



Australian Government

Australian Transport Safety Bureau

**ATSB**

# Corporate Plan

## 2024-2025 to 2027-2028

Australia's national transport safety investigator

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

ATSB acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present, and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) Corporate Plan for the period 2024-25 to 2027-28.

This Corporate Plan has been prepared consistent with paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and the relevant provisions of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* (the TSI Act), which establishes the ATSB. The Corporate Plan is also consistent with the Statement of Expectations 2023-25 (SOE) for the ATSB, as notified under Section 12AE of the TSI Act, by the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

The SOE sets out clear expectations relating to the ATSB's governance, strategic direction, key initiatives, and stakeholder engagement, such that the ATSB's resources be used in an efficient, effective, and ethical way, following best practice principles and guidelines.

To that end, a key focus for the agency has been the implementation of our strategic plan, which we launched in 2023. Developed with extensive involvement of staff, the plan clearly identifies the ATSB's key objectives, strategies, and actions for the short to medium term, with a particular focus on:

- enhancing our products and stakeholder engagement for improving transport safety
- fostering organisational resilience
- affirming our role as the national transport safety investigator.

We are continuing to work towards achieving the goals while being adaptable to our changing and growing operating environment, and the expectations of government. For example, we will be adjusting operations to participate in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Transport Safety in the Pacific program. We are already supporting Tonga and Vanuatu with investigations in those countries. We will also be prepared to address outcomes of the Aviation White Paper relevant to the ATSB. Further, we are focussed on addressing the ATSB's role as the national safety investigator for rail accidents and incidents noting the funding parameters that have resulted from the intergovernmental framework for rail safety.

It remains a priority across the aviation, marine and rail transport modes for the ATSB to work with governments and industry to ensure expectations are well defined, with the ultimate goal of making the greatest possible positive contribution to transport safety. A key tenant to this goal continues to be the publishing of high-quality transport safety investigation reports that lead to definable safety improvements across the broad spectrum of transport industry stakeholders.

For example, our investigation into a fire in the engine room of a multipurpose vessel chartered by the Australian Antarctic Division that was transiting the Southern Ocean in April 2021 identified eight safety issues. The investigation had findings covering technical faults, inappropriate watchkeeping practices, characteristics of the ship's integrated automation system, crew fatigue, and the design of the ship which itself contributed to fuel oil overflowing into the engine room, and the subsequent fire. Although the 37 crew and 72 passengers faced an extremely precarious emergency situation more than 1,500 miles from the nearest refuge, there were miraculously no reported physical injuries.

Meanwhile, our investigation into an EC130 helicopter accident on Mount Disappointment, north of Melbourne in March 2022, highlighted the importance of having multiple layers of controls to effectively manage the risk of inadvertent entry into instrument meteorological conditions (IIMC).

The pilot, operating under visual flight rules (VFR), rapidly sought to change course to avoid entering cloud. However, without visual cues in reduced visibility the helicopter developed a high rate of bank and descent during the attempted U-turn, resulting in the collision with terrain. Tragically all five occupants of the helicopter were fatally injured. The ATSB investigation found that the pilot had no



instrument flying experience, nor was the commercially chartered helicopter equipped with any form of artificial stabilisation, neither of which are required for visual flight rules flying.

The subject of risk controls was also a key message from an ATSB longitudinal safety study investigation into accidents at rail level crossings involving heavy vehicles. The study found that in a large majority of accidents at passively-controlled crossings (without flashing lights or boom gates), the heavy vehicle driver did not either detect the train or recognise an imminent risk was present until it became too late to avoid a collision.

So long as passively-controlled level crossing safety systems rely on road vehicle drivers always detecting the presence of trains, it is certain that this will fail from time to time and continue, without further effective risk mitigations, to result in future accidents. The study noted that additional engineering controls to alert road users to the need to stop would almost certainly provide an enhanced level of safety at level crossings.

Those investigation case studies demonstrate our expertise in uncovering safety issues and driving safety change, work that builds on decades of experience performing this function in the transport safety system. On 1 July 2024, the ATSB celebrated the 25th anniversary of our establishment. In the 25 years since, the ATSB has commenced more than 1,950 investigations, uncovering over 1,230 safety issues and issuing 221 safety recommendations and 104 safety advisory notices.

While the number of lives that have been saved because of the work conducted by the ATSB is difficult to measure, the deaths that continue in our transport networks are measured both in both financial impacts and more pointedly in the lifelong impact and trauma to family, friends and colleagues.



