



**Mayor David Blake
Bankstown City Council**

SUBMISSION NO. 68

28th August 2002

Mr Ian Dundas
Secretary
Transport and Regional Services Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Trs.reps@aph.gov.au

Secretary: *J. L. Moore*

RECEIVED

30 AUG 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORT AND
REGIONAL SERVICES

Dear Mr. Dundas,

**Ref: Inquiry into Commercial Regional Aviation Services in
Australia and Transport Links to Major Populated Islands**

In response to your letter of 5 July 2002, I am pleased to attach Council's submission.

At the outset, may I say that Bankstown City Council welcomes this Inquiry principally for two reasons. Firstly, this City is home to Australia's busiest general aviation airport, which might arguably be considered as having a role to play in the evolution of regional air services in NSW, and more generally in Australia. Secondly, this Council firmly believes that provision of efficient, safe, affordable and regular air services that connect metropolitan cities to regional centres and link regional centres to one another is essential. This not only has the benefit of invigorating regional economic development, but is also important in terms of enhancing social cohesion and providing a "fair go" to communities in the bush.

However, as explained in the attached submission, there is strong community opposition to any expansion of aeronautical activities at Bankstown Airport. The level of community opposition was clearly illustrated following the Federal Government's December 2000 announcement that Bankstown would be designated to cater for regional commuter services and future traffic overflows from Sydney's Kingsford-Smith Airport. Accordingly, Bankstown City Council opposes any further expansion of Bankstown Airport to cater for increased commercial passenger flights, including regional flights and larger aircraft.

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As requested, an electronic copy of this document had been emailed to you on the above address.

I wish your Committee well in its deliberations and look forward to your further advice on the Committee's views on our submission.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Blake', written in a cursive style.

David Blake
MAYOR OF BANKSTOWN

#301002

BANKSTOWN CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION

TO

INQUIRY INTO COMMERCIAL REGIONAL AVIATION SERVICES IN AUSTRALIA AND TRANSPORT LINKS TO MAJOR POPULATED ISLANDS

1. Terms of Reference

Council welcomes the Inquiry because the inadequacy of regional air service remains a major concern for communities in regional Australia. Council also acknowledges the scope of the inquiry as outlined in the Terms of Reference. The focus rightly is on regional air services to outlying provincial and rural centres, and commercial air and sea transport to the nearby islands. The adequacy of services (air and sea), their interconnectivity, assistance measures and the roles of government and major air transport carriers are all critically relevant to the subject matter and their inclusion in the Terms of Reference ensure a comprehensive articulation of the issues.

Submission: Bankstown City Council supports the purpose and the scope of the Inquiry and endorses its Terms of Reference.

2. Commonwealth's Sale of Assets: Airports

According to the media statement jointly issued by the Hon John Anderson M.P. and Senator Kemp in March 2001, the Commonwealth Government expected to sell Bankstown, Hoxton Park and Camden Airports in the second half of 2002 by way of a 100% trade sale. Council understands that the Government remains committed to this sale program, although the sale has been delayed somewhat by delays in the sale of Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport. Indications are that the sale process could still proceed within the next 6 months.

Any of the three airports could potentially play a role in the future of regional aviation in NSW and Australia generally. In light of this prospect, and given that this Inquiry is only now underway, it seems premature for the Federal Government to be moving ahead with the sale process. Hence, Council requests the Committee to consider the wisdom and appropriateness of sale of the airports in the light of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference and the stated intent of the Federal Government to improve air services to and from regional Australia.

Submission: Bankstown City Council suggests that further action relating to the proposed sale of Bankstown, Hoxton Park and Camden Airports be delayed pending the outcomes and recommendations of this Inquiry.

3. Bankstown Airport Development

The operation of Bankstown Airport over the past half-century has ensured that it has become a local 'icon'; one of the most easily identifiable elements of our City. Its progressive growth and its status as the largest general aviation airport in Australia, and perhaps the Southern Hemisphere however, means that it has inevitably had an impact on the amenity of City suburbs. Noise levels from the airport have been a cause for concern, and the level of community complaint varies from time to time. Nevertheless, there has been a general level of community acceptance of the Airport in its current form - Council itself has committed to a policy of supporting the existing nature of Airport operations.

Further development of the Bankstown Airport, including an upgrade of the runway and construction of a new passenger terminal, would be necessary to enable this airport to handle traffic overflow from Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport, as currently proposed by the Federal Government. Notably, the Federal Government has indicated that any such developments will be subject to the completion of necessary environmental assessments.

It is considered that the proposals for the Airport announced by the Federal Government in December 2000 would take the Airport's impact on the Bankstown community to unacceptable levels. Council has received significant representations from its community opposing any expansion of the airport brought about by increased regional flights and larger aircraft. The residents of Bankstown, especially those that reside in proximity of the airport, fear that any expansion of aviation activities is likely to increase noise and degrade the amenity. Hence, Council strongly opposes any further increase in flight movements or aircraft size at Bankstown, particularly those that may emanate from overflow traffic from Sydney's Kingsford-Smith Airport.

Submission: Bankstown City Council strongly opposes any expansion of aviation activities at Bankstown Airport, including overflow traffic from Sydney's Kingsford-Smith Airport, and requests that a thorough environmental impact assessment be undertaken in consultation with

the Council and the Bankstown community in respect of any proposed expansion of activity at Bankstown Airport.

4 Regional air services

Council supports improvements to regional air services that result in enhanced:

- Reliability of services to travelers;
- Availability of choice of carriers and flight times;
- Affordability of the service;
- Accessibility of services to those living in remote areas;
- Efficiency;
- Safety of passengers.

Council believes that air services are vitally important not only to maintain and enhance the prosperity of regional Australia, but also to improve its access to services typically available in metropolitan areas, leading to greater equity and social cohesion. In this context Council was pleased to note that, during the recent sale of Sydney Kingsford-Smith Airport, the Federal Government provided guarantees that access for regional airlines to the airport would be preserved and maintained.

Given existing infrastructure and distance between Bankstown and Sydney's Kingsford Smith airport, if available slots for regional airlines at Sydney KSA were downgraded in favour of Bankstown Airport, regional air travellers could be considerably disadvantaged. Even if infrastructure was to be upgraded, the additional time burden associated with travel to/from the Sydney CBD or to/from Sydney KSA for interconnecting flights would further reduce the attractiveness of regional air travel – particularly for air commuters within a 1 – 3 hour radius of Sydney. Separation of interconnecting airports by any reasonable distance also potentially increases logistical difficulties for the owners/operators of each.

Accordingly, Council supports quick and easy interconnectivity between regional air transport systems and domestic and international services on the grounds of efficiency and convenience. These considerations, together with potentially adverse environmental impacts on this community, do not present a compelling case for utilizing Bankstown Airport for overflow regional traffic.

Submission: Bankstown City Council believes that Kingsford-Smith Airport should remain the hub for regional air services to Sydney and Bankstown airport should not be used as an overflow airport.