

NOTICE OF MEETING & AGENDA

Special Meeting

Wednesday 18 March 2026

Roma Administration Centre

NOTICE OF MEETING

Date: 16 March 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 **18 March, 2026 at 11:00 AM.**



Robert Hayward
Chief Executive Officer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Item No	Subject
1	Welcome
2	Apologies
3	Business
3.1	Regulated Air Services Route into Roma Community Feedback and Submission to the Department of Transport and Main Roads2
	Prepared by: Deputy CEO - Strategic Roads, Airports & Major Projects
	Attachment 1: Letter from Mayor - Air Services Survey..... 14
	Attachment 2: Air Services Survey Results Summary - March 2026..... 16

Closure

OFFICER REPORT

Meeting: Special 18 March 2026

Date: 25 February 2026

Item Number: 3.1

File Number: D26/17973

SUBJECT HEADING: Regulated Air Services Route into Roma |
Community Feedback and Submission to the
Department of Transport and Main Roads

Classification: Open Access

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

Executive Summary:

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR), is currently undertaking a statewide review of regulated regional air services to inform the next regulated air service contracts, with current arrangements due to expire in December 2026.

Given the importance of air services to the Maranoa region for access to health services, education, government services, business activity and social connectivity, Council previously resolved to undertake a targeted community survey to capture updated feedback on the current passenger air services operating between Roma and Brisbane.

The survey was undertaken in February 2026 and attracted 649 responses, making it one of the largest community survey responses received by Council on a single issue. The results highlight strong community interest in the future of air services into Roma and provide valuable insight into current experiences and priorities.

Key themes identified through the survey include concerns regarding affordability, seat availability, reliability, connectivity to other destinations, baggage allowances and freight capability, as well as the importance of flight scheduling that supports same-day travel for business and medical appointments.

The findings provide an updated evidence base to inform Council's advocacy position as part of the State Government's consultation on regulated regional air services.

This report presents a summary of the survey outcomes and seeks Council's consideration of providing a formal submission to the Department of Transport and Main Roads, advocating for improved service outcomes for the Maranoa community

Officer's Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Receive and note the results of the community survey undertaken in February 2026 regarding passenger air services operating into and out of Roma Airport.
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) to prepare and submit a formal response to the Department of Transport and Main Roads as part of the State Government's consultation on regulated regional air services, with the submission advocating for the following strategic outcomes:
 - Retention of **regulated air service** for the Roma–Brisbane route.
 - Consideration of a State Government initiated **resident airfare scheme** as part of future contract arrangements, reducing the need for individual councils to negotiate resident fare schemes directly with airlines.
 - Recognition that Roma Airport represents a **strategic aviation asset** for the State, with infrastructure capable of accommodating larger regional aircraft such as the De Havilland Canada Dash 8-400.
 - Improved **affordability, reliability and connectivity** for passengers travelling to and from Roma.
 - Flight frequency and scheduling that improves opportunities for **same-day travel**, particularly for business travel and medical appointments.
 - A service provider capable of providing **greater seating capacity, improved baggage allowances and stronger connectivity** into broader regional, national and international aviation networks.
 - A service provider able to support the **movement of freight** in addition to passenger services, recognising the importance of regional aviation for time-sensitive freight movements.
 - A service provider with the ability to supplement baseline services with additional flights during peak periods, including major regional events or seasonal tourism demand, and potential connections to key regional tourism destinations (e.g. Longreach) during tourist season where viable.

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

Council previously resolved to undertake a short community survey to gather additional feedback on the regulated air service operating into Roma.

The survey has now closed, and the results provide an updated snapshot of community views on the current service, including matters such as affordability, seat availability, scheduling and connectivity.

This report presents Council with a summary of the survey results and seeks direction on whether to provide a formal response to the Department of Transport and Main Roads as part of the State Government's consultation process.

Background (Including any previous Council decisions):

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR), is currently undertaking a statewide review of regulated regional air services, including the regulated air route servicing Roma. The review is understood to help inform the next regulated air services contract, with current arrangements due to expire in December 2026.

Air services play an important role in supporting access to health services, education, government services, business activity and social connection for the Maranoa region. Over time, Council has received consistent feedback from residents, businesses and service providers regarding challenges associated with the current service, particularly in relation to seat availability, affordability, scheduling and connectivity to onward destinations.