Angus Mitchell  
Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer

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## ABOUT THE ATSB

The ATSB is an independent statutory agency of the Australian Government. It is governed by a Commission and is entirely separate from transport regulators, policy makers and service providers. The ATSB's function is to improve transport safety in aviation, rail and shipping. The ATSB does this through:

- the independent investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences
- safety data recording, analysis, and research
- influencing safety action.

In accordance with the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* (TSI Act), the ATSB cannot apportion blame, assist in determining liability or, as a general rule, assist in court proceedings. Its sole focus is the prevention of future accidents and the improvement of transport safety. The ATSB is also required to be independent, in the interests of avoiding conflicts of interest and external interference in its role.

## **VISION**

Transport without accidents.

## **MISSION**

We improve transport safety for the greatest public benefit through our independent investigations and influencing safety action.

## PURPOSE

The ATSB's purpose is defined by our mission statement:

*We improve transport safety for the greatest public benefit through our independent investigations and influencing safety action.<sup>1</sup>*

In prioritising the public benefit:

- We focus on the safety of passengers and crew on an aircraft, train or ship to help prevent deaths and serious injuries.
- We focus on the significant financial costs that can result from an accident, particularly where there is significant damage to public infrastructure or an impact on the national economy.

Our independent investigations seek to establish the safety factors that contributed to an accident or incident and to identify safety issues – on going risk to safety – for action by organisations with responsibility for managing that risk. By identifying safety issues, which are characteristic of an organisation or a system rather than a specific individual we target safety improvements for the greatest public benefit. Directing our resources to investigations that the potential to uncover safety issues ensures we have the broadest safety effect on transport systems.

The ATSB does not have powers to force operators, manufacturers, or regulators to take action. Instead, the ATSB relies on its ability to influence the actions and decisions of others through its authority, knowledge, position, and relationship. We continually build relationships with others to support safety action, and we have stakeholders willing to advocate for our safety messaging. Where we are concerned that not enough is being done to address safety issues we have identified, we will campaign for action to prevent future accidents.

The ATSB's aspirational vision for transport without accidents stretches well beyond the reporting period of this Corporate Plan. However, this Corporate Plan can raise expectations for government safety agencies and industry to be proactive about identifying hazards and mitigating risks in transport.

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<sup>1</sup> The ATSB's purpose is consistent with the outcome statement in the Portfolio Budget Statement for the ATSB: improved transport safety in Australia including through: independent 'no-blame' investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences; safety data recording, analysis, and research; and influencing safety action.



## KEY ACTIVITIES

The ATSB improves transport safety through the following activities:

### Independent investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences

The ATSB conducts two different types of investigations — occurrence investigations and safety studies.

Occurrence investigations typically examine a single accident or incident in detail. The sequence of events and factual background information are documented, and findings are presented along with a safety analysis to explain those findings. These investigations may identify safety issues — ongoing systemic risks to safety — and the safety actions taken by organisations to address these safety issues. The ATSB may also issue formal safety recommendations where we assess an identified safety issue has not been adequately addressed.

Occurrence investigations vary in terms of scope:

Short investigations:	Limited scope and generally office based. The findings are confined to the actions and conditions directly relating to the occurrence and any proactive safety actions taken.
Defined investigations:	May involve onsite activity. May identify safety factors and safety issues relating to ineffective or missing risk controls.
Systemic investigations:	Involve onsite activity and extensive ATSB and potentially external resources. May consider organisational processes, systems, cultures and other factors that relate to those risk controls, and are likely to identify several safety issues.

Safety studies typically investigate multiple occurrences of a similar nature, or a potential or emerging safety issue. They are conducted as an investigation under the TSI Act and aim to uncover safety issues through the analysis of occurrence and other data.

The ATSB also publishes occurrence briefs, which are short factual summaries of transport safety occurrences based upon information gathered during the initial notification, and from any follow-up information. In the absence of an investigation, they provide an additional opportunity to learn from the experiences of others.

### Safety data recording, analysis, and research

The ATSB processes over 17,000 notifications of transport accidents and incidents every year, with aviation occurrences reported directly to the ATSB, and rail and marine notifications and data provided to us via the relevant regulator.

The ATSB uses data and information it collects to identify transport safety matters that may lead to further safety enhancements through investigations, research, and targeted safety education.

