

Secretary: *J. L. H. H. H.*

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORT AND
REGIONAL SERVICES

All enquiries to
Ms Jacinta Clancy

30th August, 2002

Submission via e-mail
Trs.Reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir,

RE: Commercial Regional Aviation Services in Australia

Bundaberg City Council has welcomed your invitation to prepare a submission on the inquiry into commercial regional aviation services in Australia and alternative transport links to major populated islands.

Please find enclosed Council's submission.

Bundaberg Coral Isles Region has a bright and prosperous future, which must be underpinned by improved regional aviation services and infrastructure. For this reason Council has outlined key areas of concern in light of the Region's Comparative and Competitive Advantages. These advantages are also included for your reference. A list of local stakeholders who were consulted during the preparation of this submission have been included.

Should you have any further queries regarding this submission please contact Council's Economic Development Officer on telephone (07) 4153 9933.

Yours faithfully

P. J. Byrne
(Chief Executive Officer)

Key Areas of Concern

1. Adequacy of commercial air services in regional and rural Australia

Currently the services in the Bundaberg Coral Isles Region appear adequate in terms of providing for passenger movement between Bundaberg and Brisbane. However, there are several concerns, specifically:-

- Cost of travel
- Loss of Bundaberg-Rockhampton direct service

Perhaps mechanisms such as Fuel and/or Fare Subsidies may provide an opportunity to reduce such travel costs currently being borne by the consumer.

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

- Regional hub services

Bundaberg City Council is keen to ensure that Hinkler Airport remains and grows to be the Regional Service and Distribution Hub. This would entail catering for the needs of tourists who are requesting transfer to nearby tourism destinations like Agnes Water, the Town of 1770, Lady Musgrave and Lady Elliot Islands. In this respect air services would be linked with alternative transport modes to provide a stepping stone to the Region's Tourist Attractions.

There is the need to consider opportunities to provide for additional freight movements particularly with projects like the Bundaberg Food Precinct coming on-line.

- Small Scale owner-operator Services

Bundaberg is ideally situated to cater for a growth in Recreational Flying and has a reputation internationally for manufacturing through the likes of Jabiru. Council is mindful of the needs of Airport operators requiring additional Hangar Space. Such Infrastructure is currently being extended and the cost borne by Council. It would be desirable to see additional assistance in such matters to encourage continued use and investment in Airport related facilities and economic growth in depressed areas like Bundaberg.

- Deployment of Suitable Aircraft Types

Currently Bundaberg is serviced by Shorts which are not pressurised. It would be beneficial for the customer to see the introduction of pressurised and larger aircraft (e.g. Dash 8).

3. Adequacy of alternative sea services

N/A

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

Since the reduction of local services to one provider the regular route from Bundaberg to Rockhampton has been discontinued. This is of great concern as there is a considerable amount of travel undertaken between the two cities as a result of staff teaching demands from Central Queensland University. Now staff must travel Bundaberg-Brisbane- Rockhampton and the cost of travel has increased accordingly restricting travel and in some instances making it prohibitive. Such cost increases are placing unnecessary pressure on the resources of our much need University.

5. Role of Government in supporting and assisting development of regional air services and island transport systems

A representative of Qantas link identified that security of Airport Infrastructure and Property remains a key concern. Assistance in this regard is required by Bundaberg City Council, who is the custodian of this infrastructure, to ensure that growth and safety at the Airport is not hindered.

The matter of Passenger Security and the introduction of security checks/mechanisms was identified as requiring further investigation.

There is a great need to ensure that the current licensing mechanisms operating to manage the use and landing of aircraft within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Lady Elliot and Lady Musgrave Islands) provide the greatest and fairest opportunity for local operators to gain such licenses.

6. Role of major air transport carriers in providing regional services

No comment

Comparative Advantages

- Proximity to Markets

Sited some 15 km inland from the Queensland Coast and bisected by the Burnett River, the City is equidistant from Brisbane and Rockhampton. Modern transport has positioned the City within a leisurely four hour drive or train trip from the State's Capital, Brisbane or a mere 45 minute flight from Brisbane Airport. The coral cays of Lady Musgrave and Lady Elliot Islands, which form the Southern Gateway to the Great Barrier Reef, are located offshore from the City. Bundaberg is the commercial hub of the Burnett Region.

- Equable Sub-tropical Climate

Located on the sub-tropical central coast of Queensland, Bundaberg's position provides a climate envied by most cities. Moderate summer days give way to balmy tropical evenings. Average temperatures in summer range from 20°C to 29°C. Winter days are mild and dry, averaging 22°C maximums and less than 18 wet days through the season. Rainfall is concentrated through the warmer months, when tropical thunderstorms will bring a cool change after a sultry day. (Source: Bureau of Meteorology *Climate Averages* 2001).

- Horticultural production, Extended supply period, Quality & Quantum of arable land, Clean Growing conditions, Quality and abundant raw products;
- Potential for Value adding of products;
- Affordable lifestyle;
- Unique and diversified natural and cultural tourism experiences (Inshore Reef, Turtles, Riverine);
- Development as a retirement destination;
- Affordable family accommodation and holiday experiences.

(source: [http://www.wb2020.qld.gov.au/regional_profile/economic_development/docs/3-4 region Region's Comparative Advantages](http://www.wb2020.qld.gov.au/regional_profile/economic_development/docs/3-4_region_Region's_Comparative_Advantages))

Competitive Advantages

- affordable lifestyle;
- retirement destination;
- affordable family accommodation and holiday experiences.

Local Stakeholders

1. Phil Ainsworth, Jabiru Aircraft (07) 4155 1778
2. David Eyre, Bundy Flying School (07) 4155 3355
3. Professor Alex Grady, Head of Campus, Bundaberg, Central Queensland University (07) 4150 7070
4. Ron Purkis, Sunstate, (07) 4155 1031
5. Susie Teasdale, Bundaberg Helicopters (07) 4156 5266
6. Craig Hodges, Bundaberg District Tourism and Development Board, (07) 4153 8811
7. Mr Wayne Cunningham, Manager Engineering Services, Bundaberg City Council
8. Mr Ross Lituri, Principal Works Engineer, Bundaberg City Council