

Saturday, August 24, 2002

House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Transport & Regional Services
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Secretary: *J. Luff*

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORT AND
REGIONAL SERVICES

To Whom it May Concern

I write with regard to air transport services to Flinders Island Tasmania. I commute between Melbourne and Flinders Island on a regular basis and have homes in each place. In recent times, commuting has become much more difficult as has transportation of freight to and from the island.

As you are no doubt aware, many companies providing air services to Flinders Island from both Tasmania and Victoria have folded and/or stopped services to Flinders Island. Currently there is one regular air service from Launceston and Melbourne only. There is no regular service from Hobart.

One of the reasons for this, I am told, is new(ish) regulations preventing regular air services from removing seats to transport freight. This apparently affects the financial viability of such services. Freight transport is a vital issue, as is passenger transport, for Flinders Island.

I find these current restrictions on freight transportation extremely problematic as it means I can not transport my (large) dog on a regular air service. This in turn means I can spend less time on and money in Flinders Island. And I won't be bringing friends and family with me.

Having only one regular air service to Flinders Island limits choice of departure point for passengers. It means fewer visitors to the island and no opportunity for cheaper flights.

The cost of getting to Flinders Island also restricts tourist numbers and impacts badly on the island's economy. Flinders Island is a perfect place for tourism, especially "eco-tourism" but the difficulties of getting there turn people off the idea of Flinders Island as a great and easy destination.

I urge you to look carefully at any regulations restricting transportation of freight and remove any which don't detrimentally affect safety. I believe the rule of non-seat removal would not affect safety so long as other regulations regarding how much freight can be carried are retained and, obviously, observed.

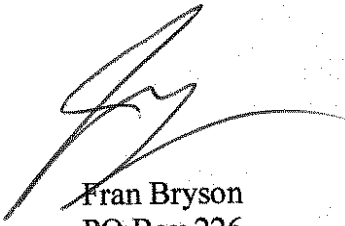
Another issue which I would urge you to examine is that of fuel costs on Flinders Island. Our fuel is enormously more expensive than just about anywhere in Australia which is crippling to the local community and presents problems for visitors – there is no public transport on Flinders Island and so everyone is reliant on cars.

Transportation of fuel to Flinders Island is an issue of concern and is, I believe, within the terms of references via the issue of freight transportation.

Aid by way of subsidies is one possible solution for transport costs both for passengers and freight.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Yours faithfully,



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