ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY: BUSY SKIES AHEAD

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Australia Corporate Alert

There are busy skies ahead for Australian airspace according to the recently released "*Aviation Green Paper: Towards 2050*" (Green Paper) by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts (Department).

As set out in the Green Paper, we can expect to see aircraft movements set to increase from three million per year to eight or even nine million per year. The reason for the threefold growth in air traffic is not a forecast of massive increase in international tourists flocking to our shores post the pandemic. Rather, the predicted increase is attributed to the expectation that the Australian public will accept and embrace Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) services such as flying taxis within the next decade and through the 2030s.

With such a large number of AAM services along with drones sharing the airways with other conventional aircraft, the Australian Government realises that the increase in volume and complexity of aviation activity requires the development of a new Uncrewed Aircraft System Traffic Management (UTM) ecosystem. The new UTM ecosystem will provide easy-to-access mission-critical data and rules regarding safety, security, noise, privacy and environmental concerns to facilitate lawful drones and future operations of AAM services.

Building onto the UTM ecosystem, a new Flight Information Management System (FIMS) will be developed by the Department in consultation with Airservices Australia. The FIMS data exchange gateway will then connect UTM participants with Australia's air traffic management system.

These revolutionary changes to Australian aviation are good news for regional communities. It is hoped that in the future, AAM services will improve the connections from Australia's regional areas. The Green Paper suggests that, in time, we may see larger aircraft being used to fly between our capital cities and regional hubs, leaving shorter onward journeys to AAM.

The 2019 report by the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee, "*The operation, regulation and funding of air route service delivery to rural, regional and remote communities,*" points out that Australia is one of the most expensive countries in the world to fly within its borders. The Green Paper predicts that drones, AAM and other emerging technologies may reduce the costs of air travel in regional areas, which is good news as everyday Australians in regional communities continue to struggle with the increased costs of living.

Chief Operating Officer of Aviation and Tourism of the Whitsunday Regional Council, Craig Turner was not surprised by the Green Paper's prediction when he said:

> “With 74 Barrier Reef islands at our doorstep coupled with the diversity of our region’s economy spanning agriculture mining and tourism, the growth of AAM aviation services will only be beneficial for our area and potentially create new revenue streams previously untapped.”

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In the future as AAM services transform the Australian skies into busy aviation highways, everyone can look forward to the convenience and cost savings that this new technology is expected to bring.

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