In response to these concerns, Council has previously undertaken community consultation to better understand local experiences and priorities in relation to air services operating into Roma.

In response to these concerns, Council previously undertook community consultation in August 2024, with an online survey attracting 214 responses and identifying strong community interest in improved capacity, affordability and flight scheduling.

While this consultation provided a valuable foundation of information on community views, Council considered that further consultation would be beneficial to ensure any feedback provided to the Department of Transport and Main Roads reflected the most current experiences and priorities of the Maranoa community.

At a Special Council Meeting held on 19 January 2026, Council resolved to undertake a further round of targeted community consultation on the issue.

Resolution No. SM/01.2026/03

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.*
- 3. 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.*

4. *Authorise the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) to develop and release the survey, with the draft survey questions to be circulated to Councillors for input prior to dissemination.*

The Survey (February 2026)

Following Council's resolution, a targeted community survey was undertaken in early February 2026 to capture updated feedback on the current passenger air services operating in and out of Roma Airport.

The survey was distributed through several channels to maximise participation. A letter from the Mayor was sent directly to households and ratepayers across the Maranoa region inviting community members to participate.

The survey was also promoted through Council's official social media channels, and hard copy versions were made available for those who preferred to complete the survey in person.

The survey sought to capture both quantitative and qualitative feedback from residents and ratepayers regarding their experiences travelling to and from Roma. The survey included the following key questions:

1. *Overall, how satisfied are you with the current flights between Roma and Brisbane?*
2. *Has seat availability or ticket prices affected how often you fly from Roma?*
3. *Has reputation, reliability and ease of connections to other destinations affected how often you fly from Roma?*
4. *Looking ahead, which airline do you think would best suit flights between Roma and Brisbane, and why?*
5. *Thinking about why you travel (work, medical appointments, education, holidays/weekend away, or connecting flights), what would you like to see improved about flying to and from Roma?*
6. *Do you have any other comments or suggestions about flying to and from Roma?*

A detailed summary of the survey results is included as *Supporting Documentation* to this report. Individual responses received through the survey have also been circulated to Councillors under separate cover.

The Response & Key Findings

The response from the community was significant, with **649 responses received**, making it one of the largest community survey responses received by Council on a single issue.

The results highlight a strong level of community interest in the future of air services into Roma and reinforce the importance of reliable, affordable and well-connected regional aviation services for residents, businesses and service providers across the region.

Key findings from the survey include:

- **Overall satisfaction with the current service is low.**
74% of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with the current Roma–Brisbane air service, with only 9% indicating they were satisfied and 18% neutral. This suggests a clear level of community concern regarding the current service.
- **Ticket prices and seat availability are significantly affecting travel behaviour.**
More than 90% of respondents indicated they are either flying less often or have stopped flying from Roma altogether due to seat availability or ticket prices. This indicates that current pricing and capacity settings may be discouraging residents and businesses from using the service.
- **Reliability and connectivity issues are also influencing travel decisions.**
More than 85% of respondents indicated that reliability concerns, service reputation, or difficulty connecting to other destinations had caused them to reduce how often they fly from Roma or stop flying from Roma entirely.
- **Affordability emerged as the strongest theme across responses.**
Many respondents highlighted the cost of airfares as a key barrier to travel, particularly for families, small businesses and residents needing to travel regularly for medical appointments or work.
- **Reliability and service consistency were frequently raised concerns.**
Respondents commonly referenced flight cancellations, delays and uncertainty around service reliability as factors influencing their travel choices.
- **Connectivity to other destinations is a high priority for regional travellers.**
Many responses highlighted the importance of seamless connections through Brisbane to domestic and international flights, including the ability to check baggage through to final destinations.
- **Increased seat capacity and aircraft size were recurring themes.**
Respondents frequently noted the need for larger aircraft or increased seat availability to reduce the likelihood of flights selling out and to improve access during peak travel periods.
- **Freight capacity was also identified as an important consideration for regional air services.**
Some responses noted the importance of air services supporting the movement of small freight and time-sensitive goods between Roma and Brisbane.

