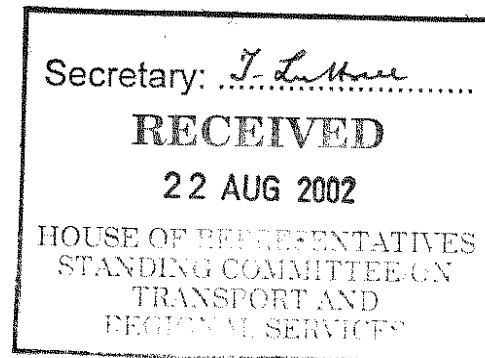


SUBMISSION NO. 41

C/- Post Office,
Whitemark,
Flinders Island. 7255
22nd August, 2002



Dear Members of the Committee,

I wish to make a submission to your inquiry into commercial regional aviation services in Australia and transport links to major populated islands.

I wish to address the term of reference,

- the adequacy of commercial air services to major populated islands and the adequacy of alternative sea services

However, I suspect that I may also be addressing the term of reference

- the role of all three levels of Government in supporting and assisting the development of regional air services and island transport systems.

I am concerned about the inadequacy of sea services in transporting vehicles to and from Flinders Island (in Bass Strait), most especially the cost involved in doing so. Flinders Island is considered to be (part of) Tasmania, consequently transport costs for motor vehicles are not eligible for the Federal Government freight equalisation subsidy afforded to those being transported between Tasmania and Victoria on the Spirit of Tasmania, or so I am told.

It is my contention that because this subsidy is supposed to represent the difference between the cost of transporting a vehicle by sea to that of transporting it by road across Bass Strait, then it should also apply to shipping a vehicle to Flinders Island. Even though Flinders Island is part of Tasmania, it is still necessary to travel across the sea to get there, and that same difference between sea transport cost and the cost of road transport exists.

Either the Federal Government subsidy should be extended to supporting the needs of Flinders Island sea transport, or the State Government should introduce an equivalent subsidy.

Monies are collected by way of motor registration by the State Government to help pay for a road to Flinders Island, which happens to be Bass Strait.

I understand that the shipping service provided to Flinders Island already receives financial consideration, so perhaps some of this could be made available to vehicle shippers.

A regular-sized Ford Falcon costs around \$700 return to transport to Flinders Island, providing the return is made within four months. There is no fare for the driver of a vehicle, although other passengers pay around \$40, which is all it is worth, seeing as there are minimal (dirty) facilities on board. The timetable is variable and changes are made at a moment's notice, as the port is tidal and unreliable.

This anomaly in transport costs must have a detrimental effect on the tourism industry on Flinders Island, as it would be hard to justify the current cost of transporting a vehicle to Flinders Island rather than to mainland Tasmania for a holiday. It is obviously an enormous burden to Flinders Islanders, and adds substantially to the cost of owning a motor vehicle on the island.

I hope you will consider my request in trying to improve transport links to Flinders Island.

Yours faithfully,

(Mrs.) Jane Bushby