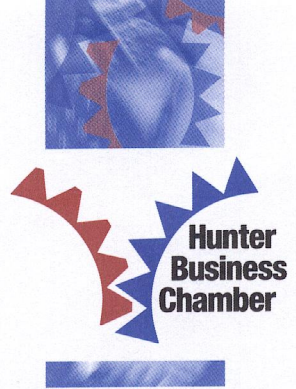


SUBMISSION NO. 71



Secretary: *J. Lunnell*

RECEIVED

30 AUG 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORT AND
REGIONAL SERVICES

28 August 2002

Ian Dundas
Committee Secretary
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Transport and
Regional Services
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ian

Please find attached an excerpt from the Hunter Business Chamber's report, Transport Infrastructure Study for the Hunter, North and West Regions of NSW, which we would like to submit to your inquiry into the adequacy of air services in regional Australia.

The Chamber believes we need more direct flights to capital cities from Newcastle.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Glenn Thornton", is written over a horizontal line.

Glenn Thornton
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Copy Sharon Grierson MP, Federal Member for Newcastle

C. Passenger Transport Projects

17. Newcastle Airport

Newcastle's main airport is at Williamtown, 27km by road from the City Centre. Local management of the airport in recent years has seen it double the number of passengers, with direct flights now operating daily to all eastern capital cities, as well as to the main regional centres. Services are provided by Impulse, Eastern and Sunstate airlines.

17.1. Issues

- A Master Plan for the growth of the airport has been completed. It identifies significant growth opportunities for freight transport, particularly for perishable primary produce to Asian markets.
- Any expansion of the airport has to be programmed in conjunction with the RAAF base.
- The runways can handle large capacity planes. More apron space is needed if there is an expansion of peak-hour schedules.
- Ground transport links to the airport need to be improved.
 - ◇ The road link from the City Centre uses an 8km diversion via the Tourle Street bridge. There is no crossing of the Hunter River that gives a direct link to the City Centre.
 - ◇ There is no scheduled public transport that is coordinated with aircraft arrivals and departures.
 - ◇ Taxi services cannot be guaranteed, due mainly to the remoteness of the site from Newcastle.
- Impulse Airlines has established its maintenance base and operations headquarters at Williamtown.
- British Aerospace is building the fighter training aircraft at Williamtown.
- Williamtown is often suggested as a site for Sydney's second airport.
- The Transrapid Consortium has proposed a magnetic levitation Very Fast Train link between Williamtown Airport and Sydney using a corridor to the west of the Newcastle Urban Area.

17.2. Opportunities

- The airport can be expanded to play a significant role in the commercial and industrial development of the Hunter Region, for the transport of both personnel and products.
- The replacement for the Tourle St bridge needs to incorporate a high-standard link between the airport and the City Centre and the main industrial areas of Newcastle/Lake Macquarie.
- Expanded air services will create the passenger flows that will generate low-cost dedicated public transport services between the airport and transport hubs in Newcastle/Lake Macquarie.
- A Very Fast Train (VFT) link to Sydney will also provide a service to the Beresfield industrial areas and to the western areas of Lake Macquarie.