

Central Old Area Consultative Committee

Submission

‘Towards a National Aviation Policy Statement’

2008



CONTENTS

Letter	
Contents	1
Summary	2
1. Introduction	3 - 4
2. CQRDA submission	4
3. Aerodromes in CQRDA region	4 – 7
4. Ownership of Aerodromes	7
5 Regional Aerodrome Policy	7
6. Remote Aerodrome and Air Services	8
7. Major Regional Aerodromes	8
8. Mantle of safety – Helicopter pads	9
9. Mantle of safety – Road Aeroplane Landing Strips	9

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SUMMARY

Central Queensland Regional Development Australia (CQRDA) (formerly Central Queensland Area Consultative Committee) incorporates the region from the cities of Rockhampton and Gladstone in the east, the Queensland / Northern Territory in the west and the Queensland / South Australian border to the south. It is one of 54 Australian-wide RDAs operating within designated regional boundaries.

The CQRDA region is serviced by 5 major passenger and freight regional aerodromes - Rockhampton, Gladstone, Emerald, Longreach and Thangool (adjacent to Biloela). There are 6 strategic licensed aerodromes at the small and remote towns of Barcaldine Birdsville, Bedourie,, Winton, and Alpha. Aerodromes in the CQRDA region, with some exceptions are owned, maintained and operated by Local Governments and regulate the land use in vicinity of aerodromes and coordinate external infrastructure.

Air transport in regional and rural is the preferred travel mode to efficiently and quickly transact business, move freight and is increasingly used by industry to fly employees in and out of mining and infrastructure development sites.

For CQRDA, the underpinning policy requirements for regional aerodromes are provision of:

- an efficient and safe air transport service supported by appropriate infrastructure for major regional cities to enable economic, commercial and social functioning and expanding demands for economic and regional development;
- sustainable and basic air transport for essential services supported by appropriate infrastructure in remote towns/areas assisted by Government subsidy where it is in the public interest; and
- Emergency services.

To ensure that air services meet the access/economic/commercial and social needs of air service reliant communities such as Blackall, Barcaldine, Bedourie, Birdsville, Windorah, and Winton, CQRDA supports the continuation of the combination of commercial and government subsidy for rural and remote air services. .

Rural and remote non-certified or non-registered aerodromes /aeroplane landing strips should be maintained at a standard that are safe for use by RFDS for emergency purposes. Many remote aerodromes used by the RFDS for emergencies do not have landing lights and should be upgraded to enable night landings and take-offs. Safe, secure and maintained landing strips should be essential components of economic and social development.

It is suggested that towns within a 300 kilometre radius of the Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service (CHRS) based at Rockhampton establish lighted helicopter pads in an accessible area for both a helicopter and ambulance where there is: a deficiency with existing landing strip; or no landing strip for the purpose of emergency evacuations. CQRDA suggests that consideration be given to the identification of suitable sealed road to double as aeroplane landing strips for emergency purposes.

Attention is drawn to the Gladstone Airport and the need for substantial infrastructure upgrade to landing strips to service the requirements of the city and region. The Emerald Airport requires specific infrastructure upgrade to accommodate the increased passenger throughput reflecting population and industry growth from the mining and agricultural sectors. Consideration may be given to increased security including passenger and baggage screening

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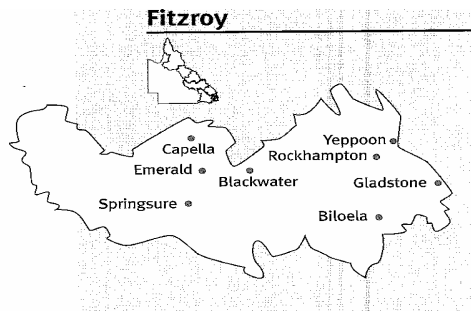
1. Central Queensland Area Consultative Committee Background

- 1.1 Central Queensland Regional Development Australia (CQRDA) (formerly Central Queensland Area Consultative Committee) incorporates the region from the cities of Rockhampton and Gladstone in the east, the Queensland / Northern Territory in the west and the Queensland / South Australian border to the south. It is one of 54 Australian-wide RDAs operating within designated regional boundaries.



