

**Submission
No 29**

INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL AVIATION SERVICES

Organisation: Hunter Business Chamber

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LEADING BUSINESS

Hunter Business Chamber

NSW Government

Inquiry into Regional Aviation Services

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Introduction

The Hunter Region has long held the reputation as the powerhouse of the NSW economy and ranks highly as one of the most valued, diverse and resilient regions in Australia.

The Hunter Business Chamber is the largest regional business chamber in Australia and is now over 128 years old. The Chamber represents 1300 member businesses to all levels of government. The Hunter Business Chamber is experiencing a period of unprecedented growth and is the peak industry association in the Hunter which represents all sectors of business in the region.

The Hunter Business Chamber welcomes the opportunity to provide a brief submission to the Inquiry into Regional Aviation Services.

While it is understood the Inquiry covers broad terms of reference this submission will focus on those issues most immediately relevant to our members and the needs of this region.

Cost of access to Sydney Airport, regional New South Wales airports and other landing fields

While the Chamber provides no specific comment on landing fees and their calculation methods it does acknowledge the significant role regional airports play in providing vital access to more central hubs such as Sydney.

Regional airports that provide vital links for business, personal travel, medical needs and onward connectivity around Australia need to be able to provide airlines with a competitive pricing structure so as not to risk the sustainability of these services and potentially leave towns and communities isolated.

Economic impact on regional communities of gaining or losing RPT services

It should be acknowledged that many regional communities contribute significantly to the wider State economy. These towns and communities need airlines to have flexible and fair arrangements in place so as to facilitate ability of businesses and individuals to operate and contribute competitively.

Ultimately regional airlinks are essential for the future of regional and remote NSW communities however, airlines will not continue to operate routes that are unsustainable. Government needs to consider how infrastructure and transport planning supports this.

Potential for development of future modern RPT aviation

Greater consideration needs to be given to how aviation services fit into the wider transport planning process for New South Wales.

The sustainability of established centres needs to be considered, supported and preserved as a priority before review and consultation of additional services is undertaken.

Conclusion

The Hunter Business Chamber appreciates the opportunity to be involved in discussion around this Inquiry.

The Chamber will continue to work with the NSW Government in order to ensure the ongoing provision of access to critical transport infrastructure for business in the Hunter Region.

Contact

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