

**Submission
No 54**

INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL AVIATION SERVICES

Organisation: Ballina Byron Gateway Airport

Date received: 19/03/2014

enquiries refer

Neil Weatherson

in reply please quote

Ref: Regional Aviation Services

14 March 2014

The Director
Standing Committee on State Development
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Sir

Re: Inquiry into Regional Aviation Services

Please find attached copy of submission into the government inquiry into Regional Aviation Services in NSW. This submission has been prepared by the Ballina Byron Gateway Airport for your further consideration and discussion as requested.

Please contact me further for any clarification or further assistance on

Yours faithfully

Neil Weatherson
Airport Manager
Ballina Byron Gateway Airport
Commercial Services Group

Ballina Shire Council submission to the inquiry into Regional Aviation Services

Introduction

Ballina Byron Gateway Airport has become a significant regional Airport in New South Wales over the past few years. The airport has numerous Regular Passenger (RPT) Services with Jetstar, Virgin Australia and Regional Express (Rex) with some 390,000 annual passenger movements. This number will increase to 400,000 by July 2014 and 450,000 by July 2015. During the holiday periods we manage some 55 RPT Services per week to Sydney, Newcastle and Melbourne.

This number is likely to increase with the recent announcement by Jetstar leading to a daily direct jet service from Ballina Byron to Melbourne.

The runway is 30m wide and 1900m long with a recent runway overlay undertaken in 2013.

We have four (4) RPT Apron parking bays to service our airline partners and our RPT Services with surplus capacity to grow our passenger numbers and airline services, cater for other airlines and allow for additional destinations.

The airport supports the operation of B737-800, A320, EMB190 and SAAB 340 aircraft on our passenger services and has numerous parking options for the existing General Aviation operators.

A new Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Station is planned for 2014/15 to support our airline operations and the RPT Services and this facility should be completed by March 2015.

Over the past three years we have spent some \$12m on capital improvements and some \$10m on airport operations.

There are currently some 100 full time employees on airport.

Items for Consideration

1. Access to Sydney Airport

One of our major concerns is the lack of access to Sydney Airport during peak periods for business traffic, ie before 10am and after 5pm.

There are limited slots available for additional RPT Services to and from regional centres during these peak periods and the existing RPT Services (that do operate in peak periods) are very expensive.

This issue of RPT access to and from Sydney Airport is a significant concern for many regional Airport Operators and Airport Owners. At the present time there is minimal opportunity for additional RPT Services and Airline Operators to add capacity during these peak periods.

This is a real concern for the growth of Ballina Byron Gateway Airport into the foreseeable future.

As a result of these concerns we believe that the Committee should consider:

- Relaxation in the movement cap for Sydney Airport for peak periods to allow for additional traffic to regional centres
- A protection of slot times and future access to Sydney (for regional centres)
- A guarantee that regional centres will not be excluded from access to Sydney Airport should a new airport be constructed at Badgery's Creek.

2. Future Development On Airport

We see the continued growth of the local Airport and additional RPT Services/additional destinations as a big building block for the future economic growth of the Northern Rivers Region.

We believe that the ongoing airport infrastructure improvements is a great opportunity to support the local community and the local tourism/business market and we firmly believe that the NSW Government should continue to play an active role in the expansion of local airports.

This role could involve ongoing assistance for regional airports through the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme/Government Grants for key infrastructure property and support with airport development and research into new opportunities.

Ballina Byron Gateway Airport is ideally located to grow and create a new General Aviation Development Precinct for aviation related business and we would welcome this opportunity to support such investments on airport.