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Australian and South Pacific regional airlines promote closer ties

Australian and South Pacific regional airlines will soon have more opportunity to collaborate on common issues, after the Regional Aviation Association of Australia (RAAA) invited the Association of South Pacific Airlines (ASPA) to be an RAAA affiliated member.

RAAA CEO Steven Campbell extended the offer at the ASPA Annual General Meeting and Conference in Nadi, Fiji this week, to which he was invited as an observer guest. He believes closer ties between the two organisations will promote greater communication and collaboration on the major challenges facing the aviation industry.

“Whether flying over ocean or desert, Asia Pacific and Australian regional airlines share challenges in operations, maintenance and recruitment that are part of connecting smaller regional and remote communities over great distances,” Mr Campbell said.

“Issues such as aircraft support in remote locations, local recruitment and maintaining the varied fleet needed to suit local operational requirements are familiar to both ASPA and RAAA members.

“But members have found different ways of addressing these problems, and their knowledge and resources could benefit operators in both regions to provide safe, efficient services to their communities.

“I am especially looking forward to reciprocating the warm welcome I received from ASPA members in Fiji, when they attend our 2024 RAAA Convention on the Gold Coast in March. Sharing knowledge and speaking with one voice will ensure our regional aviation companies have a smoother journey into the future,” Mr Campbell said.

ASPA Secretary General David Tohi said it was a great initiative for the two associations to come together for information sharing and to learn from one another.

“Australian regional carriers have such similar challenges as we do, whether it is skills shortages or reducing carbon emissions,” he said. “We will all be facing these increasing issues together and together we have a better chance of meeting those challenges.

“I look forward to working more closely with our Australian friends going forward and to have the opportunities for our members to participate in RAAA events. Similarly, we hope to see some of the RAAA members at our future events as well and enjoy our South Pacific hospitality,” Mr Tohi said.

ASPA has great reach in the South Pacific with coverage from New Guinea to the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Fiji and Samoa. Airlines operate the whole spectrum of aircraft, up to Fiji Airways Airbus A330 and A350 aircraft.

Under the agreement, all ASPA Full Members (airlines) will gain RAAA membership benefits and rates when attending RAAA events. It will also open the door to a more collaborative approach for the wider region on addressing challenges facing particularly smaller regional carriers on their journey to Net Zero.

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The RAAA represents aviation across Australia. It has over 100 members and its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) holding members directly employ over 2,500 Australians, many in regional areas. On an annual basis, the RAAA’s AOC members jointly turn over more than \$1.5 billion, carry well in excess of two million passengers and move over 23 million kilograms of freight. Our Regional Airport members also provide and manage critical infrastructure across Australia.

Serving regional aviation, and through it, the people and businesses of regional Australia
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