



19 DECEMBER 2025

Perth Airport

2026 Master Plan Preliminary Draft

Submission to Perth Airport on behalf of Freight & Trade Alliance (FTA) and the Australian Peak Shippers Association (APSA)

“KEEPING AUSTRALIA’S INTERNATIONAL TRADE MOVING”



Australian Peak Shippers
Association Inc. (APSA)

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ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

Freight & Trade Alliance (FTA) is the peak body for the international trade sector with a vision to establish a global benchmark of efficiency in Australian biosecurity, border related security, compliance, and logistics activities.

FTA represents more than 500 businesses including Australia's leading customs brokerages, freight forwarders and major importers.

On 1 January 2017, FTA was appointed the Secretariat role for the Australian Peak Shippers Association (APSA).

APSA is the peak body for Australia's containerised exporters and importers under *Part X of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010* as designated by the Federal Minister of Infrastructure and Transport.

APSA is also a member and has board representation on the Global Shippers Forum (GSF) that represents shippers' interests and that of their national and regional organisations in Asia, Europe, North and South America, Africa and Australasia.

FTA / APSA also provide international trade and logistics advocacy support to the following associations:

- Australian Council for Wool Exporters and Processors;
- Australian Dairy Products Federation;
- Australian Horticulture Trade;
- Australian International Movers Association;
- Australian Meat Industry Council;
- Australian Steel Association;
- Feed Ingredient and Additives Association of Australia;
- Grain Trade Australia; and
- Tyre Stewardship Association.

The current APSA Officers and Committee of Management are listed below:

- Olga Harriton (Manildra Group) - APSA Chair
- Brian Thorpe (Visy) - APSA Vice Chair
- Billy Davies (Australian Meat Industry Council) - Treasurer
- Mark Christmas (QMAG)
- Flaminio Dondina (Casella Family Brands)
- Sarah Granger (Fletcher International Exports)
- Brian Wright (Australian International Movers Association)
- Michael Brittain (AGT Foods Australia)
- Paul Zalai - APSA Secretary

A list of all members and further information about FTA / APSA is available at www.FTAlliance.com.au

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Freight & Trade Alliance (FTA) and the Australian Peak Shippers Association (APSA) represent the businesses at the heart of Australia's international supply chains. Our members include exporters, importers, freight forwarders, licensed customs brokers, and logistics providers—the operators who ensure cargo is cleared, stored, transported and delivered every single day. These businesses are critical to the national economy, facilitating the movement of goods worth billions of dollars each year and underpinning both Australia's domestic prosperity and its role in global trade.

Perth Airport is a vital gateway for Western Australia's high-value and time-sensitive freight, supporting key export industries including perishables, mining, pharmaceuticals, and specialist project cargo. Freight activity is concentrated across the airport's industrial and logistics precincts, which play a central role in connecting WA businesses to global markets. With Perth's population growth, industry diversification initiatives, and increased international air services, long-term planning is essential to ensure cargo capacity keeps pace with demand. Forward planning for warehousing, cold-chain infrastructure, biosecurity facilities, and efficient landside access will be critical to sustaining the state's trade competitiveness.

Protecting freight-dedicated industrial land remains a priority. Perth Airport's surrounding logistics precincts face ongoing pressure from higher-yield commercial development, which risks constraining long-term freight capacity. Safeguarding industrial zones, strengthening landside connectivity to major distribution centres and regional supply routes, and ensuring freight remains a core consideration within broader precinct planning will help maintain reliable and cost-effective supply chains. Perth Airport's strong sustainability ambitions also present an opportunity to embed freight-specific decarbonisation initiatives across ground handling, cold-chain operations, and digital processes to support industry transition.

Maintaining competitiveness and reliability will require investment in modernised inspection and biosecurity infrastructure, digitally enabled cargo systems, and operational resilience to manage both peak demand and disruption. Workforce development will also be essential, with clear pathways for skills, training, and upskilling in freight handling, aviation operations, compliance, and digital trade to meet the airport's future employment needs.

As Perth Airport continues to play a central role in Australia's air cargo network, it is essential that the 2026 Master Plan provides clear, long-term planning for freight operations. FTA/APSA offer the following recommendations to ensure Perth Airport remains competitive, resilient and aligned with national freight and trade priorities.