The ATSB maintains the National Aviation Occurrence Database, which is made publicly available on our website : [National Aviation Occurrence Database | ATSB](#).

The ATSB also publishes a separate aviation wildlife strike statistics dashboard, updated monthly on our website here: [National Aviation Wildlife Strike Dashboard | ATSB](#).

The ATSB operates the voluntary and confidential reporting scheme (REPCON) for the aviation, marine and rail industries. Any person within these industries, or member of the travelling public, may submit a REPCON report of a reportable safety concern. The scheme is designed to capture safety concerns — including unsafe practices, procedures and risk controls within an organisation or affected part of the industry.

## **Influencing safety action**

The ATSB influences a broad range of stakeholders, including governments, the public and industry, to take safety actions in response to our investigation findings. Within industry, there are different participants, ranging from operators and manufacturers, and senior executives to front-line staff with specific safety-critical responsibilities. Reaching these audiences requires different communication styles and messages to ensure they take appropriate safety action.

Not all stakeholders who need to be informed of the ATSB's safety messaging will read detailed investigation reports. Therefore, the ATSB identifies the different audiences we engage with and the best means to educate and promote our safety messaging. Channels for communicating include the ATSB's website and social media channels, mainstream media such as news websites, television, radio and print media, trade media publications, and active participation in industry events and forums. As part of our strategic plan, we have invested more in producing video and animation content. This evolution in how we convey our safety messaging recognises the changing ways in which people consume information.

The ATSB invests in studying and contributing to the methodologies and techniques used by accident investigation authorities in transport and non-transport modes across the world. We do this by employing academic discipline, supported by our continuing partnership with RMIT University. Under this partnership, industry participants are able to undertake the same core transport safety investigation training as ATSB staff. This is an investment in the training and skill development of people in industry who are in a position to support improvements to transport safety.

The ATSB is also committed to close engagement with its international counterpart agencies and relevant multilateral organisations. In line with Australian Government policy, the ATSB places a specific emphasis on engagement with countries in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly with Indonesia and Papua New Guinea and more recently assistance in the South Pacific region. Through funding programmes from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the ATSB has been providing in-country investigation support to both Vanuatu and Tonga for recent accidents. Funding from DFAT over the period of this Corporate Plan will also cover broader capacity building and technical assistance across the South Pacific. This is under the Australia-Pacific Partnerships for Aviation Program.

The ATSB is also actively involved in the work of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and is an active member of the International Transportation Safety Association (ITSA).

The ATSB also contributes towards the safety goals and safety enhancement initiatives as outlined in the Australian National Aviation Safety Plan (NASP) and the Australian State Safety Programme (SSP). These documents outline Australia's commitment to continuously improve aviation safety management capabilities in order to reduce the risks of aviation operations.

# OPERATING CONTEXT

## Environment

The work the ATSB is able to undertake to improve transport safety through its investigations is contextualised through changes in the operational environment for transport industries. We are conscious of the variable economic conditions transport industries must contend with including inflationary pressures and supply chain disruptions.

The ATSB can offer our safety knowledge and expertise in this changing environment when operators are experiencing budgetary pressure. Our experience in investigating accidents and incidents that occur amidst organisational change in a cost-pressured environment can help with applying safety lessons from the past to today.

Internally, the ATSB is working to consolidate the benefits of a significant change management program over the last few years:

- A greater focus on how we engage with our stakeholders with targeted messaging and enhanced use of digital mediums which we know amplifies our safety messaging.
- We have evolved our recruitment strategies and practices by defining and targeting core competencies for modal investigators.
- We are continuing to enhance our information, communications, and technology infrastructure to enable a more data driven approach and drive further improvements to investigation management.
- We are furthering our relationship with RMIT University to deliver broader tertiary qualifications in transport safety investigations.
- We are improving our organisational resilience through considerable investment into our training, diversity and wellbeing programmes across the ATSB.
- The *Transport Safety Investigation Regulations 2021* were amended with effect from 1 January 2023 to align accident and incident reporting requirements with the need for ATSB investigation and analysis of data.

## Jurisdiction

Currently, the ATSB's jurisdiction covers the transport sectors as outlined below.

<b>Aviation</b>	Civilian Australian-registered aircraft (excluding some recreational and sport aviation) anywhere in the world, and foreign-registered aircraft operating in Australia
<b>Marine</b>	Civilian interstate and overseas shipping involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Australian-registered ships anywhere in the world;</li><li>• foreign-registered ships in Australian waters;</li><li>• foreign-registered ships en route to Australian ports</li></ul>
<b>Rail</b>	Rail operations in Australia, subject to resourcing agreements with States and Territories.

