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Secretary: *J. Lushner*

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORT AND
REGIONAL SERVICES

**House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Transport & Regional Services**

Submission to:

**Inquiry into Commercial Regional Aviation Services in Australia & Transport
Links to Major Populated Islands**

From: Lois Ireland:

Owner/ Manager of E.M. Bowman & Co Pty Ltd.: a retail store that has been serving the people of the Furneaux Islands for the past 80 years.

Owner/ operator of Elvstan Cottages: self contained accommodation for visitors established for 5 years.

Partner in G.B. & L.E. Ireland (Ireland Construction) carpentry and building business for past 16 years

Speech Pathologist who works one week in four in the Launceston area.

Mother of two young adults who work and study in Launceston.

Preamble

I wish to make this submission given my wide breadth of interest in a reliable, safe, efficient air service.

My submission is based on the need for two types of air service:

1. a "bus service" to Launceston for locals to use for business, medical needs, schooling, holidays etc and also to be a freight service for goods required on short notice
2. a "tourist service" from Tullamarine to cater for the ever increasing numbers of visitors. This could also be a freight service.

1. "Bus Service" : the RPT airline, Island Airlines of Tasmania, with it's twice daily service to Launceston is adequate in regularity but there is a constant difficulty with availability of seats, even in the winter months. As locals booking a flight to Launceston and return we are often unable to travel on our preferred dates, often requiring extra overnight stays in Launceston which adds to the cost both in time and money. Our children find it difficult to get home and back when they wish and often choose not to come rather than have to juggle a trip with work and study, thus affecting the wellbeing of the family unit.

Having said that I always find the pilots and on ground staff helpful and professional.

2. "Tourist Service"

I support all the points covered in the Flinders Island Tourism Association Inc.'s submission. In order for local tourism operators to commit more money and effort into their businesses we need to know that a suitable aircraft (19-30 passengers) will make regular trips from Tullamarine to Flinders Island. We have enough beds to accommodate two or three flights a week and the other infrastructure will quickly fall into place once visitor numbers are seen to increase.

Of course we need to keep tabs on just how quickly change occurs and what form that change takes but fortunately almost all islanders are in agreement that we live in a superb part of Australia and we need to nurture it very carefully and our Council's policies and planning schemes are adequate to control development.

Freight

Currently we rely almost solely on sea freight as there is not capacity on the airlines for freight and passengers. This causes marked delays in the receiving of goods as with only one sailing a week, if goods miss the delivery cut off day for the boat it will be another 10 days til goods arrive. As we are in the business of meeting the consumer needs of customers this time delay means they will often phone through to a Launceston business to buy a needed item that is not currently on our shelves and our profit line is decreased.

In our building business this delay can mean major delays in works, causing disruption to scheduling and anxiety among our building clients. We have got used to this situation over the years but our service and productivity could be higher without the delays.

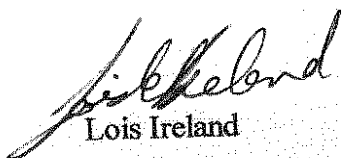
The Charter business Sinclair Air is doing a marvellous job of their contract with Australia Post and our daily papers. E. M. Bowman consistently have the daily papers from around the country on the counter before 9am Monday to Saturday and the mail is sorted by 10am each week day.

A larger aircraft from Tullamarine will assist our retail business in that we will be able to access freight direct from Melbourne rather than the current arrangement which means goods sail Bass Strait to Tasmania to be redirected to our shipping service i.e only one freight bill and a quicker arrival.

Summary

In order for Flinders to develop at a sustainable rate the sealing of the long runway is a vital need that must be met by all levels of Government. The returns will be in increased personal taxation as our incomes improve as a result of a steady increase in visitors. In reverse we as Flinders Island residents will travel more thus assiting the viability of any new airline.

I fully support the submission from Flinders Island Tourism Association Inc.


Lois Ireland

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