

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

15<sup>TH</sup> January 2018

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

To the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

I am writing in regard to the operation, regulation and funding of air route service delivery to rural, regional and remote communities, with particular reference to social and economic impacts of air route supply and airfare pricing.

My name is Lisa Cunningham and I am 42 years old. I was born and bred in Mount Isa and apart from moving away from the Isa to live in Boulia for 12 years have been here my whole life.

Overpriced airfares have always been a problem for Mount Isa residents, even when I was a child I remember that holidays to the coast were few and far between as we always had to drive, no one could afford to fly. I recall my first ever plane trip was when I was 19, yes 19. And it was to attend a family member's funeral, not a holiday.

Mount Isa is a great place to live and raise your kids, unfortunately though the cost of travelling away is far too costly for most people and thus deters people from moving or staying.

I do not travel via air much as the costs are generally out of my budget, even when flights are 'on sale'. I usually book at least 4 months in advance and even then stress that flights may get cancelled as they do on a regular basis.

I believe that the problem stems from Mount Isa being labelled as a mining town, which of course it is, I do not work in the mines, never have, and I do not think that the population of Mount Isa should be punished for the fact. Most of the mining communities in the region are now minimising their FIFO workers and encouraging a more localised work base so the regular rotation of FIFO workers flying in and out for their shifts will diminish soon enough.

I truly believe that if flights were cheaper, more people would take the option to fly, my immediate family all live on the coast, I would love the opportunity to fly out on a Friday and back on a Sunday to spend a weekend with them as would plenty of others. At present if I were to book that flight today, the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, it would cost me \$1115.00.

I truly hope that the committee take the time to understand what it is like to live in a remote area like Mount Isa and the effects that airfare prices have on the community.

Yours Sincerely,

Lisa Cunningham