

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT

INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL AVIATION SERVICES

Questions on Notice: Bland Shire Council

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

Page 30:

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: Was Rex the previous service into West Wyalong?

Mr SMITH: Yes.

Mr STIEN: Yes.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: How long did it operate before the service was terminated?

Mr STIEN: I am not too sure of the history.

Mr SMITH: I think as soon as Rex took over it, it was running from day one.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: Did council make any contribution towards the flights? Did you charge for landing fees at the airport?

Mr SMITH: They waived the landing fees. The income from landing fees for Bland Shire Council is minimal. It says it will waive them as a gesture of goodwill. We are not losing much money at all.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: What sort of assistance or inducement did council provide to the airline to maintain the service?

Mr SMITH: As far as I know it was simply waiving the landing fees. I do not think they had the funds to offer more.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: Can you take that question on notice and check to make sure there was nothing else?

Mr SMITH: Yes. – Bland Shire Council waived the landing fees and did not charge for the use of the airport, terminal or associated facilities.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: You spoke about Barrick goldmine. Did they make any contribution to the service as well? Did they reserve a number of seats on each flight or anything like that?

Mr SMITH: Again I will take that question on notice and find out. – Bland Shire Council is not aware of any assistance provided by Barrick and to make the service viable Rex were aiming for a minimum of 15 seats per one way flight. The 15 seats were to be made up of Barrick Cowal Gold mine construction staff and the residents of the Bland and surrounding Shires.

Page 33:

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Does the mining company have a view on whether or not as part of a negotiation with an airline they would actually say, "Look, we would like to use X number of seats"? Have they been approached?

Mr SMITH: Only in an informal manner but certainly they would put their weight behind any submission if that came to fruition.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: But would they put their money behind the submission?

Mr STIEN: I think they would, and this is why we will take that question on notice. I think they guaranteed, and I have heard a figure of six seats. - Bland Shire Council recollected a figure of six seats, but in actual fact to make the service viable Rex were aiming for a minimum of 15 seats per one way flight. During the construction stages of the Barrick Cowal Gold mine, Bland Shire Council is lead to believe that this 15 seat target was met.

Post the construction stage and taking into account that the Barrick Cowal Gold mine is a residential mine site, Barrick does not have a need to fly staff in and out on a regular basis.