The ATSB does not have the resources to investigate every one of the thousands of accidents and incidents that occur in these sectors each year. To provide assurance that the ATSB's finite resources are being used for the greatest safety benefit, the ATSB will continue to work with government and industry stakeholders to clarify the priorities for its existing jurisdiction and the potential for its expansion. Consistent with the Minister's SOE for the ATSB, the ATSB participated in the Australian

Transport Safety and Investigation Bodies Financial Review which was announced in the 2023-24 Budget.

The ATSB may investigate sports aviation accidents on an exception basis – exceptions normally only include where Australia is the state of manufacture for the aircraft, the aircraft is registered with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), or there is a third-party risk. The ATSB’s jurisdiction in the sport and recreation sector was referenced in the Government’s Aviation Green Paper, released in September 2023. The subsequent White Paper is expected to be released in 2024.

The financial resources section of this Corporate Plan addresses limitations on our role nationally in rail investigations. However, where we do investigate, our objective is to ensure safety lessons are shared across the Australian rail industry. The ATSB’s level crossing safety study, published in 2024, demonstrates the need for and value of a national approach to rail safety investigation.



The ATSB will take account of international agreements when reviewing its current jurisdiction. In aviation this includes the Convention on International Civil Aviation and in marine, the Safety of Life at Sea Convention. Under these conventions and supporting documents, there are expectations relating to investigating certain categories of accidents and incidents. The ATSB will have regard to these expectations but will have as its primary focus, using its resources to investigate those occurrences that provide safety lessons of the greatest public benefit.

### Technology

New technologies are continually being adopted across transport industries. These technologies are improving efficiency, enabling new types of transport operations, improving safety and much more. Into the future we can expect new advancements in technology and subsequently, further change in how transport operates.

### **Automation**

While the aviation sector has seen increasing levels of automation for decades, fully automated transport is now expanding into other transport modes.

For example, Sydney Metro is already operating driverless trains on its Northwest Line. It is planning on having a number of fully automated trains operating in the near future through its city and Southwest line. Automation is already widely used on rail tracks servicing Australian mines.



### **Artificial Intelligence and Augmented Reality systems**

Transport operators are looking to exploit the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) capabilities to improve the use of automated logistic transport systems. AI and AR are now being utilised to automatically recognise nearby ships through ship camera analysis to determine the risk of collision.

For example, Hyundai Heavy Industries plans to operate the first automated ocean-going carrier using this technology for its liquefied natural gas carriers<sup>1</sup>.



### **Remotely piloted and swarming technology**

Remotely piloted technologies are increasingly being adopted – replacing some existing piloted operations and enabling other new operations. This includes advancement in swarm capabilities for drones. This capability is becoming very popular for aerial displays, particularly at night. Swarm capabilities are now moving into other applications such as environmental monitoring to urban planning<sup>2</sup>.

For example, featuring more than 1000 luminous drones choreographed to dance across the night sky above Uluru, Wintjiri Wiru (“a beautiful view out to the horizon” in the local Anangu language) will run until February 2025. The swarm of drones creates a series of shapes depicting aspects of the Mala story. The visuals are accompanied by a soundtrack of traditional music and narration in the Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara languages<sup>3</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> [Hyundai Plans First Ocean-Going Autonomous Ship Voyage by Year’s End \(maritime-executive.com\)](https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/hyundai-plans-first-ocean-going-autonomous-ship-voyage-by-year-s-end) accessed on 25 July 2024 at 1017.

<sup>2</sup> [Mastering the Sky: The Revolutionary Potential of Drone Swarms in 2024 - Blue Falcon Aerial](https://www.bluefalcon.aerial.com/mastering-the-sky-the-revolutionary-potential-of-drone-swarms-in-2024), accessed on 25 July 2024 at 0904.

<sup>3</sup> [Wintjiri Wiru launch: Uluru night sky lights up with spectacular drone, laser and sound show. \(afr.com\)](https://www.afr.com/travel/wintjiri-wiru-launch-uluru-night-sky-lights-up-with-spectacular-drone-laser-and-sound-show-20240725) accessed on 25 July 2024 at 0918.

