

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT
INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL AVIATION SERVICES**

Supplementary questions: Wagga Wagga City Council

Answers are to be returned to the Committee secretariat by Friday 11 July 2014.

1. Can you please explain the screening arrangements at Wagga Wagga Airport? Do they differ to other regional airports and if so, why?

Wagga Wagga Airport is a category 3 screened airport.

Screening operations and security as a whole is conducted in accordance with the Aviation Transport Security Act 2004 (The Act), and the Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005 (The Reg's).

Security Controlled airports are required to have in place a Transport Security Plan (TSP), which is the overarching document detailing how the airport conducts security and as such complies with The Act and The Reg's, and Aviation Security Notices (ASN's).

Qantaslink departing passengers and baggage from Wagga Wagga Regional Airport are subject to security screening including Passenger Walk Through Metal Detection, Carry On Baggage X-Ray, Explosive Trace Detection, and Carry On Baggage X-Ray. These services are conducted under contract by a security service provider. The cost of these services is passed on to Qantaslink with no mark up whatsoever. All additional security costs are absorbed by the airport as additional operational costs. The reason for screening Qantaslink departures is that the Bombardier Q400 aircraft operated by Qantaslink out of Wagga is above the Maximum Take Off Weight (MTOW) threshold of 20,000kg. Although the Q300 aircraft is below the MTOW, Qantaslink, to their credit also choose to have those aircraft departures screened as well.

Rex departing passengers are not subject to security screening at Wagga. However their baggage is screened when it is within the normal operating hours of Qantaslinks departures.

The reason for not screening Rex passengers is that their aircraft (SAAB 340) is below the MTOW. However also very importantly to this, the airport terminal and aircraft parking aprons must allow complete separation of Rex passengers from Qantaslink departing passengers. Wagga's terminal building and parking aprons, together with the operational procedures in place allow this, and it meets the requirements of The Act, the Reg's and is subject to Office of Transport Security Audit. Many regional airports simply could not employ a similar screening arrangement due to the physical layout of their terminal and or parking aprons. Furthermore in the interests of security outcomes they may not wish to do this even if the physical infrastructure enabled it.

I would personally advocate for this loophole in The Act and The Reg's to be closed, as it creates far too much ambiguity and uncertainty in the industry, resulting in at times Airports and Airlines having to battle head to head, indeed through the courts as has been the case with Rex and Dubbo Regional Council, to implement and administer a flawed system.

I am more than willing to provide further details on this matter if necessary.