



**CASINO CANBERRA**

15 July 2009

Nicholas Dowie  
Planning Policy and Environment Section  
Airports Branch  
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local  
Government  
GPO Box 594 Canberra ACT 2601

Dear sir,

The following document outlines Casino Canberra's position in support of the proposed developments at Canberra International Airport as detailed in their draft 2009 Master Plan. We submit this position to be considered as part of the "Safeguards for airports and the communities around them" Discussion Paper.

Casino Canberra believes world class facilities are essential for the growth and prosperity not only of the businesses directly affected by improved aircraft services, but the standing and success of Canberra as the national capital.

Yours faithfully,

Ms Bernie Morris  
General Manager  
Casino Canberra Limited



**Casino Canberra.  
Supporting growth for the  
National Capital through  
Canberra International Airport.**

## **Introduction.**

Casino Canberra has been a major corporate player in Canberra since opening in 1992, and is proud of its achievements during that time.

The Casino has a lasting commitment to delivering world-class services from a Canberra base, all highlighting the best Canberra has to offer.

Casino Canberra also has a vision to deliver a new era of quality and service to locals and to visitors.

Canberra International Airport is a crucial part of that vision, and Casino Canberra supports the continued growth of all aviation operations to achieve the goal of creating a world leading experience as befits the National Capital.

The following are the reasons for this support.

## **1. To develop local infrastructure.**

The Casino has invested millions in building, developing and maintaining the facility and working in conjunction with other businesses such as Crowne Plaza Hotel and the Canberra Convention Centre to build the better infrastructure to attract and retain interstate business.

Casino Canberra is committed to contributing more to local infrastructure through expanded activities and involvement.

The success of these ventures is intrinsically linked with the success and capabilities of our aviation services. With poor, limited or unnecessarily constrained services, Canberra will not be able to compete with other centres for major business.

## **2 - To be a national and international tourist attraction**

Historically, total tourist visitations have featured around 45% of all patrons to the Casino. In income terms, they represent a much higher proportion of Casino Gross Revenue. Tourism has and always will be a foundation market to Casino Canberra's business.

To cater for this important trade – not only to the Casino but to the community generally – the infrastructure must be in place to service this market to the highest degree.

The infrastructure and services at Canberra International Airport is one of – if not the – most important part of the continuation and development of this market.

Furthermore, tourists, especially international tourists, expect the very best: the best dining options, the best entertainment, the best nightlife.

Casino Canberra has invested tens of millions in developing the facility to achieve this. To continue to offer world-class services, as the City deserves, continual improvement is needed, not only in the services such as those provided by hotels, conference facilities and entertainment options, but the facilities to enable visitors to take advantage of all Canberra has to offer.

### **3. To be a part of a world-class convention and tourist destination.**

The convention industry, particularly prior to the 2008/9 economic crisis was one of the most growing sectors in the business and tourism industries all around Australia.

In contrast to every other major city, Canberra convention business was relatively static. The economic crisis offers great opportunity to Canberra to capitalise on conferences and meetings of organisations that no longer want association with what could be seen as over indulgent conference locations.

The tourism business has suffered significant declines since 2001 and 9/11 followed directly by the collapse of Ansett. Again there is potential to capitalise on the economic crisis as domestic rather than international travel is a more affordable option for many Australians.

New investments have started to address the downward trend and future investment can reverse it.

The newly refurbished National Convention Centre has made an improvement to the convention offering. New hotels such as the 5 star Hotel Realm and luxury boutique Diamant Hotel have been developed. The Casino is currently reviewing its refurbishment options.

All this will be undermined if it is not supported by the ability to attract and maintain air services to cater for that market, at times and at levels that suit their needs.

The draft 2009 Master Plan outlines how this market could be provided for, with minimal impact to the large majority of local residents.

### **3. To offer international gaming experiences.**

The business vision for Casino Canberra is to become a world-class entertainment and casino offering, equalling the glamour, services and products of the best smaller International casinos. This is what research has repeatedly shown tourists to Canberra and locals want.

However, one of the prime markets for this is within Asia, as evidenced by the huge growth in centres such as Macau.

Casino Canberra is fully backed by its parent company, Casinos Austria, a leading player in the global casinos industry who operate 72 casinos around the world with total group earnings of 2.6 billion Euros.

This company is well versed in charter operations to and from the Asian markets to our well run, well regulated casino operations such as Cairns and previously, Christmas Island.

We have the talent and expertise in this market to attract and service high-end visitors from many Asian Countries. What we do not have is an aviation structure that can fully exploit this market.

Jetstar, Tiger Air and possibly Singapore Airlines are just three operators who could enable this small but important market to be serviced, if they have the facilities and support to do so.

Regular international services, both commercial and charter, would be of enormous value to the local community, and Casino Canberra has the resources to assist this proposition to become a reality. We support the growth necessary to achieve this end.

#### **4. To support the local community.**

Business growth helps all of the community to develop and grow. Even peripheral businesses would share in the community growth. For example:

- Since opening in 1992, visitors inside Casino Canberra have spent \$50 million on food and beverages and \$9.7 million on entertainment.
- More than eight million people have visited the casino since 1992
- Since opening in 1992, Casino Canberra has contributed \$235 million to the ACT government in fees and taxes;
- \$10.6 million to the Commonwealth Government;
- \$3.8 million to interstate businesses and
- \$166 million to employees.
- Since opening, \$23 million worth of goods and services has been purchased from ACT businesses.
- Paid \$166 million in salary

*Source: Ernst & Young Economic Impact report, 2007.*

These figures can only improve as Canberra gets more and better services.

## **Conclusion**

Casino Canberra supports the continued improvements to our aviation services. The Casino would also support the Canberra International Airport Master Plan proposal that would seek to minimise the noise issues through the current flight paths.

For Canberra to become an international standard city, it must have the infrastructure and regulations of a major city, without special interest interference and without unnecessary impediments.