## ATSB STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-25

The ATSB published its Strategic Plan in August 2023 covering the three-year period 2023 to 2025, with the plan reviewed and updated on an annual basis by the Senior Leadership Team.

In developing the plan, the Senior Leadership Team agreed to three strategic goals, supported by six strategies. With one strategy supporting all three strategic goals. The three strategic goals are:

- To influence positive transport safety outcomes through independently identifying and sharing safety concerns and fostering safety awareness, knowledge, and action.
- To position the ATSB to be Australia's national transport safety investigator, maximising safety outcomes across transport sectors through growth and innovation.
- To be an enduring and adaptable organisation that delivers on its outcome across changing environments by investing in its people, systems, and partnerships.

These goals and strategies have been updated to reflect the new Minister's SOE, effective from 1 July 2023. The ATSB Strategic Plan placemat can be read in full at [Home | ATSB](#).



## NATIONAL AVIATION SAFETY PLAN 2024-26

The ATSB is one of eight Commonwealth agencies contributing to the Australian National Aviation Safety Plan (NASP) 2024-27.

Due for publication in 2024, the NASP complements the Australian State Safety Programme (SSP). It identifies initiatives that are being undertaken to reduce the risks associated with aviation operations in Australia and details the strategic direction for the management of aviation safety in the short, medium and long term.

The NASP presents the national strategy and roadmap of actions for enhancing aviation safety for the period 2024 to 2027. Australian safety enhancement initiatives (SEIs) not only support the improvement of safety domestically, but within the Asia-Pacific region and globally.

## PERFORMANCE

We have set performance measures that seek to demonstrate our ability to improve transport safety. These measures balance effectiveness, efficiency, and investigation outputs. While the targets for each of these measures are quantitative, as appropriate, the results will be supplemented by qualitative information to give greater context and meaning.

<b>Effectiveness</b>		
<b>1. Outcome:</b> Improve transport safety for the greatest public benefit through our independent investigations and influencing safety action.		
<b>KPI</b>	<b>Target 2024-25</b>	<b>Target 2025-26 and beyond</b>
Number of safety issues that are addressed through safety action.	a) 65% of safety issues addressed in the last financial year. b) 85% of safety issues addressed in the previous financial year.	
<p><b>Comment:</b> The performance targets for outcome 1 recognise that some safety issues will take time to be actioned by stakeholders. We expect that some safety issues not actioned in the year they are identified will be addressed the ensuing year. There also needs to be some tolerance for a minority of safety issues identified not being actioned. The ATSB does not have powers to force operators, manufacturers, and regulators to take action. The ATSB relies on its ability to influence.</p>		
<b>2. Outcome:</b> We identify safety issues additional to those identified by industry and government safety agencies for the greatest public benefit through our occurrence investigations and safety studies.		
<b>KPI</b>	<b>Target 2024-25</b>	<b>Target 2025-26 and beyond</b>
Number of Systemic, Defined, and Safety Study investigations completed by ATSB that identify safety issues.	65% of investigations identify a safety issue.	
Percentage of all investigations that identify at least one safety issue not already identified by others.	Project 50% of systemic and defined investigations completed in 2024-25 identified safety issues not identified by others.	Project 50% of systemic and defined investigations completed in 2025-26 identified safety issues not identified by others.
<p><b>Comment:</b> The measures for outcome 2 are targeted towards demonstrating that the ATSB adds value. If we commence a systemic investigation there should be a strong prospect of finding a safety issue. We intend 50% of those safety issues are ones that have not been identified by another entity. When reporting on these measures, additional qualitative information will be provided summarising the significant safety action taken in response to the safety issues identified.</p>		



## Efficiency

- 3. Outcome:** We efficiently use our resources to conduct investigations through selective investigation processes and project management discipline.

KPI	Target 2024-25	Target 2025-26 and beyond
On an average annual basis, the ATSB will be conducting around twice the number of investigations as it has available investigators.	Projecting 90 active investigations.	Projecting 90 active investigations.

**Comment:** This outcome and KPI focuses the ATSB's attention on managing its limited resources. The performance measure has been set with a target consistent with resourcing and investigation output expectations for similar investigation agencies internationally.

## Outputs

- 4. Outcome:** ATSB safety-related information is shared in a timely manner for the benefit of those needing awareness of relevant hazards, risks and trends or taking safety action, through publishing information in accordance with committed timeframes.

