

NOTICE OF MEETING & AGENDA

Special Meeting

Monday 19 January 2026

Roma Administration Centre

NOTICE OF MEETING

Date: 16 January 2026

Mayor: Councillor W M Taylor

Deputy Mayor: Councillor C J O'Neil

Councillors: Councillor J R P Birkett
Councillor M K Brumpton
Councillor A K Davis
Councillor P J Flynn
Councillor J M Hancock
Councillor B R Seawright
Councillor J R Vincent

Chief Executive Officer: Robert Hayward

Executive Management: Cameron Hoffmann – Deputy CEO – Strategic Roads, Airports & Major Projects
Brett Exelby – Director Corporate Services
Seamus Batstone – Director Engineering
Jamie Gorry – Director Regional Development, Environment and Planning

Attached is the agenda for the **Special Meeting** to be held at the Roma Administration Centre on **19 January, 2026 at 10:30 AM.**



Robert Hayward
Chief Executive Officer

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OFFICER REPORT

Meeting: Special 19 January 2026

Date: 16 January 2026

Item Number: 3.1

File Number: D26/4104

SUBJECT HEADING: Regulated Air Services | Community Consultation

Classification: Open Access

Officer's Title: Deputy CEO - Strategic Roads, Airports & Major Projects

Executive Summary:

Air services are critical for the Maranoa region, supporting access to health services, education, government services, business activity and social connection. Council has previously undertaken community consultation which has highlighted community concern on matters including service capacity, affordability and scheduling.

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Transport and Main Roads, is undertaking a statewide consultation process on regulated regional air services, including the regulated air service operating into Roma. This consultation will inform the development of the next regulated air services contract, with current contracts due to expire in December 2026.

This report provides Council with an overview of the consultation process, relevant background information, and options for Council's participation in the State Government's review.

Officer's Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Notes the Department of Transport and Main Roads' consultation process in relation to regulated regional air services, including the additional community consultation session scheduled in Roma on 18 February 2026;
 2. Acknowledges the Government's response to Council's advocacy by expanding community consultation opportunities to help inform the next regulated air services contract; and
 3. Resolves to undertake a short, targeted community survey to supplement the community consultation previously undertaken in August 2024, with the survey outcomes to inform the preparation of a formal Council submission to the Department of Transport and Main Roads.
-

Context (*Why is the matter coming before Council?*):

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR), is currently undertaking a statewide review and community consultation process in relation to regulated regional air services, including the regulated air service operating into Roma.

This report is presented to Council to:

- Formally advise of the current DTMR consultation process and upcoming engagement opportunities; and
- Seek Council's consideration of undertaking additional targeted community consultation to ensure Council's formal response to DTMR reflects the most current and representative views of the Maranoa community.

Background (*Including any previous Council decisions*):

The Queensland Government subsidises and regulates a small number of regional air routes to ensure communities in regional and remote Queensland retain access to essential air services where commercial demand alone may not support reliable or affordable operations.

These regulated air services play a critical role in supporting access to health care, education, government services, employment, business activity and broader social connectivity.

Roma Airport is serviced under the Central 1 regulated air route, making it a key regional aviation hub within South West Queensland. The service is of strategic importance to the Maranoa region due to the scale of travel demand associated with health services, government and judicial functions, resource sector activity, education, and regional business operations, as well as the need for reliable onward connections via Brisbane.

Over a sustained period, Council has received consistent feedback from residents, businesses and service providers regarding challenges associated with the current regulated air service, particularly in relation to:

- Limited seat availability and frequent sold-out services;
- High airfares and fare volatility;
- Inflexible flight schedules that limit the ability to undertake same-day travel for business and medical appointments; and
- Constraints on freight and baggage capacity.

These issues were also a key theme during the 2024 Local Government Elections, reinforcing the importance of air services as essential infrastructure for the region.

In response to ongoing community concern, Council undertook an online community survey in August 2024 to directly capture local views on the regulated air service. The survey attracted 214 responses, with strong and consistent themes emerging across the community. Key findings included a clear preference for:

- Increased seat capacity per service;
- Improved affordability and reduced fare volatility;
- Flight schedules that better support same-day travel;
- Improved connectivity to Brisbane and onward destinations; and
- Adequate freight and baggage capacity to meet regional needs.

The survey outcomes have informed Council's advocacy position to date and have been provided to DTMR as part of the broader consultation process.

