



SUBMISSION NO. 7



ELECTORATE OFFICE

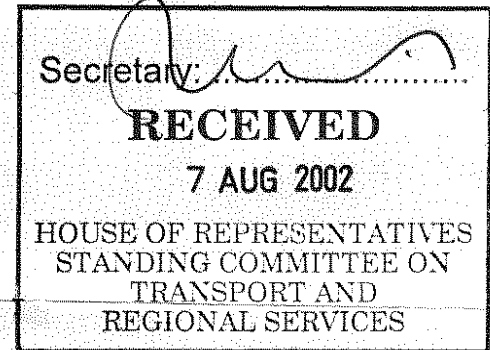
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30 July, 2002

The Committee Secretary  
Mr Ian Dundas  
Standing Committee on Transport & Regional Services  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Sir,

I am writing to submit my comments for consideration with reference to the Inquiry into Commercial Regional Aviation Services in Australia and Transport Links to Major Populated Islands.

I believe the greatest impediment to regional Australian aviation services is the individual charging regime that exists. Air Services Australia charges at Mackay airport are not comparable with larger volume airports in Australia and thus aviation services are inhibited as well as the development of the region as a whole.

Mackay has a growing tourism industry and is also a gateway to the Whitsunday Islands and the Bowen Basin. Our potential as a region is limited only by the imagination, but relies on the provision of vital services and infrastructure.

A \$3.5 million upgrade to the Mackay airport was recently completed, and the terminal now boasts many new features and facilities with an improved ability to expand readily to meet passenger and airline demand.

Works completed include repainting of the terminal, an attractive new interior, expanded security departure lounge, larger baggage re-claim conveyors, secured car park, comprehensive closed circuit TV surveillance system, new car hire and check-in facilities, new flight information display system, more covered walkways, and a new QantasLink lounge.

Facilities are now at the forefront of aviation reception in Queensland, and passenger numbers have also been boosted through the attraction of Virgin Blue in Mackay and also new direct Qantas flights between Sydney and Mackay.

Despite wonderful efforts to ensure Mackay's airport is attractive to business and customers, the problem of expensive airfares and terminal operation fees remains a burden, restraining Mackay from fully taking advantage of tourist and visitor demand.

I believe the Committee should take into account a networked charging system, which would restore balance to the provision of aviation services in regional communities such as Mackay and allow for a more competitive operation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

**TIM MULHERIN, M.P.**  
Member for Mackay