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Submission to Department of Infrastructure,  
Transport, Regional Development and local  
Government – National Aviation Policy  
Discussion Paper

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By Hunter Economic Development  
Corporation

Regional Infrastructure Project  
June 2008

## **National Aviation Policy – Submission by the Hunter Economic Development Corporation (HEDC)**

The comments below are related to the Newcastle Airport (NAL) and RAAF base at Williamstown.

### **About the HEDC**

The Hunter Economic Development Corporation is a peak advisory body to the NSW State Government on matters of economic development. It facilitates the delivery of economic development strategies for the region, markets the region for investment and provides support to business looking to expand or relocate.

### **Background**

Williamstown Airport and RAAF Base is a significant economic driver in the Hunter region according to a recent economic study. The airport contributes \$228 million annually to the regional economy supporting over 2100 jobs. The RAAF base also contributes significantly to this employing 3,200 military and contractor personnel and injects \$150 million per annum in salaries.

Newcastle Airport is the fastest growing regional airport in Australia passenger growth is projected to grow to 1.8 million by 2025 (source Newcastle Airport master plan). In 2007 passenger levels reached in excess of 1 million in 2008 it is expected to reach 1.3 million.

Expansion of JetStar services by 18 flights per week in June this year is expected to increase passenger throughput by an additional 266,000. This would bring forward passenger growth at NAL of 1.8 Million well in advance of the prediction in the 20 year master plan

Significant aerospace development for military contractors, aircraft maintenance as well as freight handling facilities including BAE, Jetstar National heavy Maintenance base will be supported by up to 40,000 square metres of commercial office tenancies.

Aerospace industry development in Williamstown is likely to create up to 1000 jobs (Lower Hunter Regional Strategy). The rezoning of 100 hectares of land in close proximity to the airport/RAAF base is currently on exhibition it will be specifically for development of an aerospace precinct

The expansion of RAAF Williamstown and associated Defence development facilities is likely to continue to grow in the long term.

### **Issues to be considered**

- The relationship between the RAAF and civil aviation is of critical importance for the long term viability and continued growth of Newcastle Airport. A more robust agreement related the use of the RAAF base for civil operations may be needed to secure long term future needs of the airport to accommodate growth in both domestic and limited international operation.

- The importance of Williamstown defence and civil operations are essential components contributing to the diversity of Hunters economy. Growth in both defence and civil should be promoted.
- Williamstown airport is in a unique position to relieve some pressure of Sydney by acting as a regional hub.
- The restrictions on civil operation component related to number of aircraft movements per hour and shortening of runway during military operations cause delays and reduction in civil passenger services.
- New proposals for rezoning 100 hectares of land at Newcastle airport is well advanced and will provide the impetus for aerospace development in the region to service growth in military and civil operations.
- Closer liaison with local council must ensure residential development areas don't encroach into unsuitable areas which may inhibit future expansions of Military and civil operation.

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