- 1.2 The CQRDA region incorporates Rockhampton, Gladstone, Central Highlands, Barcardine, Blackall-Tambo and Longreach Regional Councils, and Winton, Diamantina, Barcoo and Banana Shire Councils.
- 1.3 The CQRDA region has a population of approximately 220,000 (reference ABS 3218.0 Regional Population Growth 2006-07). The main population centres of the entire CQRDA region are located around Rockhampton, Gladstone, Emerald and Biloela. Gross regional product for the entire region i2003-2005 is approximately \$18 billion. (Reference Queensland Government Office of State Development (OSD)2005).
- 1.4 CQRDA provides the residents of Central Queensland with advice and assistance on Australian Government programs. It works with networks on strategic plans to aid Australian Government regional decision making. CQRDA is recognised as a key regional stakeholder to build networks and partnerships to increase community capacity and achieve regional economic growth.
- 1.5 The CQRDA region incorporates the Fitzroy region (See map below -Rockhampton Regional Council, Banana Shire Council, Emerald Shire Council) encompassing the cities of Rockhampton, Gladstone and towns of Yeppoon, Biloela, Blackwater, Capella, Emerald, Springsure and is a leading economic area in the State.





1.6 The region has an area of some 123,000 square kilometres and a population of approximately 204,500 or 5 per cent of Queensland's total population. The Fitzroy region is a leading economic area due to mining, agriculture, tourism and industrial development. The region

- Accounts for seven per cent of Gross State Product and 1.2 per cent of Australia's Gross National Product;
- Generates more than 10 per cent of Queensland economic activity;
- Employs over 10 per cent of Queensland's workforce; and
- Is home to six per cent of the State's businesses. (Reference OSD 2005)

2. CQRDA submission

2.1 Our comments are from the CQRDA's perspective and confined to issues that have direct relevancy to aerodromes and aeroplane landing areas in the CQRDA region therefore several questions and statements in the Issues Paper are devoid of responses.

3. Aerodromes in CQRDA region

3.1 CQRDA is serviced by 5 major passenger and freight regional aerodromes - Rockhampton, Gladstone, Emerald, Longreach and Thangool (adjacent to Biloela). (See maps below)

3.2 There are 6 strategic licensed aerodromes at the small and remote towns of Barcardine (approx 1,900), Birdsville (approx 100), Bedourie (approx 120), Winton (900) and Alpha (approx 1,100) for the provision of basic access and essential services including Royal Flying Doctor Service emergency requirements.

3.3 In the CQRDA region according to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA website) there are 4 categories of aerodromes. They are: Certified; Registered; Other Aerodromes more than 9 but not more than 30 passengers; and Other Aerodromes operations.



3.4 In the CQRDA region there are 14 Certified Aerodromes:

Aerodrome	Ownership
Barcaldine	Barcaldine Shire Council
Blackall	Blackall Tambo Regional Council
Blackwater	BM Alliance Coal Operations
Boulia	Boulia Shire Council
Dysart	BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance
Emerald	Central Highlands Regional Council
Gladstone Regional Council (Gladstone Calliope Aerodrome Board)	
Longreach	Longreach Regional Council
Middlemount	Anglo Coal (Capcoal Management)
Moranbah	BM Alliance Coal Operations
Rockhampton	Rockhampton Regional Council
Thangool	Banana Shire Council
Winton	Winton Shire Council
Windorah	Barcoo Shire Council

3.5 In the CQRDA region there are 2 Registered Aerodromes:

Alpha	Barcaldine Regional Council
Bedourie	Diamantina

3.6 In the CQRDA region there are 32 Aerodromes recognised by the Royal Flying Doctor's Service for its operations:

- 9 licensed and 23 unlicensed; and
 - 23 sealed, 7 gravel and 2 grass.
- They are:



