quieter and cleaner aircraft. Fleet renewal is vital – our member consultations have shown that newer aircraft are not only more fuel efficient (between 70-80%) but also up to 40-50% quieter.
- Work collaboratively with regulatory bodies, airports, carriers, and communities to find alignment and explore alternative measures, including changes or improvements to routes.
- Allocate \$200 million annually to match the Queensland Government contribution to the *Attracting Aviation Investment Fund*, to support a competitive aviation market, enhancing capacity for major cities and regional destinations, with the goal of surpassing pre-pandemic levels. The program should offer incentives to attract investment, stimulate growth in international and domestic visitation, and encourage expansion of new international air routes to diverse markets for tourism and trade.
- Establish an investment account for tourism businesses with initial seed funding from the Australian Government, supporting critical research and development programs, including sustainable aviation fuel.
- Investment into developing a skilled workforce to alleviate existing shortages and ensure strategic, longer-term workforce planning aligned with projected population growth.

In eight years, the *Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games* will spotlight Queensland on the world stage. Ongoing investment in transport infrastructure is critical to capitalise on this exposure, facilitate regional visitor dispersal, and address population growth and liveability. QTIC emphasises that the tourism industry, situated at the intersection of people, place, and economy, can be a powerful driver of positive change. Striking the right balance is essential for the long-term sustainability of businesses, communities, and the environment.

QTIC is committed to a sustainable aviation future, prioritising collaboration and innovation to foster a vibrant and resilient visitor economy for Queensland and all those who live here. For further discussion on any points raised in this submission, please contact QTIC on (07) 3236 1445 or email policy@qtic.com.au.

Yours sincerely,



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