

REGIONAL AVIATION ACCESS PROGRAMME

Programme Component One:

Remote Air Services Subsidy (RASS) Scheme

PROGRAMME INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORM

Introduction

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that Australian's in regional and remote communities have reasonable access to air services to major cities and other key centres.

In recognition of the important role that aerodromes play in helping remote communities access essential goods and services, the Government provides funding for safety and access upgrades at remote airstrips through the Remote Aviation Access Programme (RAAP).

Funding under the RAAP is provided by the Australian Government and administered by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (the Department).

The Funding Components of RAAP are:

- the Remote Air Services Subsidy (RASS) Scheme;
- the Remote Aerodrome Upgrade (RAU) Programme;
- the Remote Aerodrome Inspection (RAI) Programme.

The RAAP operates under direction from the portfolio Minister.

Objective

The objective of the RAAP is to provide support for remote aviation services that are not commercially viable but are essential for the social and economic well being of the communities they serve.

REMOTE AIR SERVICES SUBSIDY (RASS) SCHEME

PROGRAMMME OVERVIEW

1. RASS Scheme Objective

The RASS Scheme is part of the Regional Aviation Access Programme (RAAP). The RASS Scheme's objective is to provide communities in remote and isolated areas of Australia with improved access through the subsidy of a regular air transport service, typically weekly, for the carriage of passengers and goods.

2. RASS Scheme Operation

The RASS Scheme supports a specified regular air service.

The Scheme operates to a fixed annual budget. The capacity to admit communities is limited by the budget available for RASS activities in any year, taking into account all prior financial commitments.

Australia Post has responsibility for the delivery of mail and has separate contracts with several RASS air operators for this purpose.

3. Communities

The eligibility criteria for admission of communities to the RASS Scheme are in [Attachment A](#).

To ensure continued eligibility, communities receiving a RASS service will be reviewed to ensure that available funds are used in the most appropriate manner.

4. Community Selection

Communities are selected by:

- (1) A community applying to receive a service; or
- (2) The Australian Government strategically determining a community as a potential recipient.

Steps in the Process

The process applied in selecting a community for admission to the RASS Scheme, by application or determination, is:

- the community must meet the eligibility criteria for admission to the RASS Scheme;
- a viable means for operating the RASS service to the community needs to be determined by the Department, including a firm cost estimate;
- an assessment of the available funding will need to demonstrate that the admission of the additional community can be accommodated; and
- an air operator agrees to use the community's aerodrome in accordance with civil aviation safety regulations.

Once these conditions are met, arrangements may be initiated to provide an applicant community with a RASS service.

5. RASS Scheme Priorities

The RASS Scheme subsidises routes to provide an air service to remote communities.

The scheme is conducted for the transportation of, for example, passengers (resident in these communities and passengers travelling to provide services to these communities), fresh food, education material, medical supplies, veterinary supplies and/or machinery parts.

The Department's experience is that some aircraft operators enter into separate arrangements for the delivery of mail with the Australian Postal Corporation. However, the Department does not guarantee or make any representations as the continuation or commencement of such arrangements.

Community applications should be made on the application form at [Attachment B](#) to:

Director
Remote Aviation Programmes
Aviation Industry Policy Branch
Australian Government Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Phone: 1300 768 578
Fax: 02 6274 6749
Email: rass@infrastructure.gov.au

Community applications for a RASS service will be assessed in the Department by the Director responsible for the RASS Scheme. The decision to approve a community's admission to the Scheme has been delegated to the General Manager responsible for the overall management of the RASS Scheme.

6. Ministerial Discretion

Where there are extenuating circumstances and the criteria have not been met, the portfolio Minister may consider approving a community's admission to the RASS Scheme. Further information on this process would be provided to any community unsuccessful with its initial application.

The Minister, on advice of the Department, may determine that a particular community or group of communities meets the criteria for admission. This would be determined on the basis of community characteristics as well as consultation with the community, government agencies and other relevant stakeholders. Such a process would typically follow the Steps in the Process of Community Selection above.

The Minister may decide to vary the structure of the RASS service received by existing or new communities admitted to the Scheme. This may include determining that a community or communities receive a service other than weekly, for example a return flight each week or each fortnight, or any other proposal. Such a determination would be in accordance with the objectives of the Scheme and within the RAAP Budget allocation.