LOCATION STATUS	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH	
Rockhampton	Licensed	Major Regional		
Great Keppel Isle	Un-licensed	Sealed	850 metres	
Marlborough	Un-licensed	Gravel	1,200 metres	
Parkhurst	Un-licensed	Gravel	1,000 metres	
Gladstone	Licensed	Major Regional		
Agnes Water	Un-licensed	Gravel	1,000 metres	
Raglan	Un-licensed	Grass	2,000 metres	
Thangool	Licensed	Major Regional		
Baralaba	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,200 metres	
Moura	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,600 metres	
Rolleston	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,150 metres	
Theodore	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,350 metres	
Woorabinda	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,200 metres	
Emerald	Licensed	Major Regional		
Alpha	Licensed	Sealed	1,500 metres	Strategic
Bauhinia Downs	Un-licensed	Gravel	1,350 metres	
Blackwater	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,500 metres	
Duaringa	Un-licensed	Grass	1,200 metres	
Gemfields	Un-licensed	Gravel	950 metres	
Middlemount	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,550 metres	
Longreach	Licensed	Major Regional		
Aramac	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,200 metres	
Barcaldine	Licensed	Sealed	1,700 metres	
Bedourie	Licensed	Sealed	1,500 metres	Strategic
Isisford	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,300 metres	
Jundah	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,200 metres	
Tambo	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,300 metres	
Birdsville	Licensed	Sealed	1,750 metres	Strategic
Blackall	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,650 metres	
Windorah	Un-licensed	Sealed	1,375 metres	
Yaraka	Un-licensed	Gravel	1,000 metres	
Middleton	Un-licensed	Gravel	1,450 metres	
Winton	Licensed	Sealed		

- 3.7 There are a further 4 small towns with aerodromes but are not recognised by the RFDS due to poor condition. They are: Wowan (grass air-strip and primarily used for gliding and is some 40 kilometres from the township of Wowan), Jericho, Taroom (black soil and dry weather only) and Muttaborra.
- 3.8 In the CQRDA region there are many private airstrips that are important adjuncts to Local Government and other aerodromes and may be utilised for example by the RFDS for emergency situations.
- 3.9 In the economically powerful Fitzroy region there are 4 major certified aerodromes – Gladstone, Rockhampton, Emerald and Thangool (adjacent to Biloela) and has 15 unlicensed aerodromes that are identified by the RFDs, many private airstrips and commercial and private helicopter pads.



3.10 The maps below show the geography. Note all towns not shown:(e.g. Thangool adjacent to Biloela)

Central Queensland



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An Australian Government Initiative

Central Western Queensland



4. Ownership of Aerodromes

4.1 Aerodromes in the CQRDA region, with some exceptions (See above), are owned, maintained and operated by Local Governments and regulate the land use in vicinity of aerodromes and coordinate external infrastructure.

5 Regional Aerodrome policy

5.2 Air transport in regional and rural is the preferred travel mode to efficiently and quickly transact business, move freight and is increasingly used by industry to fly employees in and out of mining and infrastructure development sites.

5.2.1 For CQRDA, the underpinning policy requirements for regional aerodromes are provision of:

- an efficient and safe air transport service supported by appropriate infrastructure for major regional cities to enable economic, commercial and social functioning and expanding demands for economic and regional development;
- sustainable and basic air transport for essential services supported by appropriate infrastructure in remote towns/areas assisted by Government subsidy where it is in the public interest; and
- Emergency services.



