

Friday 27 June 2008

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601
aviationstatement@infrastructure.gov.au

Dear Minister,

RE: Comments on National Aviation Policy - Issues Paper

Council is pleased to provide comment on the Australian government's National Aviation Policy Statement. Our comments refer directly to the Issues Paper, section 4.4 Disability Standards.

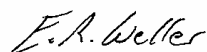
At an Ordinary Meeting of Council on Monday 23 July 2007 a Councillor raised the issue of accessible toilets on large aircraft on behalf of a local family. Council requested a report in reference to accessible toilets on aircraft in Australia. This request was raised in relation to the unfortunate experience of a local family travelling on a holiday to New Zealand when the son required the use of an accessible toilet during the flight.

A report was developed in consultation with Council's Disability Access Committee with information regarding Accessible Toilets on aircraft. It made reference to the legislative provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport. It appears that there are significant anomalies in the accessibility of toilets on aircraft flying to or from Australia compared to flights in many other countries.

When the Draft Report on the Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport was released for public comment, Council's Disability Access Committee endorsed draft Recommendation 6 for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) to be "provided with powers to refer cases of breaches of the Transport Standards to the Federal Court". The Disability Access Committee in conjunction with Council fully support this recommendation.

In conclusion Penrith City Council also submits to the current aviation policy review process that this recommendation 6 is relevant in supporting compliance by airlines to equitably meet the travel needs of people with a disability.

Yours faithfully,



Erich Weller
Community & Cultural Development Manager