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Communique

NPFC Meeting 26 November 2024

The NPFC (the Committee) convened on 26 November 2024. The Chair, Tharanie Vithanage, First Assistant Secretary, Strategy and Policy Division, conducted opening formalities and meeting administration and delivered an Acknowledgement of Country.

The ABF provided updates regarding progress on traveller modernisation initiatives over the last 12 months, including:

- The Future Traveller Vision and Roadmap
- The Australian Traveller (ATD) project – a joint industry and government project
- The trial of new single step contactless departures SmartGates at Sydney International Airport
- Various regulatory reforms, including the Turnaround Crew Policy

It was agreed that industry sessions would be held to provide members with increased visibility of government initiatives and trials.

The Board of Airline Representatives of Australia (BARA) provided an update stressing the importance of a focus on growth in the Asia Pacific region over the next 20 years, with aviation-related capital investment predicted to be worth 1.3 trillion USD. The Australian Airports Association (AAA) advised that over the next seven years, there will be capital investment of over 20 billion AUD for airport infrastructure upgrades.

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) provided an update on the Aviation White Paper, released by government in August 2024. The Aviation White Paper outlines a long-term vision for aviation, with 56 initiatives to guide the next generation of growth and innovation in the sector to 2050. Some of these initiatives include:

- A review of the ports framework, which will determine appropriate future arrangements for whole of government consideration of new and redeveloping ports whilst maintaining customs, immigration and biosecurity standards
- The Ombuds Scheme, which will develop an Aviation Customer Rights Charter detailing fair and appropriate treatment of travellers by airlines and airports
- Development of new aviation-specific disability standards, as a schedule to the existing Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport. The new requirements will be co-designed with people with disability and industry and relevant government agencies consulted in 2025.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) priorities currently include:

- Reduction of physical interventions with low risk passengers at the border
- Expanding locations where detector dogs are used
- Working with DITRDCA on the Aviation White Paper content regarding First Port of Entry
- Developing a risk status to be attributed to each inbound source market, which will lead to a framework on the 'dial up/dial down' of intervention safety mechanisms

Priorities for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Passport Office include:

- Working on the development of a digital travel credential which meets international standards
- Implementation of a minor change to R Series passports, following an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) decision.
 - There will soon be an additional letter in the 'Type' field denoting the passport type, for example PO for Official passports
- Implementation of ICAO determined photo image encoding changes to passport chips, with implications for passport creation and passport readers

The ABF led a discussion on the review of the NPFC Terms of Reference and membership. Members were invited to provide feedback on any potential improvements to how the committee operates. Suggestions included reviewing and expanding membership given the evolving nature of travel and digital identification, establishment of time-limited, issue-specific working groups, consideration of a rotating industry co-chair, inclusion of cyber security representatives, facilitating meetings at industry-hosted locations, and facilitating alignment with related strategic forums.

The ABF also briefed members in relation to the National Air Transport Facilitation Programme, noting an update to the audit will be provided in 2025. A program document has been drafted; the program is designed to operate alongside and to provide updates to the NPFC.

The next NPFC meeting will be held in March 2025.

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