KPI	Target 2024-25	Target 2025-26 and beyond
Median time to complete investigations.	Short: 6 months Defined: 12 months Systemic: 18 months	Short: 6 months Defined: 12 months Systemic: 18 months

- 5. Outcome:** Investigations of transport occurrences, and safety studies are defensible, to ensure industry and government confidence in our work, through the use of evidence based and systematic investigation processes.

KPI	Target 2024-25	Target 2025-26 and beyond
Number of changes to the ATSB's published investigation finding over the previous financial year.	Zero	Zero

**Comment:** These measures focus on the timeliness and quality of the ATSB's investigation products. Timely sharing of safety information is important for our stakeholders with responsibility for managing risk. Our stakeholders need to have confidence in that information to be able to act.

## CAPABILITY

In a rapidly changing transport environment, the ATSB must nurture the right capabilities to meet our strategic objectives. We continue to build our capabilities through the implementation of key strategies and work plans, as overseen by our governance committees.

### Workforce

Our people are dedicated professionals committed to achieving our mission: *improve transport safety for the greatest public benefits through our independent investigations and influencing safety action.*

Our workforce is our greatest asset, and the satisfaction, motivation, and retention of our employees is a key priority.

The *Workforce Plan 2024-2025: Shaping our Workforce* will guide the development of the ATSB's workforce. This plan will help us meet emerging workforce challenges and achieve our mission.

### Infrastructure

In the period of this Corporate Plan, planned infrastructure investments include:

- The fit-out of a new Brisbane office incorporating Protective Security Policy Framework security treatments and information technology (IT) infrastructure prior to the occupation of the new premises by staff.
- Upgrades to investigation equipment such as software and hardware including periodical refresh of video conferencing peripherals and end-user computing hardware to ensure effective support and maintenance to reduce risk and the burden of supporting depreciated hardware.

These investments will assist the ATSB to use its resources in a more efficient manner and support the agency's core work relating to transport investigations.

Over time, the ATSB's estimated capital injections fall short of the deficits associated with the non-funding of depreciation and amortisation. Without adequate funding injections by the Government, this represents a challenge to the ATSB in maintaining its underlying equity and asset base going forward.

The ATSB continues to take a conservative approach towards its capital investment strategy giving priority to maintaining plant and equipment on a needs basis, to ensure the agency has the necessary equipment to conduct its investigative functions.

### Information and Communications Technology

The ATSB's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategic Plan and Roadmap is designed to provide a plan for information, communications, and technology in support of our organisational objectives. Improvements in collaboration will continue as the ATSB moves away from owning and operating our ICT infrastructure towards consuming these as a service where possible. The ATSB continues to leverage cloud technologies and transition to an alternative managed services model.

This work is motivated by several factors, including:

- the need to better support ATSB core operations that involve collaboration between staff and other stakeholders at partner and client sites and in the field.
- greater emphasis on post-investigation functions such as leveraging data and publishing findings to a broad audience to affect changes in behavior and policy that improve transport safety outcomes.
- the current Whole-of-Government emphasis on a cloud-first approach to IT service delivery

outlined by the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA).

This financial year key milestones will be to complete the transition of the new IT Managed Services contracted arrangement and supporting services. Following on from this transition of services, investment will be made into developing a modern and supportable Standard Operating Environment to prepare for a hardware refresh in FY25/26.

End-of-life peripherals such as monitors, headsets and specialised computing equipment will also be refreshed to maintain capability and supportability.

## **Financial resources**

The ATSB's funding varies by transport mode. Aviation activities are funded through Commonwealth appropriation. Marine activity is also funded through Commonwealth appropriation, consistent with our established jurisdiction of certain civilian interstate and overseas shipping. The ATSB is not resourced for domestic commercial vessel investigations.

A comparatively small amount of our funding is for rail. Under an intergovernmental framework for rail safety the majority of the ATSB's resourcing is meant to be provided by State/Territory Governments. Queensland is the only active participant in this model that currently provides an appropriation. New South Wales and Victoria maintain their own independent accident investigators. The other States and Territories are not actively financing rail safety investigations under the envisaged model. As the ATSB seeks to manage its resourcing under the limitations of this model there are rail accidents and serious incidents that are not able to be investigated by the ATSB. The ATSB is working with governments to provide greater certainty around its role in the future.

