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Commuque NPFC Meeting 16 October 2025

The Australian Border Force (ABF) convened the third National Passenger Facilitation Committee (NPFC) meeting of the year at ABF Head Quarters in Brindabella Park, ACT with Ms Tharanie Vithanage, First Assistant Secretary, Strategy and Border Modernisation Division and Mr Ryan Both, Executive General Manager Aviation, Brisbane Airport Corporation overseeing the commencement formalities and meeting administration. The minutes from the previous meetings held on 24 March 2025 and 1 August 2025 were endorsed by all members.

Members noted Traveller initiatives tabled for Treasury consideration following the August sprint, including technology upgrades, traveller modernisation through the Australian Travel Declaration (ATD) and digitalisation of the Tourist Refund Scheme. Industry flagged biosecurity implications associated with the ATD rollout and agreed that aligned messaging and joint engagement with stakeholders is essential to support seamless border and productivity reforms.

The Chair of the working group on Sustainable Funding of Border Operations highlighted progress toward a unified industry-led funding proposal to achieve seamless border outcomes by 2030. Members noted the estimated \$380 million phased investment for digitisation, arrivals card removal, technology uplift and enhanced facilitation. The Chair flagged the need to refine the proposal and progress a unified plan focusing on sustainable border operations.

The Chair of the working group on Legislative and Regulatory Reforms outlined opportunities to improve digital processes and enable earlier access to traveller information. Members emphasised aligning proposals with current NPFC priorities, avoiding duplication and balancing immediate opportunities with broader member impact.

The Chair of the working group on Facilitation and Key Performance Indicators reported initial discussions focused on agency metrics, processing outputs and measuring facilitation performance. The group agreed to map indicators into an equivalence matrix to identify gaps and inform realistic, internationally comparable measures that reflect passenger experience, security and biosecurity requirements.

The Department of Home Affairs provided an update on liquid, aerosol and gel restrictions. Members noted that advancements in CT X-ray and body-scanning technology enable future screening of larger liquid volumes and agreed that any consideration of changes to requirements should be carefully coordinated to ensure security, facilitation and operational requirements are met.

Sydney Airport outlined progress on the Combined International Departures and Domestic Operations project, including work on system integration, passenger and baggage milestones and dependencies relating to the ATD.

Austrade provided an update on data and forecasting questions from the previous meeting, noting the challenges and limitations in some areas. Members supported continued collaboration amongst key stakeholder groups.

Brisbane Airport reported progress on the International-to-Domestic seamless baggage transfer project, highlighting technical dependencies, broad scenario testing and the importance of coordinated messaging among airlines, airports and Government.

The Department of Home Affairs provided an overview of one-stop security arrangements, noting operational complexity, international regulatory requirements and the need for careful coordination with partner countries.

The Chair reflected on the year's efforts, encouraged ongoing feedback from members to continue improving the quality of discussions and thanked everyone for their continued support of the NPFC. The next NPFC is proposed to take place at Gold Coast Airport in February 2026.

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