Council has continued to advocate strongly for meaningful and accessible community consultation to play a central role in shaping the next regulated air services contract from 2027 and beyond.

Council has consistently emphasised that the design of future air service contracts must be informed not only by high-level policy considerations, but by the lived experience of regional communities that rely on these services as essential infrastructure.

DTMR is currently undertaking a statewide consultation program to inform the development of future regulated air service contracts, with existing contracts due to expire in December 2026. As part of this process, DTMR has committed to engaging directly with affected communities, councils, industry stakeholders and elected representatives.

An initial face-to-face consultation session was held in Roma on 17 December 2024. Council subsequently provided feedback to DTMR that the timing of this session — held during business hours and close to the Christmas period — may have limited the ability of some community members to attend in person.

In response, DTMR has scheduled a second consultation session in Roma on 18 February 2026, providing an additional opportunity for community participation.

Given the significance of air services to the Maranoa region, it is important that any formal submission provided by Council to the Department of Transport and Main Roads is current, evidence-based and reflective of community views.

Given the significance of air services to the Maranoa region, it is important that any formal submission provided by Council to the Department of Transport and Main Roads is current, evidence-based and reflective of community views.

The State Government's review of regulated regional air services represents a time-limited opportunity to inform the design of future air service contracts. Once new contracts are established, they typically operate for a number of years and provide limited opportunity for substantive changes outside of scheduled review periods. Decisions informed through the current consultation process are therefore expected to influence air services into Roma for the medium to long term.

Council has previously undertaken community consultation in relation to regulated air services. However, the timing of the State Government's current engagement process — including the consultation session scheduled for February 2026 — provides an opportunity to consider whether additional targeted community consultation would assist in updating or supplementing earlier feedback.

Any further consultation undertaken at this stage would inform the development of Council's response to DTMR and ensure that community feedback is considered during the period in which service contract settings are being reviewed.

Options Considered:

The following options are presented for Council's consideration in relation to Council's participation in the State Government's consultation on regulated regional air services. Each option reflects a different approach to how community views may be represented and how Council may engage in the current review process.

☐ **Option 1 – No submission to the Department of Transport and Main Roads**
(Not Recommended)

Under this option, Council would not provide a formal submission as part of the State Government's consultation on regulated regional air services.

Outcomes/Implications:

- Council would not formally contribute to the current contract review process.
- Community views would be represented through individual submissions made directly to DTMR.
- Council would have limited influence on the future design of regulated air services into Roma.

□ **Option 2 - Submission based on existing community survey and previous advocacy**
(Possible Option)

Under this option, Council would prepare and submit a response to DTMR based on the outcomes of the community survey undertaken in August 2024, together with feedback previously provided through Council advocacy and engagement.

Outcomes / Implications:

- Council would provide a formal submission informed by existing community feedback.
- The submission would reflect community priorities identified during 2024.
- Feedback provided may not reflect any changes in community views or be able to focus further on emerging or key priorities in relation to the regulated air service.

□ **Option 3 – Undertake a targeted community consultation to inform a submission**
(Recommendation)

Under this option, Council would undertake additional targeted community consultation to supplement previous feedback and inform the preparation of a formal submission to DTMR.

Outcomes/Implications:

- Council's submission would be informed by both previous consultation and updated community views.
- The approach would support the inclusion of current community perspectives during the State Government's consultation period.
- Feedback provided to DTMR would reflect contemporary service experiences and priorities.

Recommendation:

Based on the information outlined in this report, including the State Government's current consultation process, Council's previous engagement with the community, and the upcoming consultation timeframes, the following recommendation is presented for Council's consideration.

That Council:

1. Notes the Department of Transport and Main Roads' consultation process in relation to regulated regional air services, including the additional community consultation session scheduled in Roma on 18 February 2026;
2. Acknowledges the Government's response to Council's advocacy by expanding community consultation opportunities to help inform the next regulated air services contract; and
3. Resolves to undertake a short, targeted community survey to supplement the community consultation previously undertaken in August 2024, with the survey outcomes to inform the preparation of a formal Council submission to the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Risks:

Risk	Description of likelihood & consequences
Impact on ability to help shape future air service contracts	If Council does not actively participate in the current consultation process, there is a risk that community views are not fully captured or reflected in the development of the next regulated air services contract. Given the long-term nature of these contracts, this may result in service settings that are less aligned with local needs for an extended period.
Strategic importance to Council and the community	Air services are a high-interest and strategically important issue for the Maranoa community. If Council involvement in the consultation process is limited or not clearly communicated, there is a risk of reduced community confidence in Council's role in representing local interests on this issue.
Timing and significance of influence on long-term air service arrangements	The review of regulated regional air services occurs infrequently and represents a key opportunity to influence future service arrangements.