CONTACT

For further details please contact:



Amanda Bradfield

Head of International Freight & Logistics - FTA / APSA

abradfield@FTAlliance.com.au

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1 – Publish a long-term cargo infrastructure development roadmap

Perth Airport is critical for WA’s exports, particularly perishables and high-value commodities like gold. FTA/APSA recommend a detailed roadmap for the development of freight infrastructure, including warehousing, cold-chain storage, automation, digital integration, and inspection capacity. This roadmap should be aligned with the 20-year land use and precinct planning outlined in the 2026 Master Plan and ensure there is sufficient space to support the air cargo, logistics, and freight forwarders that operate around the airport today.

RECOMMENDATION 2 – Strengthen and protect freight connectivity to key logistics hubs

Seamless freight movement between the airport and WA’s logistics network is essential. FTA/APSA recommend a “freight-first” approach to planning, including upgrades for B-Double and A-Double access, wayfinding improvements, congestion management, and coordination with Main Roads WA, local councils, and surrounding industrial precincts. Protecting internal and external freight movement will support airport-adjacent industrial precincts and future-proof the network as freight volumes continue to grow.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – Safeguard industrial land for air cargo, logistics and cold-storage operations

The land surrounding Perth Airport is home to critical freight forwarders, depots, and cold-chain operators. FTA/APSA recommend that both on-airport and adjacent industrial land be protected from higher-yield retail or commercial development. Ensuring this protection maintains long-term operational capability and allows Perth Airport to accommodate projected growth in cargo volumes and freight trips over the next 20 years.

RECOMMENDATION 4 – Maintain a competitive and attractive environment for freight operators

Cost, reliability, and service levels are major drivers of air cargo demand. FTA/APSA recommend transparent pricing structures, clear service-level agreements, and potential incentives to attract and retain freighter activity at Perth Airport. This ensures operators can continue to deliver reliable, timely freight services and keeps Perth competitive as a global gateway for WA’s exports.

RECOMMENDATION 5 – Develop a coordinated air freight workforce strategy

Perth’s cargo operations rely on skilled staff across freight handling, cold-chain logistics, aviation operations, and specialised support functions. FTA/APSA recommend a collaborative workforce strategy with TAFE, universities, and industry bodies to provide targeted training, apprenticeships, and workforce planning aligned with the airport’s projected growth in industrial and cargo precincts.

RECOMMENDATION 6 – Embed cargo-specific sustainability initiatives

Perth Airport’s operations have an opportunity to lead in sustainable freight practices. FTA/APSA recommend implementing low-emission ground support equipment, renewable-powered cold-chain systems, sustainable aviation fuel pathways, and circular terminal operations. These initiatives should be integrated into Perth Airport’s environmental management framework to ensure alignment with broader sustainability objectives while maintaining cargo integrity.

RECOMMENDATION 7 – Enhance operational resilience and surge capacity

WA’s air cargo market can be impacted by e-commerce spikes, supply chain shocks, and biosecurity events. FTA/APSA recommend planning for surge handling capacity, redundancy in cargo processing and IT systems, and robust crisis management protocols to maintain continuity of operations and support the broader WA supply chain.



RECOMMENDATION 8 – Adopt measurable cargo performance benchmarks aligned with global leaders

FTA/APSA recommend the development of a formal Freight Performance & Service Charter for Perth Airport, establishing KPIs and benchmarks for cargo clearance times, landside dwell, cold-chain integrity, truck turnaround, and terminal efficiency. Benchmarking against leading international airports such as Changi, Doha, and Incheon will ensure Perth remains competitive and transparent to the industry.

RECOMMENDATION 9 – Align airport freight planning with national and regional trade strategies

Perth Airport's freight and logistics planning should be closely coordinated with WA and national strategies, including the WA Industrial Strategy, WA Supply Chain Strategy, and Federal aviation and supply chain resilience initiatives. This ensures airport growth supports broader trade, export, and economic priorities while safeguarding Perth Airport as a critical gateway for WA's economy.

RESPONSES

Industrial Land Safeguards

Perth Airport's surrounding industrial and logistics precincts, including freight forwarders, depots, and cold-chain operators, are critical to WA's air cargo ecosystem. Forecast growth in cargo operations over the next 20 years will increase intra- and inter-precinct trips, placing additional pressure on landside access and connectivity.

FTA/APSA consider it essential that the Master Plan provides strong land-use protections for on-airport and adjoining industrial land. Ring-fencing land for air cargo, warehousing, cold-chain, and distribution activity will prevent displacement by higher-yield commercial or retail development, ensuring Perth Airport retains long-term capacity to support projected cargo volumes and freight operator needs.