As part of the 2023-24 Commonwealth Budget process, the ATSB received a one-off additional appropriation comprising \$3.8 million in operating and \$0.8 million in capital funds to increase the average staffing level to 110, to meet the legislative and international obligations of the organisation, and to make improvements to the core enterprise safety investigation management system (AIMS). For the 2024-25 budget, the ATSB was again provided with one-off additional funding of \$3.9 million, allowing it to maintain minimum core staffing levels.

The ATSB also receives funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) for technical assistance and capacity building in transport safety investigation in Indonesia. Funding has also been provided by DFAT to the ATSB as part of an Australia-Pacific Partnerships for Aviation Program. Its objectives include a safer, more sustainable and resilient Pacific aviation sector.

Detailed information regarding ATSB funding for 2024-25 can be found in the Portfolio Budget Statements [Portfolio budget statement | ATSB](#).

## COOPERATION

The ATSB can identify safety issues but has no powers to make others take safety action. Instead, the ATSB actively engages with stakeholders to share safety messaging to influence others to improve safety. The ATSB has memoranda of understanding with a number of industry associations who can reach out to their members with messaging that is tailored to their working environment.

In addition, the ATSB uses domestic and international forums hosted by others to share priority safety messages. The ATSB also engages with stakeholders directly where it is appropriate for the ATSB to provide information on its role and explain its reasoning for making particular findings.

Where the ATSB is concerned about inaction on areas of safety concern, the ATSB seeks to work with others, such as Coroners, regulators, and government-led safety inquiries, to influence safety action.

Identifying safety risks is a shared responsibility, and regulatory authorities, industry and others investigate, research, and conduct data analysis where the ATSB does not. From a safety system perspective, the ATSB needs to have confidence that others are properly identifying the hazards and risks from the occurrences and data where the ATSB is not involved.

The ATSB will continue to engage with governments and industry to ensure appropriate organisations are involved for different occurrences. The ATSB's partnership with RMIT University for the delivery of investigation courses supports the enhancement of capability in others, where required.

To deliver rail safety investigation services in New South Wales and Victoria, the ATSB has a collaboration agreement with independent investigation agencies in those states. The agreement provides for resources from those agencies to be used to conduct investigations under the Commonwealth's *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003*.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

As Australia’s national aviation, rail, and marine safety investigator, the ATSB is experienced in risk management for the purpose of identifying safety risks in industry so that they can be effectively managed. In a risk management framework, these safety risks are shared risks where the ATSB, the regulators and industry participants need to work together to improve safety.

### Risk approach

Risk management in the ATSB is about improving organisational performance and resilience, providing the ATSB with confidence to make difficult decisions, and identifying and exploring opportunities.

The ATSB has revised its agency risk management framework to align with contemporary Commonwealth policy and guidance. The revised risk management framework is embedded into the ATSB strategic, operational, and business planning processes.

All new and existing staff undertake risk training on an annual basis.

### Our critical success factors

The ATSB’s appetite and tolerance for risk is mapped to defined categories of critical success factors which relate to the agency’s organisational objectives.

Category	Tolerance Statement
Delivery	<p><b>Cautious (Low):</b> Prefer safe options with little risk of adverse exposure for agency and/or the government.</p> <p><b>Tolerance (Medium):</b> Noting a <i>cautious</i> appetite for risk around delivery of outputs and outcomes, we are willing to take a <i>moderate level of additional risk</i> (in certain circumstances) in order to achieve positive safety outcomes.</p>
Injury (physical or psychological)	<p><b>Cautious (Low):</b> Prefer safe options with little risk of adverse exposure for agency and/or the government.</p> <p><b>Tolerance (Low):</b> Noting a <i>cautious</i> appetite for risk around safety, as we operate in higher risk environments, we seek to manage such risks carefully, and we are <i>unwilling to take further risks</i> exposing injury to our staff or stakeholders.</p>
Financial	<p><b>Accepting (Medium):</b> Willing to consider all options and choose the one that is most likely to result in successful delivery while also providing a reasonable degree of protection from high risks.</p> <p><b>Tolerance (Medium):</b> Noting an <i>accepting</i> appetite for financial risk in a cost constrained environment, we accept <i>certain additional financial exposure</i> in order to deliver safety outcomes. We will always work with funders actively to ensure awareness of risk being taken.</p>

