

OFFICIAL

Communique

NPFC Meeting 24 March 2025

The NPFC convened at Brisbane Airport International Terminal, with Co-Chairs Ms. Tharanie Vithanage, First Assistant Secretary of the Strategy and Policy Division and Mr Ryan Both, Executive General Manager Aviation, Brisbane Airport Corporation, overseeing the commencement formalities and meeting administration. The Minutes from the previous meeting held on 26 November 2024 were endorsed by all members. Members welcomed the move to include an industry co-chair for future NPFC meetings, demonstrating a commitment to ensuring genuine government and industry collaboration.

Members discussed key markets such as New Zealand, China, India and Southeast Asia, focusing on their growth trends and potential growth. Visitor categories showed a quick rebound in travellers Visiting Friends and Relatives when borders reopened, with holiday travel expected to grow the most going forward. The importance of easing travel through borders to boost demand and the need for accurate projections for planning and investment were emphasised.

The need for a more transparent, efficient and flexible framework to support the growth of new and redeveloping international ports was highlighted. Some industry members highlighted the disproportionate financial burdens faced by smaller airports and the importance of coordination across government agencies. A strategy for ports to guide development and improve communication was noted as crucial.

Some industry members emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Passenger Movement Charge (PMC) funds were directed appropriately towards border operations. Some industry members raised concerns about the challenges faced by smaller airports regarding funding and infrastructure. A cohesive argument for investment in border operations and the creation of a working group to address funding and operational challenges were agreed upon, with an industry member to lead the forum.

Members noted the new Perth Airport runway construction is set to begin soon and will be operational by 2029. The construction of the first multi-story car park is underway, with completion expected by September 2026. The role of biometrics in enhancing passenger processing efficiency was discussed, along with the consideration for expanded border agency capabilities to handle increased demand.

Members were informed about the recent consolidation of the Aviation Security Screening Notice (ASN) into a single document, aimed at simplifying and contemporising the language used. The importance of uplifting the security culture and effectiveness of passenger screening was emphasised. With plans to collaborate with industry on identifying and addressing issues, the Department of Home Affairs advised members that the first meeting of the Screener Working Group is scheduled for June 2025.

A number of Seamless Border Initiatives were discussed. The Australia Travel Declaration (ATD) pilot, has now expanded to all Qantas flights arriving in Brisbane. The Increased SmartGate Usage Project aims to increase SmartGates usage to 70 percent of all arriving travellers, with new eligibility criteria and communication strategies being implemented. The Combined Departures Project (industry led initiative) aims to streamline and harmonise processes for combined domestic and international departures, with ongoing deep dive workshops to map out the end-to-end journey of passengers.

Members were informed about the progress and challenges of the 3D X-ray projects in mail, travel and air cargo pathways. The importance of confirming attendance for future meetings was reminded, with the next meeting scheduled for June 2025 in Canberra. Members were encouraged to participate in the working groups outside of the NPFC to continue discussions on key issues.

OFFICIAL