- **Baggage allowances were also raised as a concern.**
Several respondents referenced current baggage limits as restrictive, particularly for passengers travelling for medical appointments, extended stays, or onward connections to other destinations. The ability to check baggage through to final destinations and access higher baggage allowances was noted as an important factor when considering preferred airlines and overall travel experience.
- **Flight timing and frequency remain important for regional users.**
Several respondents indicated that flight schedules should better support same-day travel for business, government and medical appointments.
- **Airline preference responses highlighted strong views from the community.**
A significant proportion of qualitative responses referenced Qantas as a preferred operator, with recurring reasons including reliability, better connectivity, baggage allowances, frequent flyer programs and larger aircraft capacity. Other responses referenced the value of competition, including Virgin as an alternative operator.

The survey results provide a strong evidence base on community experiences with the current regulated air service operating into Roma. The level of participation and the consistency of themes raised across responses highlight the importance of air services to the Maranoa community and the challenges many residents and businesses currently face when travelling to and from the region.

The findings outlined above provide valuable insight to help inform Council's advocacy in relation to the future of regulated regional air services.

Service Design Considerations for Regional Air Services

As part of the State Government's review of regulated regional air services, it is important to recognise that improvements to regional aviation services often involve balancing several service characteristics, including aircraft size, seat capacity, baggage allowances, freight capability, connectivity and flight frequency.

In many cases, smaller aircraft can operate more frequently throughout the day, while larger aircraft may operate fewer services but provide significantly greater passenger capacity and additional operational capability.

For example, the aircraft currently operating on the Roma–Brisbane route is typically a **Saab 340**, which has a typical seating capacity of approximately **34 seats**. However, in practice, available seating can sometimes be lower due to operational factors, meaning lower seats being made available to market.

By comparison, a **De Havilland Canada Dash 8-400** aircraft, commonly used by major regional carriers, typically has a seating capacity of approximately **74–78 seats**.

To illustrate how aircraft size can influence overall seat availability:

Maranoa Regional Council

Special Meeting - 18 March 2026

Aircraft Type	Typical Seats per Flight	Flights per Day	Total Seats per Day
Saab 340	34	4	136
Saab 340 (reduced capacity example)	28	4	112
De Havilland Canada Dash 8-400	74	2	148
De Havilland Canada Dash 8-400	78	2	156

As part of the current consultation process, communities may need to consider these types of service trade-offs when advocating for improvements to regulated air services, particularly where the goal is to improve overall seat availability, reliability, freight capacity and connectivity to the broader aviation network.

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

Under this option, no further action would be required. 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 via South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (SWQROC) only

Under this option, no further action would be required. Council has already contributed to a submission prepared collectively through the South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (SWQROC) as part of the State Government's consultation on regulated regional air services.

Outcomes/Implications:

- Council's views would be represented through a regional advocacy submission prepared on behalf of multiple councils.
 - The submission would highlight shared regional issues and priorities relating to regional aviation across South West Queensland.
 - While Council's survey results and local experiences could inform the regional submission, specific issues and nuances relating to the Roma air service may receive less detailed attention within a broader regional response.
 - Council would rely on the SWQROC submission as the primary mechanism for providing feedback to the Department of Transport and Main Roads.
- **Option 3 – Council to provide a formal submission to the Department of Transport and Main Roads**
(Recommended Option)

Under this option, Council would prepare and lodge a formal submission to the Department of Transport and Main Roads as part of the State Government's consultation on regulated regional air services.

Outcomes/Implications:

- Council would be able to directly present the outcomes of the recent community survey and clearly articulate the experiences and priorities of the Maranoa community.
- The submission would provide an opportunity to advocate for improvements to service capacity, affordability, reliability, connectivity and other matters identified through community consultation.
- Council's submission could complement any broader regional advocacy undertaken through SWQROC.
- This approach would ensure the specific needs and perspectives of the Maranoa community are directly considered as part of the State Government's review process.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Council provides a submission to DTMR as per **Option 3** outlined on the previous page.

