

REF: 03134DH - C/1/1

4th June 2003

House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Transport &
Regional Services
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam

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

Profile

The District Council of Elliston is an isolated rural Local Government authority on the Eyre Peninsula, South Australia. The Council consists of an area of 6 500 km² and contains a population of 1200 persons.

The nearest regional centre (Port Lincoln) is 170 kms distant. Port Lincoln is the closest available locality providing a regional air services. Previously regional air services could be accessed at Streaky Bay 125 kms, Ceduna 220 kms or Cleve 170 kms. Regretfully these services were not maintained.

Given the vast distances involved on the Eyre Peninsula access to the Capital of Adelaide (700 kms) is a significant obstacle to overcome and regional air services are a vital component. Such air services provide efficient and effective passenger transport and freight services. In this instance a flight from Port Lincoln takes an hour whilst vehicle access to Adelaide takes 7 hours.

At best this submission provides anecdotal evidence of the need for regional commercial air services.

I attach however an extract of how this community valued the importance of air services, such that it built its own airstrip. Whilst the primary aim was in relation to medical evacuation the end result is an airstrip built to commercial standards. This in time could provide the fundamental infrastructure to be a component of regular passenger transport services serving Eyre Peninsula.

Yours faithfully

DAVID HITCHCOCK
Chief Executive Officer

All correspondence to be addressed to:

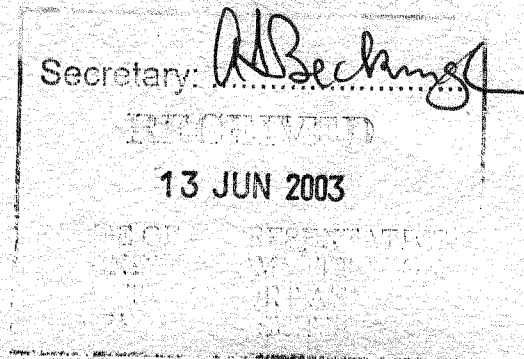
The Chief Executive Officer
P.O. Box 46, ELLISTON, S.A. 5670

PHONE: (08) 8687 9177

FAX: (08) 8687 9176

EMAIL: dce@elliston.sa.gov.au

SUBMISSION NO. 181



Elliston's Council and Community Achievement

By David Hitchcock, Chief Executive Officer District Council of Elliston

MUCH has been said in recent times about poor, battling communities out in the bush. Thankfully enough, the bush is now becoming a major asset, as it not only harbours our significant ecological resources, it is also home of the pioneers who contributed so much to this State.

Indeed this is the case in the District of Elliston where pioneers still reside and continue their contribution.

The community of Elliston, had for many years endured the frustration and despair of not having a suitable all weather, day and night airstrip which would allow medical evacuation of persons by the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Recent audit of the airstrip facilities by the Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme confirmed the unsuitability of existing sites.

Due to the undulating nature of the terrain, any potential sites were limited with projected development costs beyond the resources of Council.

A public meeting was held on 16th March, 1993 to determine community support for upgrading a site near the Elliston township.

Members of the community unanimously resolved to:

- Provide an all weather aerodrome that is recognised to safe operational and construction standards that meets the immediate and longer term requirements of the community.
- Meet the Civil Aviation Authority guidelines for aeroplane landing areas for both day and night operations.
- Construction of an aerodrome that meets the ALA requirements and allows unrestricted use of aircraft types up to 5,700kgm in mass.
- Wherever possible adopt the licensed aerodrome standards to allow future upgrading for regular public transport scheduled flights.



Premier Dean Brown and Elliston District Council's Chairman Don Starke at the opening of Elliston's Aerodrome.

The District Council of Elliston budgeted \$100,000 toward the project and design plans were instigated.

Airstrip Specifications

Runway Strip - 1320mtrs long x 90mtrs wide
Runway - 1200mtrs long x 18mtrs wide
Side Transitions - 1:7
Runway approach gradients - 3.33%

Following another public meeting a community co-ordinating committee was formed to co-ordinate volunteer labour and plant.

Council facilitated insurance, fuel and registration requirements.

Work commenced with drilling and blasting of 15,000m³ of rock in November 1993.

Carting of 65,000m³ of fill commenced on 14th January, 1994. This took 30-35 volunteers working 8 hours a day Monday to Friday, four weeks to complete. The only stops were smoko and the odd crayfish sandwich.

In all, the volunteer labour totalled over 5,500 man hours and 3,900 volunteer machine hours. Many local farmers left their farm operations for nearly two and a half weeks at a stretch to help with this community project.

This volunteer effort reduced the cost of the project from \$450,000 to \$130,000.

The aerodrome was officially opened on Wednesday 6th July, 1994 by Premier Dean Brown, who paid tribute to the initiative and determination of the community and their council in completing the project.

In recognition of the economic stimulus the aerodrome will produce, the Premier presented the community with a cheque for \$50,000 to help fund sealing and lighting of the Elliston airstrip.

In all good stories there should be a moral and this one could be best termed as:

"The quality of any Local Government Authority is directly proportional to the quality of its community members."