6. Remote Aerodrome and Air Services

- 6.1 An air service is vital for the functioning of remote and small towns and their surrounding areas.
- 6.2 To ensure that air services meet the access/economic/commercial and social needs of air service reliant communities such as Blackall, Barcaldine, Bedourie, Birdsville, Windorah, and Winton, CQRDA supports the continuation of the combination of commercial and government subsidy (Queensland Government's Regional Airport Development Scheme (RADS)).for rural and remote air services. It is essential that RADS continues to underpin passenger. freight and essential services into these remote areas.
- 6.3 Rural and remote non-certified or non-registered aerodromes /aeroplane landing strips should be maintained at a standard that are safe for use by RFDS for emergency purposes.
- 6.4 Many remote aerodromes used by the RFDS for emergencies do not have landing lights and should be upgraded to enable night landings and take-offs. The owners of these landing strips are primarily Local Governments without the rate base to provide landing lights. Governments, as a community service obligation, should provide financial assistance to ensure that landing lights are standard equipment.
- 6.5 Some remote and rural aerodromes are not effectively fenced allowing large animals and wildlife to graze adjacent to the landing strips or habit on or closely having the potential to cause aircraft damage or accidents. Consideration should be given to assisting remote and local governments to ensure landing strips are fenced for safety purposes and commercial, personal and emergency usage.
- 6.6 The CQRDA region encompasses a large area known as “The Outback”. Tourists in increasing numbers are visiting the Outback and the mining and agricultural sectors are developing new business operations resulting in skill and work opportunities in rural and remote areas.
- 6.6.1 Safe, secure and maintained landing strips should be essential components of economic and social development. For example Outback visitors between March 2007 and March 2008 numbered 494,000. (Tourism Queensland, Queensland Data Sheet Year ended March 2008)

7. Major Regional Aerodromes

- 7.1 As indicated above the CQRDA has 4 major regional aerodromes (Rockhampton, Gladstone, Emerald and Thangool) in the populous, economically diverse and strong Fitzroy region.
- 7.1.1 Attention is drawn to the Gladstone Airport and the need for substantial infrastructure upgrade to landing strips to service the requirements of the city and region. Gladstone is a heavy industry hub including large-scale mineral processing adjacent to large coal, gas, silica sand, and limestone resources and with world-class port facilities.
- 7.1.2 The Emerald Airport requires specific infrastructure upgrade to accommodate the increased passenger throughput reflecting population and industry growth from the mining and agricultural sectors. Consideration may be given to increased security including passenger and baggage screening



8. Mantle of safety - Helicopter pads

- 8.1 John Flynn's vision for a "mantle of safety" for travellers and people who live and work in rural and remote regional areas is as much an urgent need and requirement in economically and technologically advanced 2008 as it was 80 years ago in 1928 when the world's first aero medical service commenced.
- 8.2 Significant economic development and population growth in the Fitzroy region has raised discussion and comments on safety issues and accident emergency evacuations.
- 8.2.1 It is suggested that towns within a 300 kilometre radius of the Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service (CHRS) based at Rockhampton establish lighted helicopter pads in an accessible area for both a helicopter and ambulance where there is:
1. a deficiency with existing landing strip; or
 2. no landing strip for the purpose of emergency evacuations.
- 8.2.2 The rationale for the development of helicopter pads in strategic towns for emergency evacuations is due to the growth in the mining and agricultural sectors and the labour force; the increasing through road traffic to the north, west and south on major and secondary highways for industry, logistics, tourism, commercial and personal purposes. Helicopter pads should be essential infrastructure at regional base hospitals.
- 8.2.2.1 The CHRS coverage area is St Lawrence in the north, Agnes Water in the south and a flexible boundary in the west but within the 300 kilometre operational radius. Tasks of CHRS include medical retrievals, inter hospital patient transfers and search and rescue.

9. Mantle of safety – Road Aeroplane Landing Strips

- 9.1 Major highways and by-ways such as the Matilda Highway and Channel Country Byway in the area known as "The Outback" are attracting increasing number of tourists by road and utilised for logistic purposes. For example, road between Windorah, Birdsville, Bedourie and Boulia. Subconsciously, safety is a constant matter.
- 9.1.1 CQRDA suggests that consideration be given to the identification of suitable sealed road to double as aeroplane landing strips for emergency purposes. Appropriate signage including wide double-line markings in the middle and to the side of the road should alert drivers that they are entering an emergency aeroplane landing zone and take the necessary precautions. The road aeroplane landing strips may be at every 100 kilometres or thereabout and maintenance undertaken by the Local Government Shire Council.

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