



# KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL

P.O. Box 1071, KATHERINE, N.T. 0851

Secretary: *J. Luff*

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9 SEP 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORT AND  
REGIONAL SERVICES

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5<sup>th</sup> September 2002

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

Emailed 6/9/02

Dear Secretary

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

Katherine Town Council makes the following submission in relation to the above-mentioned inquiry.

This submission focuses only on issues and impacts relative to the local community and those served immediately by the Katherine Civil Airport. As a member of AAA, I understand that a generic submission will be made by that organization addressing the "big picture" issues. Please refer to the Terms of Reference as follows:

- *The adequacy of commercial air services in regional and rural Australia;*

Katherine is serviced by only one RPT service per day to Darwin and one from Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. It could be said that this service is, at this point, quite adequate, based on passenger statistics. Aboriginal communities are generally well serviced by commercial air services out of Katherine.

- *Policies and Measures to assist in the development of regional air services including:*
  - (a) *Regional Hub Services:* Katherine Airport is a regional hub to service outlying Aboriginal communities and a number of service providers operate out of it.
  - (b) *Small-scale owner-operator services:* Again, we have a few small operators operating particularly charters to outstations. Often the smaller operators work on minimum margins and financial viability can be a problem. We have experienced difficulties at our airport as usage fees are often left unpaid until collection agencies are used and even then success is not guaranteed. It is our opinion that common legislation is necessary either federally or by state/territory

governments to enable claims to be made on the registered owner. This would ensure that the financial responsibilities of the aircraft operator, who is often not the owner, would be upheld. Failure to do so could result in the aircraft owner taking away the use of the aircraft.

- (c) *The development of most suitable aircraft types:* Generally the suitability of the aircraft is the responsibility of the air service provided – in our region the smaller aircraft used to cater for the surrounding communities appear to be quite adequate. In relation to the Airnorth center run flight EMB 120, Council believes that more consultation would assist in relation to future planning particularly where large, permanent or temporary population increases are imminent.
- *The adequacy of commercial air services to major populated islands and the adequacy of alternative sea services:*

Other submission will cover.

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

We believe this could be improved, especially when considering the extreme nature and remoteness of our area. Katherine Airport is the alternative to Darwin in case of emergencies. Both national and international carriers connecting our RPT to interstate flights would benefit our regional community.

- *The role of all three levels of government in supporting and assisting the development of regional air services and island transport systems;*

NT Government does not support Katherine Airport financially.

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

Katherine Airport has the potential to link to other major tourist destinations eg Cairns, Ayers Rock, Broome and Darwin.

If rural and regional services are to be maintained, connecting flights to major cities and tourist destinations is vital for tourism and therefore the community.

Yours sincerely



Wayne Osburn  
CO-ORDINATOR OF AIRPORT OPERATIONS