Border and Biosecurity Processes

Perth Airport is a vital international gateway for time-sensitive and high-value exports, including perishables and precious metals. Consultation with freight operators has highlighted the need for improved airside and landside connectivity between terminals, cargo precincts, and bonded facilities to facilitate faster cargo handling and customs clearance.

The Master Plan should commit to upgrading and expanding inspection bays, quarantine-approved premises, and bonded facilities, ensuring scalable biosecurity capacity to handle projected cargo growth. Modern, efficient infrastructure is critical to maintain cargo throughput during peak periods, supply chain disruptions, or emergency events.

Digital Integration and Data Flows

The Master Plan recognises technology and automation as important enablers for cargo handling, including robotics, autonomous vehicles, and predictive maintenance. However, there is an opportunity to further strengthen digital integration across Perth's freight ecosystem.

FTA/APSA recommend positioning Perth Airport as a digitally enabled cargo hub, supporting e-freight standards, integration with freight community systems, and end-to-end visibility of cargo flows. Advanced digital trade and automation capabilities will reduce processing times, enhance operational transparency, and maintain competitiveness in a rapidly evolving global logistics environment.

Workforce and Skills

Perth Airport's cargo and industrial precinct growth will require a skilled workforce across freight handling, cold-chain logistics, aviation operations, and digital trade systems.

FTA/APSA recommend that the Master Plan include a clear workforce strategy, developed in partnership with TAFE, universities, and industry bodies, incorporating targeted training, apprenticeships, and upskilling programs. A pipeline of qualified personnel is essential to support forecast growth in cargo throughput and ensure compliance with regulatory and operational requirements.

Sustainability and Decarbonisation

Freight operators and customers are increasingly demanding low-emission supply chains. While Perth Airport's Master Plan identifies broad environmental objectives, more detailed cargo-specific measures are required.

FTA/APSA recommend embedding freight-focused sustainability initiatives, including low-emission or electric ground support equipment (GSE), renewable-powered cold-chain facilities, sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) pathways, and support for hydrogen or electric freight vehicles. Implementing these initiatives will ensure Perth Airport remains competitive and aligned with global sustainability standards.

Resilience and Future-Proofing

The COVID-19 pandemic and other disruptions highlighted the vulnerability of Perth's air cargo operations, particularly where freight relies on passenger flights.

FTA/APSA recommend incorporating explicit resilience measures for cargo operations in the Master Plan, including surge warehousing and apron capacity, redundant inspection and clearance systems, and robust digital and IT infrastructure. A freight-specific Resilience and Continuity Blueprint should be developed to provide contingency arrangements, ensuring uninterrupted operations and protecting the efficiency of both on-airport and regional supply chains.

Global Benchmarking

Perth Airport must remain competitive against international cargo hubs. Transparent KPIs for cargo operations, including clearance times, landside dwell, cold-chain integrity, and truck turnaround, will drive performance improvements and strengthen industry confidence.

FTA/APSA recommend adopting measurable cargo performance benchmarks, informed by best practices at leading airports such as Changi, Doha, and Incheon, with annual reporting to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

Policy Alignment

Perth Airport's cargo operations are central to WA's trade ecosystem and broader national supply chains.

FTA/APSA recommend the Master Plan explicitly align with WA and national freight strategies, including the WA Industrial Strategy, State supply chain initiatives, Federal aviation policy, and national trade resilience frameworks. Coordinated planning will ensure Perth Airport supports long-term economic growth, trade resilience, and the continued development of surrounding logistics precincts.



Conclusion

Perth Airport is a critical national gateway, and its future success depends on a freight precinct that is modern, resilient, and capable of supporting Western Australia's diverse and globally competitive trade profile. To meet rising demand across key export sectors, growing e-commerce activity, population growth and increasing international air services, the Master Plan must position freight as a core strategic priority, not a secondary consideration to commercial or passenger development.

Clear commitments to safeguarding freight-dedicated industrial land, strengthening border and biosecurity capability, improving digital integration, embedding freight-focused sustainability measures, and developing a skilled workforce are essential to prevent future constraints and ensure Perth Airport can continue operating as a high-performing logistics hub for the state and the broader region.

FTA/APSA look forward to working with Perth Airport, government, and industry partners to ensure the final Master Plan delivers a future-ready freight environment that supports Western Australia's exporters, importers and supply chain resilience for decades to come.