Category	Tolerance Statement
Legal	<p><b>Cautious (Low):</b> Prefer safe options with little risk of adverse exposure for agency and/or the government.</p> <p><b>Tolerance (Low):</b> Noting a <i>cautious</i> appetite for legal risk as a representative of the Commonwealth, we will take and <i>accept only limited additional risks</i> that breach our legal authority or compliance obligations under any circumstances.</p>
Reputation	<p><b>Cautious (Low):</b> Prefer safe options with little risk of adverse exposure for agency and/or the government.</p> <p><b>Tolerance (Medium to High):</b> We have a cautious appetite for reputation risk as our reputation is essential to our effectiveness as an influential safety investigation transport agency. However, in order to achieve material and sustained transport safety outcomes, we will accept some level of reputational impact.</p>
Security	<p><b>Cautious (Low):</b> Prefer safe options with little risk of adverse exposure for agency and/or government and/or public premises or information.</p> <p><b>Tolerance (Low):</b> Noting a <i>cautious</i> appetite for security risk, we will take and <i>accept only limited additional risks</i> that expose our information holdings, premises, or assets to unauthorised access under any circumstances.</p>

## Enterprise Risks

The ATSB has four enterprise risks.

Risk	Controls and Treatments
<p><b>A reduction in funding in real terms beyond 2024-25, caused by the removal of a budget measure and a failure to address rising costs and industry growth will result in the ATSB failing to be able to meet expectations in the PBS for delivery of services.</b></p> <p>The context for this risk is inconsistency and uncertainty with ongoing funding with the increasing employee and supplier costs versus appropriation.</p>	<p>ATSB has received a funding injection for 2024-25 only. This increase reestablishes ATSB's baseline funding. The ATSB has participated in a financial sustainability review coordinated by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.</p>

<p><b>The ATSB does not meet the timeliness KPI for ATSB investigation reports (shorts, defined, systemic) caused by insufficient resources and inefficiencies, resulting in reputational damage and safety action being delayed.</b></p> <p>The context for this risk is the challenges the ATSB has experienced in meeting timeliness targets for the publication of reports.</p>	<p>Timeliness has been improving, particularly in short and defined investigations categories. Further, the ATSB does not rely on the publication of investigation final reports alone to share safety information. The ATSB shares safety information as soon as practicable with stakeholders who need to act on it, including through direct interactions with stakeholders, and the publication of preliminary and interim reports, and Safety Advisory Notices.</p>
<p><b>The ATSB does not have a clear identification of critical systems and data assets to ensure adequate security controls and data protection.</b></p> <p>The ATSB has a wide set of systems and data assets. It is important that these are clearly understood and managed.</p>	<p>The ATSB has active membership and engagement with E8 forums and other security workshops across the APS.</p> <p>ATSB is updating its Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery Management Plan (DRMP) during 2024-25.</p>
<p><b>Failure to obtain funding and resourcing certainty for the ATSB's independent rail safety investigation function at a national level will result in safety factors not being identified and adequately addressed following accidents and incidents.</b></p> <p>The intergovernmental framework does not provide certainty for rail investigations.</p>	<p>The ATSB working with governments to provide for greater certainty around its role in the future.</p>

## VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The ATSB has systems and controls in place to ensure we manage resources efficiently, effectively, and ethically in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

While protecting our independence, we work closely with transport safety regulators and the aviation, marine and rail industries. We approach our work in accordance with five key principles intended to maintain trust in our organisation:

- Independence – we think for ourselves
- Engagement – we work with others
- Rigour – we rely on evidence
- Innovation – we are open to new ideas
- Relevance – we make a difference.

The ATSB fosters a culture where we:

- treat each other with dignity and respect, valuing our people as our greatest resource
- work across the ATSB collaboratively.
- search for the truth to enhance transport safety.

The ATSB's five key principles and culture are backed by our commitment to the Australian Public Service (APS) Values set out in the *Public Service Act 1999*:

- Impartial: The APS is apolitical and provides the Government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.
- Committed to service: The APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government.
- Accountable: The APS is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.
- Respectful: The APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage.
- Ethical: The APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity in all that it does.



# PUBLIC GOVERNANCE, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY RULE REQUIREMENTS

The ATSB has prepared this Corporate Plan in accordance with the requirements of:

- Subsection 35(1) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (PGPA) Act 2013 and
- The Public Governance, Performance, Accountability Rule 2014.

The table below outlines each relevant requirement and where it is covered in the Corporate Plan.

Requirement	Page
Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement of preparation</li> <li>• The reporting period for which the plan is prepared</li> <li>• The reporting periods covered by the plan</li> </ul>	3
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Operating context	11
Performance	16
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