

Submission to "Aviation Review Paper"  
on behalf of the "Future Pilot Task Force"  
(The views expressed represent those of the majority of the Task Force)

The Future Pilot Task Force was formed in early 2008 as a direct result of the concerns held by many in the Australian aviation industry of the declining number of trained, experienced pilots available to meet an expanding national and global demand for trained pilots.

The Task Force, which includes representatives from the major Australian airlines, flight training organisations, universities, aviation industry focus groups/associations and other aviation related organisations, is focused on finding solutions for the pilot shortage issue. While not having found a solution to what is a multifaceted problem the members of the Task Force are of the view that:

- The skill shortage the industry faces will continue for an extended period;
- There is a pressing need for immediate action to train more pilots;
- The aviation industry and government(s) must work together;
- There are no "short term" solutions;
- The shortage must be addressed across the industry, not just at the end user; and
- Whilst the current "fuel crisis" may result in the rationalisation of routes there will be no end to the aviation skill shortage.

#### *1.1 Access to Australian Markets.*

The answer must be a resounding NO. If Australia is to have a viable aviation industry Government cannot allow foreign carriers to 'cherry pick' the revenue strong routes/sectors and then expect the local operators to compete on those and cover the less revenue rewarding routes/sectors. Few countries allow 'cabotage' and there are no imperatives for Australia to do so, nor should we encourage or support 7<sup>th</sup> freedom rights.

#### *1.3 Regional and general aviation (Air services)*

Adequate and affordable air travel is essential to the continued viability of many remote and regional centres and if this requires government support that must be forthcoming and there must be unified support from all levels of government. In many cases the providers involved operate over a number of states and to limit support to local or state government would not be appropriate. The policy approach must be one of support on the basis of need and reasonableness with a whole of government approach – which may require moving away from de-regulation.

#### *1.3 Regional and general aviation (Airport infrastructure)*

The main General Aviation airports in or near capital cities are operated by private companies which in general do not appear to have the interests of the aviation industry at heart. With few exceptions the aviation operators at these airports are under continual financial pressure due to increasing charges with little or no improvement in services as airport owners' drive towards higher commercial returns through the development of non-aviation sites within the airport boundaries.

In many cases the lack of aviation specialist support and increasing costs have driven aviation operators either away from these airports or worse out of the industry – this is a real detriment to the industry where those leaving have been maintenance providers.

#### *1.4 Addressing skills needs in the aviation industry*

The skills shortage cannot be resolved by the aviation industry alone. Whilst operators must awaken to the reality of a sustainable and liveable wage, in particular for pilots and engineers, the government must also awaken to the need for better levels of support with respect to both initial training and the maintenance of those skills. A national rather than randomised state approach to the provision of technical training along with the more focussed employer support is necessary.

The introduction of some form of FEE-Help for both pilot and engineer training would be a major step forward and one that need not cost the community in the long term. Provision of FEE-Help must be in such a way that both the operator and the trainee are protected. Given that all aviation training providers must be approved by CASA (and are subject to CASA surveillance and audit) the requirement for RTO status is questioned.

Industry and government need also to recognize that pilot training is not a one size fits all. Australia is one of a few countries which does not recognise the distinct differences between recreational/private flying training and commercial/professional flying training. A serious

approach to flying training must be based on recognition of the different end products. Provision for self regulated flying training for PPL and fully regulated and approved flying training for all professional licences and ratings is a model which should be investigated.

## *2.2 Air traffic management*

The issue here appears to be that AirServices Australia see themselves as the 'managers' of air space and air traffic for the sake of management rather than the management of both for the benefit and safety of ALL users. The management philosophy needs to be one which recognises that the needs of ALL users should be met and that no single user group should be disadvantaged by the management of the air space or traffic. A return to a less commercially driven provision of services would be a good first step.

*Prepared on behalf of the Future Pilot Task Force by  
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