Risks:

Risk	Description of likelihood & consequences
<p>Failure to advocate for community interests</p>	<p>If Council does not actively advocate for improved air services during the current consultation process, there is a risk that the needs and experiences of the Maranoa community are not adequately represented in the development of the next regulated air services contract.</p> <p>Given the long-term nature of these contracts, this could result in service settings that do not align with regional travel needs for an extended period.</p>
<p>Community expectations regarding outcomes</p>	<p>While Council can advocate on behalf of the community, the final decision regarding regulated air service contracts rests with the Queensland Government.</p> <p>There is a risk that some community members may expect Council to directly influence airline selection or service delivery outcomes. If expectations are not managed, this may lead to community frustration if changes to the service are limited.</p>
<p>Misalignment between Council advocacy and community expectations</p>	<p>There is a potential risk that Council advocacy may not fully reflect community priorities. However, this risk is considered low given the strong level of participation in the recent community survey and the clear and consistent themes that emerged from the responses. The survey results provide a robust evidence base to guide Council's advocacy position.</p>
<p>Limited influence on final contract settings</p>	<p>The review and procurement of regulated regional air services is led by the Department of Transport and Main Roads.</p> <p>While Council can provide feedback and advocate for improvements, there is a risk that community priorities identified through the survey may not be fully reflected in the final service contract arrangements.</p>
<p>Service design trade-offs in future air service arrangements</p>	<p>Future regulated air service arrangements may require balancing a range of service outcomes, including aircraft size, seat capacity, baggage allowances, freight capability, connectivity and flight frequency.</p> <p>While the use of larger aircraft could improve seat availability and provide broader connectivity through major airline networks, these services may operate fewer flights per day than smaller aircraft.</p>

	As a result, improvements in capacity and connectivity may require some reduction in flight frequency. Clear communication with the community will be important to ensure expectations are understood as part of the consultation process.
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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 currently undertaking a statewide consultation process on regulated regional air services to inform the development of the next regulated air services contracts, which are due to commence following the expiry of current arrangements in December 2026.

As part of this process, feedback from councils, communities and stakeholders is being sought directly by DTMR to inform the development of future service arrangements.

Should Council resolve to provide a formal submission, it is proposed that the submission be prepared and provided to the Department of Transport and Main Roads **prior to the end of March 2026**.

Consultation (Internal / External):

Chief Executive Officer

Councillors

Member for Warrego and Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers

Minister for Transport and Main Roads of Queensland

SWQROC

Maranoa Community – via survey

Executive Director | Commercial Partnerships – DMTR

CSG Industry

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
SWQROC	South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils

Addition to Operational or Corporate Plan:

Maranoa Regional Council

Special Meeting - 18 March 2026

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:

1 [↓](#) Letter from Mayor - Air Services Survey

D26/27397

2 [↓](#) Air Services Survey Results Summary - March 2026

D26/27399

Report authorised by:

Chief Executive Officer



23 January 2026

[Name]
[Address]
[Address]

Dear Resident,

Have Your Say on the Future of Flights in the Maranoa

As we start the new year, I am writing to you about an issue that I know is important to many people across the Maranoa — flights in and out of Roma Airport.

The Queensland Government is now reviewing air service contracts across Queensland, including the service that operates in and out of Roma. The decision about which airline operates these services sits with the Queensland Government.

It is important that we clearly communicate our needs to the Government as part of this review. The contract that comes out of this process will be in place for many years, and your feedback really does matter.

Every day, residents and businesses raise with Council issues around the availability, affordability and reliability of flying in and out of Roma. For many people in our region, flying shouldn't be a luxury — it's how you get to medical appointments, connect with family, run a business, study, or simply get where you need to be.

Background

Since being elected in March 2024, Council has advocated strongly for better air services for our region. In August 2024, Council ran a community survey on this topic, which received more than 200 responses. The messages were clear and consistent. People spoke about difficulties with seat availability and airfare costs, the challenge of making same-day trips, and the importance of reliable connections through Brisbane.

Other concerns, such as limited access to resident fares, freight options, baggage capacity and onward connections, were also raised. While support for a discounted resident fare was overwhelming — with 97% of respondents in favour — many people told us they still struggle to access these fares or secure seats when they need to travel.

These results have helped guide Council's advocacy so far, which has been raised directly with the Queensland Government, including the Premier, Deputy Premier, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, and our State Member.

