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The Secretary,
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Issues Paper: Towards a National Aviation Policy Statement

I am responding to the invitation from The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, in the Minister's Foreword to the Issues Paper; dated 10 April 2008.

Whilst I have not had an aviation career, it was always my intention as a young man to do so.

Unfortunately, circumstances precluded this career pursuit.

However, I did work for a crop-dusting firm whilst training to obtain my pilot's licence in the mid-1960s. This was curtailed by military service, but I was able to serve in Australia and Vietnam in Army Aviation.

After my military service, I was not able to continue in aviation, much to my regret.

However, my interest in, and passion for things aeronautical has never waned.

I thank the Minister for this opportunity to comment on Aviation Policy.

Aviation Regulation

Whilst appropriate regulation is critical to the aviation industry, it often seems that we have regulations for regulations' sake. I believe it is obvious that the role of Government and the regulator to be equally a facilitator of the industry. I am sure others more qualified than I will touch on this in their submissions. However, it is a fact that an unnecessarily over-regulated industry is at risk of being killed off and therefore would obviously be no longer in need of regulation.

It would seem that these days across the board we are captives of "One size fits all", and cost-recovery no matter what the cost.

Surely essential infrastructure, whether or not it is in partnership with private enterprise, is the responsibility of Government.

Environmental Issues

The importance of this issue is acknowledged, but is often bandied about as an emotive concern rather than a factual one.

For example, the quantity of air pollution from a private car per-person, is often greater than the per-passenger output of an aircraft.

(Australian Aviation magazine)

*Aircraft noise is an acknowledged reality. People who move house to live near an airport should have no further legal recourse when later they discover that the noise is unbearable, and affects their quality of life. A “No litigation” clause should be in the house-purchase contract of all dwellings and businesses within a pre-determined radius of any airport.

Airport Location /Planning

Early identification of potential airport sites and appropriate forward planning and zoning is essential to overcome these problems, such as outlined above (See *)

The Hunter Basin would be the logical site for a second International Terminal for New South Wales. With proper transport linkages it would give Australia’s largest-populated state facilitated new growth and development, and would have the ability to take the overflow from Sydney.

The potential boost to tourism in the Hunter region would swell the state coffers, and rapidly recoup the initial costs.

Rural and Regional Air Services

Some time ago, the regulator dictated that single-piston engine aircraft were not to be available in service for RPT, despite that fact that a person could charter a single-engine plane, and be a passenger in it.

Safety issues were cited as the reason, harking back to over fifty years ago, when many single-engine aircraft were considered a highly risky mode of transport for passengers.

Since those days, technology, research and development of avionics and aviation technology has evolved the aircraft engine into a safe and efficient propulsion unit.

In light of the present fuel crisis, carbon-pollution issues and cost-effectiveness, this situation needs to be looked at again with a 21st century perspective.

A single-engine aircraft uses half the fuel, costs half the maintenance, costs less to purchase. The trickle-down savings could be utilized to maintain the regional and rural services, or perhaps some savings could be offered to passengers.

I do hope that close attention will be given to this issue in your deliberations, especially as the Australian designed and built GA8 Air Van could fulfill this role in a much more cost-effective manner than the current fleet.

Surely it is up to a well-informed public as to whether or not they avail themselves of such a service.

Rural and Regional Air Services: Aircraft Depreciation

For many years, the industry has been asking for changes to the depreciation rules regarding the purchase of new equipment. Surely this screams out for your close attention and consideration.

General Aviation

Surely training for both pilots and LAMES must be funded through a Technical College or HECS scheme to guarantee an adequate work force for the future.

General Aviation: Shortage of Instructors

We have a chronic shortage of flying instructors. This, with other issues, has long been flagged within the industry. May I suggest two things:

- 1/ The British system, or an Australian variant, of licensing suitably-qualified private pilot licence-holders as instructors.
- 2/ Perhaps a significant number of retired professional pilots may embrace an opportunity to continue their love of flying on a part-time basis as flying instructors.

General Aviation: Self/Joint Regulation

In recent times, I have read a considerable amount on potential co-operative regulation between industry and the bureaucracy. However, all this good work can come to nothing if it has insufficient funding. Surely, taking into consideration the infrastructure and community service requirements, cost-recovery should not be the single arbiter.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to participate in this discussion. I have been most interested in the thoughts and opinions of others thus far. I wish this project the utmost success, and hope that my humble opinions have some merit, and will be duly considered.

Regards, Trevor Hesse