



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment and Heritage  
Australian Antarctic Division**

Chairman  
Joint Standing Committee  
on the National Capital and External Territories  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

SUBMISSION 37

Dear Senator Lightfoot

I refer to your Committee's query regarding the feasibility of utilising the Australian Antarctic Division's intra-continental aircraft (2 x CASA 212s) to link up with inter-continental air transport systems operated by other nations. We have briefly examined this option and concluded that the aircraft range, support requirements and payload issues mean that this is not a feasible option.

The intercontinental air transport system operated by the United States, which would be the only system Australia could conceivably utilise, flies between Christchurch in New Zealand and the US base, McMurdo. The distance between McMurdo and the nearest Australian station, Casey, (1174 nautical miles or the equivalent of Sydney to Auckland) makes it impractical to transfer meaningful numbers of passengers or cargo in a CASA 212 without refuelling and ground support being provided enroute. Recent experience with operating aircraft in Antarctica also indicates that five to seven days would need to be allowed for a return flight from Casey to McMurdo if fuel and ground support were to be provided enroute, say at either Dome C (Concordia) or the French base, Dumont D'Urville.

The logistics requirements of such an exercise and the uncertainty created by weather delays would make linking the Australian CASA 212's to other nations' flight schedules an impractical solution for ongoing operations. In any event, it is also unlikely that there is any surplus capacity within the US air operations that would allow meaningful numbers of Australian scientists to be transported between Christchurch and McMurdo.

I hope that the above information answers your query but do not hesitate to contact the AAD should you require further information.

Yours sincerely

A J Press  
Director  
Australian Antarctic Division

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