



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

ENSURING REGIONAL AVIATION SERVICES CONTINUE TO FLY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

23 October 2014

The Standing Committee on State Development released its report for the inquiry into regional aviation services today, and recommended a number of measures aimed at assisting regional councils and the aviation industry in their efforts to maintain regular passenger transport services throughout regional New South Wales.

The chair of the committee, Mr Rick Colless, said: 'Regular passenger transport services provide an essential link between regional and metropolitan New South Wales. Without these services, communities are at risk of becoming socially and professionally isolated. There is also flow on effects to the availability of health, education, legal and other essential services in communities where there is often a great need.'

The regional aviation sector has changed considerably in the past 20 years with several airlines bowing out of the industry. Mr Colless commented on this: 'Changes in the aviation sector have resulted in a 37 percent reduction in the number of regional centres who have regular passenger transport services. It is important that the government takes action now to guard against any further loss of service.'

The committee believes that the recommendations in the report provide direction for the way forward. Recommendations include continued access of regional air services to Sydney Airport during peak periods and greater consultation between state government and regional communities on the provision of air services. In addition, the report recommends that government provide financial support to assist regional councils to maintain their airports. There is also a proposal to establish a taskforce that will progress the issues raised in this report.

The committee has also recommended that the responsibility for regional aviation services be transferred from the Transport portfolio and placed with the Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services. Mr Colless said: 'Regional aviation services needs to be located within a portfolio which has a regional focus. I believe that Regional Infrastructure and Services is an ideal platform from which regional aviation services can be promoted and supported. Additionally, the committee has requested that a taskforce be established under the direction of the Minister, to address the issues raised in this report.'

*For further comment please contact the Hon Rick Colless MLC
Committee Chair, on 9230 2397*

A copy of the committee's recommendations is attached to this release. A full copy of the final report is available from the New South Wales Parliament website at: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/regionalaviation.



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