

Antarctic Science Advisory Committee (ASAC)



Telephone 03 6232 3396 International 61-3-6232 3396
Facsimile 03 6232 3415 International 61-3-6232 3415
Address c/- Australian Antarctic Division Channel Highway,
KINGSTON TAS 7050,
Email asac@aad.gov.au

Australian Government

SUBMISSION40.....

Quinton Clements
Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
The Commonwealth Parliament
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Clements

I am pleased to provide an answer to a question on notice from Senator Hogg in relation to bridging funding at the hearing in Canberra on June 23rd 2004. I was asked to provide a "thumb-nail sketch" of the bridging arrangements that would be required for the introduction of intercontinental air transport.

To make the transition from the existing shipping based transportation to one by air will require a timeline of at least 3 summer seasons:

1. The first summer would be spent sending equipment down by ship and preparing the runway for operations to commence.
2. In the second year the runway would be commissioned and test flights would be undertaken- possibly by a short-term charter arrangement.
3. In year three a limited number of people-moving flights would commence (either as a charter or signing of a longer term arrangement).
4. In year four a full air transport system would be fully operational and shipping would no longer be the primary mode of personnel transport. Marine science and resupply activities will, however, always require voyages to Antarctica.

The estimated costing for the 'bridging' (all 03/04 dollars) is:

\$7.4m of capital set up costs (over the first two years) and

\$9-12m p.a for two full seasons (commencing in the same year as the second of the capital set up).

This would allow the establishment of the necessary infrastructure required to commence operations and funding for the first two seasons of intercontinental flights under an ad hoc aircraft charter arrangement.

The injection of \$7.4m over the first two years is necessary to construct the runway suitable to support the regular operation of a jet service linking Hobart and Casey. Although much of the preparatory work completed during the trial construction provides a limited capability, all of the necessary infrastructure to support regular operations (to a standard required by CASA) is yet to be put in place.

\$4.7m is required for the first year for purchase of construction equipment and aerodrome infrastructure (compaction roller, snow blower, towed landplanes, ground crew accommodation and refuelling equipment, salaries,). The balance, \$2.7m, is required in year two is to purchase the necessary emergency accommodation, ground transport vehicles and system infrastructure in support of the regular movement of scientists and their equipment.

The cost of aircraft charter to provide the necessary service in year 2 and 3 is in the range of \$9-12 M per year as explained briefly below.

In summary the additional funding required is estimated to be:

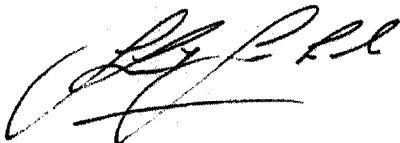
Year 1 \$4.7M
Year 2 \$2.7M + \$9-12M
Year 3 \$9-12M
Year 4 \$9-12M (ongoing cost of intercontinental air transport)

The change to intercontinental air transport will necessitate a number of changes to current business practices. There would undoubtedly be some cost implications in these while the two systems of travel operate at the same time, but given they are not likely to be "big-ticket" budget costs they have not been included in these estimates.

Shipping for transport of personnel has already been reduced so while there will be some additional saving in shipping expenditure this is not sufficient to fund the intercontinental air transport system. The need for ships for station resupply, delivery and pick-up of helicopters and equipment, recovery of samples, and conducting marine science are still necessary at the same time as air transport. Substantial changes to the shipping operations have already been made with the savings redirected to fund the intracontinental aircraft (Casa 212's). Therefore the additional cost of air transport each year once fully operational is \$9-12M.

I hope this helps the committee with its deliberations. If you require a more detailed costing I would recommend you contact the Australian Antarctic Division.

Yours sincerely



Professor Kurt Lambeck FAA, FRS
Chair

13 August 2004