

Submissions open on proposed extension to Qantas and American Airlines authorisation

15 April 2025

The Acting Minister of Transport is considering, pursuant to section 202 of the Civil Aviation Act 2023, to vary the end date of the current Qantas and American Airlines alliance authorisation from 14 November 2025 to 31 March 2026.

The Ministry of Transport (the Ministry) invites submissions from parties to the agreement and interested stakeholders. Submissions will be published on the Ministry's website. Please indicate if there is any information in your submission that you consider should be withheld and provide grounds for doing so.

Submissions should be emailed to alliances@transport.govt.nz by 5 pm on Wednesday 23 April 2025.

Background

The Civil Aviation Act 2023 provides for greater transparency and consistency when authorising airline cooperation agreements. It includes new steps that must be followed, such as publishing a draft report and calling for submissions. This increases the time taken to assess an application before a final decision is made.

The Ministry has developed an assessment framework detailing how the economic assessment would be undertaken, as well as guidelines outlining the steps and timeframe for assessments. These are due to be finalised shortly.

The framework requires the applicants to provide more data than they had previously, undertake some of the analysis, and submit these to the Ministry for review. This is new, and applicants were not aware of this prior to the Ministry's consultation on the assessment framework.

Proposal

Qantas and American Airlines intend to apply for reauthorisation of their current authorisation which ends 14 November 2025.

The Ministry is of the view that there is insufficient time to undertake the new reauthorisation process before the current authorisation ends, which is a material change in circumstance. The Minister on advice from the Ministry proposes to extend the current authorisation by just over four months to 31 March 2026 to provide enough time for the airlines to prepare their application and for the Ministry to assess the application before the Minister makes a final decision.

The Minister proposes that the extension is only what is reasonably necessary to complete the authorisation process, and short enough to mitigate against any competitive detriments.