



**SUBMISSION NO. 91**

## Mildura Rural City Council

A.B.N. 42 498 937 037

26 August 2002

Mr Ian Dundas  
Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Secretary: *J. Lunn*

**RECEIVED**

**2 SEP 2002**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORT AND  
REGIONAL SERVICES

Dear Ian,

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

Thank you for inviting the Mildura Rural City Council to provide a submission in regard to the above inquiry.

*The adequacy of commercial air services in Regional and Rural Australia*

The airline schedules are promulgated as a reaction to market forces and do not necessarily provide frequency that would best suit communities in remote locations.

*Policies and measures required to assist in the development of regional air services, including:*

- Regional Hub services;
- Small scale owner-operator services; and
- The deployment of most suitable aircraft types.

These are vital issues that will enable future strategic planning for long term development in accordance with airport masterplans. Airports require sound support and commitment from both the airlines and the Government to be able to plan the necessary infrastructure to service the future needs of the developing communities.

*The adequacy of commercial air services to major populated islands and the adequacy of alternative sea services.*

This topic does not effect Mildura or its region.

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*Interconnectivity between regional air transport systems, major national air services and international services (including on-carriage, through ticketing, freight handling, timetabling and airport slotting).*

Consideration should be given to encouraging more airlines to operate out of Melbourne in lieu of Sydney to reduce the congestion at Sydney airport. The resultant delay factor caused by hubbing flights to one major port in Australia has a hub and spoke effect on many of the airlines through to third level operators servicing regional networks. It obviously suits the international carriers to have a one-stop operation in Australia at the largest city and have the domestic carriers provide feeder traffic from the various airports. The Committee should recommend that the international carriers share their operations more equally between Melbourne and Sydney and thus minimise the delays to other airports.

*The role of the three levels of Government in supporting and assisting the development of regional air services and island transport services.*

The three levels of Government must ensure that local airport owners have the flexibility to control through planning permits the corridors for operating current and future aircraft at their airports. This will enable airports to confidently plan for providing the necessary infrastructure to accommodate larger type aircraft and the possibility of flight training operations.

The situation in Mildura is that we have little control over protecting aircraft approaches or departures for height or noise limitations outside a fifteen kilometre radius of the airport. On the fringe of this radius is also New South Wales Local Government who give no consideration in their planning to either the current or future operations of Mildura Airport. The highway in the sky is no different to the highway on the road. State Governments for future development protect real estate and boundaries for new road highways.

Also there is a continuing issue relating to the control of tree growth in the aerodrome approach surfaces. There needs to be a means of legal advice to property owners whereby tree growth can be trimmed if requested by the airport operator. To be properly effective, Government support would be required to ensure that runway lengths are not compromised by vegetation growth if an owner refuses permission for trimming. This can have a significant flow on effect for commercial regional aviation if aircraft payload has to be restricted if permission is refused to control vegetation.

*The role of major air transport carriers in providing regional services.*

It is the view of the Mildura Airport Management group that large airline operators should consider their social responsibilities to the local communities in the regions, as well as their desire to increase the bottom line of their operations. This is in line with the Prime Minister's approach to the corporate world. He is saying that big corporations are making substantial amounts of money from their operations in Australia, and they need to consider whether they should put something back into local communities where they operate as a way of supporting these societies.

*Other important issues to be considered by the Committee.*

Because of the perception by the travelling public that there is an issue with regional airport security we would like the inquiry to avert to that perception and have a look at the whole security issue.

If this perception was translated by the Federal Government into a requirement for passenger screening at regional airports like Mildura, we would hope that the inquiry would recommend that there be Federal Government financial assistance given to such regional airports. If this support was not made available, regional airports would find it impossible to operate successfully and carry the burden of this cost.

The added cost would include provisions for screening, structural alterations at all regional airports of a very costly nature, additional perimeter fencing, signage and a myriad of other costs which would mean that an airport such as Mildura would find it impossible to cope with.

In relation to aviation policy, the Committee should be asking the Federal Government to expand their terms of reference, so that the Committee would not only be looking at commercial regional aviation services in Australia, but the whole of the aviation industry. It is the view of this airport and its management that there is a need for a national aviation policy, encompassing all aspects of aviation in Australia, commercial, non commercial, capital city, regional and rural.

CASA and its regulatory regime have now classified the small charter operators such as Cobden Air operating out of Mildura in a deleterious way by regulating them to be the same as a large airline operator and they are clearly not. They provide an excellent charter service and the costs to this operator and others will soon become prohibitive resulting in these types of services being lost to the Mildura region.

The Committee might also consider the ageing condition of aircraft operating regional routes. The ages of aircraft have increased over the years and the standards of transport for the public have decreased significantly. As a result, there is increasing delays due to regular maintenance both overnight and during scheduled operations.

Thank you for the opportunity to be able to contribute our concerns about the current and future of aviation in Australia. If you would like to discuss any of the matters raised or if we can contribute in any other way to the Committee, please call myself on (03) 5023 2362 or email [byrne@hotkey.net.au](mailto:byrne@hotkey.net.au)

Yours sincerely



Cr Peter Byrne L.L.B.  
Chairman  
Mildura Airport Management Advisory Committee