

30 April 2024

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

*Via email: [rrat.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:rrat.sen@aph.gov.au)*

Dear Committee Secretary,

**RE: Inquiry into the Impact and Mitigation of Aircraft Noise**

The Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA), the peak body for a broad array of Australian travel professionals, thanks the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee for the opportunity to provide input into its Inquiry into the Impact and Mitigation of Aircraft Noise. ATIA's membership base includes the full spectrum of travel intermediary businesses across Australia including retail, corporate and online travel agents, tour operators, wholesalers and consolidators.

In undertaking this Inquiry, it is important to balance concerns around aircraft noise with the social and economic benefits of Australia's aviation industry. Any proposed mitigation measures must be appropriate, and not create any unnecessary ramifications that do not serve the broader industry, community and economy.

Aviation is a critical sector, contributing \$20 billion to the economy before COVID-19 and directly employing over 90,000 people. Aviation is also key to Australia's tourism and travel sector. Given Australia's size and dispersed population, as well as the fact Australia is an island nation, aviation plays a critical role in domestic and regional connectivity and offers a vital connection between Australia and the rest of the world. Combined domestic and international visitor spend in Australia totalled \$170 billion last year,<sup>1</sup> which would not have been possible without appropriate levels of passenger facilitation via air travel.

We note the Inquiry seeks to understand the effect of aircraft noise on small business, as well as proposals for the mitigation and limitation of aircraft noise such as flight curfews, changes to flight paths and alternatives to air travel. Ninety-two per cent of ATIA's members are small businesses, and last year travel professionals sold over 23 million air tickets worth almost \$18.5 billion,<sup>2</sup> supporting the needs of travelling Australians. The effective operation of Australia's aviation sector is crucial to these small businesses and the communities in which they operate.

ATIA small businesses have been greatly impacted by flight disruptions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and measures that may negatively impact an airline or airport's ability to operate will have negative consequences for Australian consumers. Measures such as curfews or flight capping would exacerbate existing challenges felt during peak periods and recovery periods after weather disruptions, resulting in cancelled flights and flight delays. This has a significant flow on effect for travel intermediaries, with time spent by staff reorganising trips, including rebooking flights, accommodation, car rental, land transport and tourism experience activities. Travel agents also face an opportunity cost, which is the revenue that may be lost by the agency because the travel agent staff could have used the time they spent on reorganising a cancelled flight and other bookings to arrange travel for new clients instead.

The management of aircraft noise is a complex matter involving Governments, planners, regulators, airports, airlines and air service providers. ATIA understands that key industry stakeholders have been focused on and are committed to efforts to minimise noise impacts, for example through use of modern, quieter aircraft, and appropriate noise abatement operational procedures. In addition, the Government is

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<sup>1</sup> Tourism Research Australia (2024), [Visitor Economy Facts and Figures](#), March 2024, pg.1.

<sup>2</sup> Ticket defined as individual air tickets sold.

examining measures to further address aircraft noise as part of its Aviation White Paper process, which has involved extensive industry and community consultation. Recommendations to address aircraft noise will appropriately be contained within the Aviation White Paper, due to be released mid-2024.

Thank you for considering the views of the travel industry. Please contact Ingrid Fraser, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy at [ingrid.fraser@atia.travel](mailto:ingrid.fraser@atia.travel) for any further information.

Yours sincerely

**Dean Long**  
**Chief Executive Officer**