	<p>Decisions and advocacy undertaken during the current consultation period are likely to shape air services in both the short and medium term.</p> <p>Once contracts are established, there is limited flexibility to make significant changes for several years, reducing opportunities to revisit service settings.</p>
Community expectations regarding Council's role	<p>There is a risk that members of the community may assume Council directly contracts or selects airlines and determines air service arrangements.</p> <p>In practice, Council's role is limited to providing airport infrastructure and advocating on behalf of the community, with final service decisions made by the State Government.</p>

Policy and Legislative Compliance:

The Local Government Act 2009 (QLD) (the Act) provides the legislative framework for the constitution, powers, responsibilities and accountability of local governments in Queensland.

Local Government Principles

Section 4 of the Act outlines the local government principles that underpin the entire legislative framework. These principles include:

- Transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest;
- **Democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement;**
- Good governance of, and by, local government;
- Ethical and legal behaviour of councillors and local government employees.

Relevant to the matters addressed in this report, meaningful community engagement and transparent decision-making are key principles that guide Council in how it consults with the community and represents community views. The consultation considerations in this report align with the legislative expectation that local governments actively engage with their communities when responding to matters that affect residents.

Responsibilities of Councillors

Under *Section 12* of the Act, each councillor has a responsibility to:

- **Represent the current and future interests of the residents of the local government area;**
- Participate in council meetings, policy development and decision-making for the benefit of the local government area; and
- Be **accountable to the community** for the performance of the local government.

Alignment with Policy and Legislative Compliance

The approach outlined in this report — including consideration of additional community consultation — is consistent with the local government principles and councillor responsibilities prescribed by the Act.

Budget / Funding (*Current and future*):

Preparation, delivery and analysis of any additional community survey could be undertaken internally within existing resources and allocated budgets, consistent with the approach adopted with the previous survey.

Timelines / Deadlines:

The Department of Transport and Main Roads is undertaking a statewide consultation process on regulated regional air services, with engagement activities occurring between November 2025 and February 2026.

A community consultation session was held in Roma on 17 December 2025, with a further session scheduled for 18 February 2026 following feedback regarding the timing and accessibility of the initial session.

DTMR has indicated that feedback is sought by mid to late February 2026 to inform the current review process and the development of future regulated air service contracts.

If Council determines to undertake additional targeted community consultation, a 2–3 week survey period could be implemented within this timeframe to align with the State Government's consultation schedule.

Deputations with relevant State Ministers are also currently being considered for mid-February 2026. Having updated community feedback available at that time would assist in informing these discussions

Consultation (Internal / External):

Council has previously undertaken external community consultation in relation to regulated air services, including an online community survey conducted in August 2024, which received 214 responses and identified consistent themes relating to seat availability, affordability, scheduling and connectivity.

In addition, the Department of Transport and Main Roads is currently undertaking its own community and stakeholder consultation process as part of the statewide review of regulated regional air services. This has included a face-to-face consultation session in Roma on 17 December 2025, with a further session scheduled for 18 February 2026.

Ongoing feedback has also been received by Councillors and officers from residents, businesses and service providers regarding the operation of the current air service.

Should Council resolve to undertake additional targeted community consultation, this would provide an opportunity to supplement previous feedback and capture current community views within the State Government's consultation timeframe.

Internal

Chief Executive Officer

Mayor – Cr Wendy Taylor

Deputy Mayor & Portfolio Char for Airports – Cr Cameron O'Neil

Manager – Airport & Aerodromes (Acting)

Strategic Asset Management Implications:

(If applicable, outline changes to whole of life costs and / or level of service)

N/A

Acronyms:

Acronym	Description
DTMR	Department of Transport and Main Roads

Addition to Operational or Corporate Plan:

Plan Description	Yes / No
Operational	No
Corporate	No

Link to Corporate Plan:

Corporate Plan 2023-2028

Corporate Plan Pillar 4: Accountability

4.8 Public engagement and participation

Supporting Documentation:

Nil

Report authorised by:

Chief Executive Officer