



01 June 2022

The Hon Catherine King MP
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Via email: Catherine.King.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms King

Congratulations and welcome

On behalf of the RAAA Board and its members, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and welcome you to the portfolio. I am aware of your experience in this portfolio and I know you would be aware of most of the issues facing the aviation industry. There are however some urgent matters that would need your immediate attention.

The RAAA has approximately 40 Ordinary Members (AOC holders) and 70 Associate/Affiliate Members. Our members directly employ over 10,500 Australians, many in regional areas. On an annual basis RAAA members jointly turnover more than \$1.5b, carry well in excess of two million passengers and move over 23 million kilograms of freight. RAAA members operate in all states and territories and include airlines, freight operators, airports, engine and airframe manufacturers, flight training companies including Universities, finance and insurance companies and government entities.

The Covid pandemic has caused one of the greatest disruptions to our industry in its 100-year history, the previous government's support was vital in sustaining many aviation companies over the last two years. With international travel still below 50% and not forecast to return to normal levels until 2024 at the earliest, it is vital that some of our aviation related agencies continue to receive that vital financial support to sustain them without the need to dramatically increase fees and charges to our domestic and regional aviation organisations. The RAAA are seeking your early support to ensure that any recovery we are hoping for will not be hindered by covering costs that otherwise would have been provided by international flights.

Labor's announcement of a White Paper to be developed is most welcome and the RAAA would like to ensure we are involved in this process as much as possible to ensure regional aviation receives the attention it deserves. We would also point to the previous government's framework to recovery paper to accelerate some of the policy areas needing more urgent attention, such as skills. We are already in a critical skills shortage, in particular for aircraft maintenance engineers. Whilst we do need to look at long term solutions to training processes, the RAAA would like to call on your government to immediately include Aircraft Maintenance Engineers (Australian Skills Classifications 323111, 323112, 323113) to the Priority Migration Skilled Occupation List (PMSOL) which is managed by the Minister for Immigration, we would like your assistance in ensuring this may occur. Aircraft Maintenance Engineers are already classified by the National Skills Commission as in "national shortage with strong future demand". Regional aviation suffers worst for skills shortages due to



location and lack of ability to compete on salaries with the major airlines. Our members are currently accessing overseas workforces with limited success but are being hampered by delays in processing Visas which in most cases could be avoided if on the PMSOL.

The RAAA works collaboratively with our regulator CASA to develop mutually beneficial policy outcomes. The work of the regulator is of course a fine balancing act and we commend the work they did during Covid to alleviate a lot of regulatory hurdles which otherwise could not have been complied with. The RAAA would like to see CASA continue to improve their collaborative work with the aviation industry and also look to work on their systems-based regulatory oversight abilities. Our industry has, through recent regulatory changes, moved towards systems-based administration which has required an incredible amount of work by industry, we would hate to see this work go to waste and have CASA continue to oversight on every aspect of an organisation. CASA inspectors require training in this mindset otherwise we will only see lip service being paid to this new approach.

I would like to also take this opportunity to request a meeting with yourself at the next sitting period to further discuss these matters and others which I believe would be of value to yourself and staff. I am sure you will be busy with briefings and other meetings but please do not hesitate in contacting me on the number/email below.

Best regards,

Steven Campbell

Chief Executive Officer

Regional Aviation Association of Australia

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