

The operation, regulation and funding of air route service delivery to rural, regional and remote communities

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To The Committee

**AS BOTH A LOCAL RESIDENT OF MOUNT ISA AND SPOKESPERSON FOR THE MOUNT ISA
THEATRICAL SOCIETY INC**

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF AIR ROUTE SUPPLY AND AIRFARE PRICING

As a longtime resident of Mount Isa with a family heritage going back to the early 1950's; Mount Isa has always been home to my family. This is a rarity with the majority of residents separated from their families for hundreds of kilometers. Family connectiveness is so important and the extreme airline costs are a huge barrier to local residents meeting these needs. It also places a massive pressure on those who wish to travel. Flights from Mount Isa to coastal regions quite often far exceed the overseas leg of a journey, making taking time out a financial strain. Despite Mount Isa being a mining town, only 11% of residents work for Glencore mine. People cannot afford to travel, certainly not with children. I am sure you don't need figures quoted on how much 2 adults and 2 children to Brisbane would be. Driving is one of the only solutions to these circumstances, leaving people with 2 days of driving on either side of a holiday. This does not take into effect urgent travel for family emergencies.

As for economic impacts to Mount Isa itself. Who wants to pay \$500ow to come to the middle of Australia when you can pay \$199 to go to New Zealand? We have zero tourist fly traffic. You just have to look at the Triple J "One Night Only Concert" held in 2017. The organizers expected 8000 people to attend, but it was clearly explained by potential attendants that the exuberant costs of flying kept them away.

Mount Isa suffers greatly with the inability to offer the same opportunities in Arts, Sports or Recreations as most areas in Australia relish. It is completely impracticable for any local Non-profit to fly a team anywhere for anything. Mount Isa teams are relegated to long bus travel if they are lucky. It also effects the clubs in reverse. Paying for a coach, mentor or trainer to travel to hold workshops is so substantial that it does

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not happen. Certainly the ability to fly a referee out for a day is ridiculous. Adjudicators' flights for competitions are another massive percentage of organizational budgets.

The cost of flights in and out of Mount Isa is not just hurting people going on holiday it is hurting; Family, education, learning, development, Arts, sport, tourism, the economy, financial stability and mental health.

THE DETERMINATION OF AIRPORT CHARGES FOR LANDING AND SECURITY FEES, AIRCRAFT TYPE AND CUSTOMER DEMAND

The Mount Isa Airport charges are clearly visible on the Mount Isa Airport Website. Charges for terminal use and screening are such a negligible part of the fare make up the airlines blaming these fees is laughable.

Please see: <http://www.mountisairport.com.au/regulatory/charges/>

PRICING DETERMINATION, SUBSIDIZATION AND EQUITY OF AIRFARES

Customer demand is definitely an issue as people just cannot afford to fly. Having an uncertain run with full planes at times and empty at others would be hard to control, but this is how you can help. Regulate the route. It does not have to be the whole gambit of flights. Create an ISA-TSV-BNE flight per day. If the price is right and the plane is suitable it will be full. We will compromise.

Another area that need urgent assistance is family emergency flying. There needs to be some sort of assistance to those who have family in critical care or have passes away. If you have just lost a parent you do not need to be paying \$1800ow to attend their funeral. It is disgusting that when residents are at their most vulnerable they are hit with such ridiculous fares.

DETERMINATION OF REGULATED ROUTES AND DISTRIBUTION OF RESIDENTS' FARES ACROSS REGULATED ROUTES

Even limited subsidies would be helpful to resident a two time a year offer. An application for discount for travel related to non-profits if it benefits the community and Bereavement fares.

CONSISTENCY OF AIRCRAFT SUPPLY AND RETRIEVAL OF PASSENGERS BY AIRLINES DURING AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE AND BREAKDOWN

There have been so many breakdowns in recent months that the route to Mount Isa has been contracted to Alliance Airlines for both Virgin and Qantas. The Fokker 100 aircraft have a better time with reliability but cannot take off full in a plus 35 degree environment. Mount Isa seems to be send older aircraft with environmental

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unsuitability. The older Boeing 747's have so many engineering issues. The Fokkers can't handle the heat. It is a "poor cousin" situation for sure, with once again no one able to say anything about the planes being used due to it being the only option.

These planes have no screens, no entertainment, no business class but we are paying more than a business class fares to sit in an old, substandard plane that may not be able to carry our luggage because it is too hot.

Give Mount Isa a break. Help us to be part of the Queensland community by reconnecting us with the coast, with our friend and family and letting us grow us a community. Isolation is a killer of people and opportunity.

Jenelle Robartson

Mount Isa Resident
Mount Isa Theatrical Society Inc