Alongside this, Council has consistently raised two key priorities on behalf of the community. The first is the need for a resident fare scheme in the new contract that is supported by the Queensland Government. While the current regulated service includes State involvement, community feedback over the past two years has made it clear that future arrangements should include a resident fare scheme that is clearly funded by the Queensland Government, rather than placing a heavy burden on Maranoa ratepayers. This advocacy reflects how other public transport services are supported across Queensland.

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The second priority, and an important focus of this letter, is making sure both Council and the people who rely on the service have a genuine seat at the table to share their views and help shape the next generation of the air service contract. This survey is a key part of that, giving the community an easy way to have their say.

Helping Council represent our community to the State Government

Council's advocacy is strongest when it is backed by the voices of the people it represents. While we will continue to advocate on behalf of our community, it is the collective voice of residents and businesses that gives that advocacy real weight.

To make sure your views are properly represented, Council has put together a short follow-up survey. It's just six questions and should take no more than two to five minutes to complete. The survey is designed to build on the feedback already provided in August 2024.

The results of the survey will be shared directly with the Queensland Government, including the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Hon Brent Mickelberg MP, and our State Member for Warrego, the Hon Ann Leahy MP.

How to complete the survey


A QR code is included at the bottom of this letter if you'd like to complete the survey online. If you prefer a hard copy, one is enclosed and can be returned to any of Council's Customer Service Centres, or mailed to Maranoa Regional Council, PO Box 620, Roma QLD 4455. Surveys close at **12:00pm on Monday, 16 February 2026**.

This has been an important issue for our community for a long time, and your feedback helps Council represent you more effectively.

I strongly encourage you to take a few minutes to complete the survey and have your say, so together we can make sure the Maranoa's voice is clearly heard as the Queensland Government makes decisions about the future of air services.

I also want to sincerely thank everyone who has taken the time to speak up on this issue. The strength and consistency of the feedback we receive makes it very clear just how important improved air services are to our community.

Yours sincerely,


Cr Wendy Taylor
Mayor

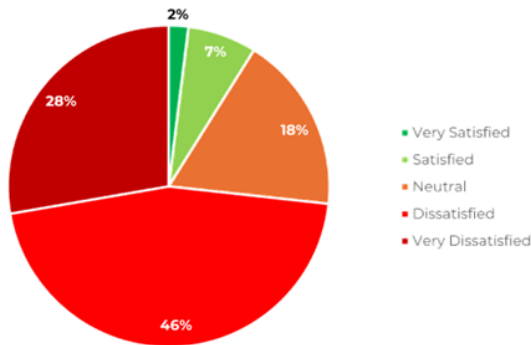
Scan here to
complete survey



What the Maranoa Residents Are Saying

Air Services into Roma

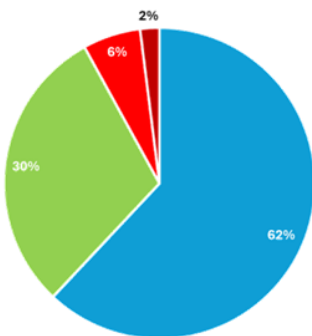
1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the current flights between Roma and Brisbane?



Survey results show overall satisfaction levels are currently low, with 74% dissatisfied, 18% neutral and 9% satisfied, indicating clear community concern alongside a small but present base of satisfied travellers.



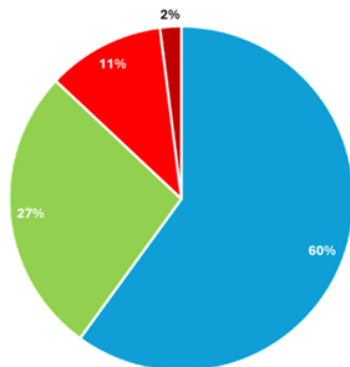
2. Has seat availability or ticket prices affected how often you fly from Roma?



Yes - I fly less often than I used to	62%
Yes - I no longer fly from Roma	30%
No - these issues haven't affected how often I travel	6%
I don't travel by air	2%

>90% of respondents are flying less or no longer flying from Roma due to seat availability

3. Has reputation, reliability and ease of connections to other destinations affected how often you fly from Roma?



Yes - I fly less often than I used to	60%
Yes - I no longer fly from Roma	27%
No - these issues haven't affected how often I travel	11%
I don't travel by air	2%

>85% of respondents are flying less or no longer flying from Roma due to reputation, reliability or connection concerns.

