



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

25<sup>th</sup> June 2002

### **Airport Sale proceeds should be used to develop a strong regional air service through a zonal system – Windsor**

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor is proposing that the proceeds from the sale of Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport be used to develop a strong regional air service through a zonal system.

“Regional air services have diminished to the point where they are not meeting the needs of the country communities that rely on them for both the outgoing needs of country people and the incoming services provided by city based people.

I am proposing that for airports that the major operators don't want to service because of economic viability, that the Government step in and assist to ensure that this essential service be maintained,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor wants the Federal Government to sit down with the New South Wales Government and develop a zonal structure where ‘marginal country airports’ be assisted to maintain air services.

“Part of the proceeds of the sale should be set aside to fund this proposal.

An independent assessment panel should also be established to determine the level of community service obligation or subsidy.

Such a panel would prevent the airline operators rorting the system,” Mr Windsor said.

On the matter of continuing the noise cap, Mr Windsor said, “I find it quite incredible that the Minister for Transport, John Anderson is pandering to the Sydney community by restricting the use of KSA to 80 movements an hour due to noise politics when he avoids any long term commitment to country people.”

“And on continued access for regional airlines at Kingsford Smith Airport, the Federal Government says that no regional airline will be forced to move.

Let's make sure that there are still regional airline flights from regional communities and let's make sure that we have equity of access for them,” Mr Windsor said.

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“Mr Anderson knows that over time access slots will be lost if the marginal country routes aren’t assisted,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor was a participant at the NSW Regional Airline Summit last year, and raised a number of questions relating to airline slots into KSA and received written answers.

“It appears that all is not well. In fact, information from Airport Co-ordination Australia Pty Ltd, the body that controls the access slot arrangements suggests that over a two season period (April to October) slots can be lost to regional airlines,” Mr Windsor said.

The following is an extract from a letter from Mr Ernst J Krolke, Chief Executive Officer, Airport Co-ordination Australia Pty Ltd.

*“Ring fenced NSW slots can be lost if an airline’s utilisation drops below 80% for a slot allocated on a specific day (example Monday 07.55). Such slots will be returned to the NSW Regional slot pool and will be re-allocated to other NSW regional airlines if there is any demand.*

*Should there be no demand from NSW Regional Airlines, then the slot can be allocated to an Interstate or International operation on a temporary basis for the rest of April/October 2001 (for example), however such allocation would not accrue historic precedence. Should there be no demand in April/October 2002, the slot will be awarded to the NSW Regional airline and not the airline that used the slot on a temporary basis. However, should there be no demand for NSW Regional in 2002, the slot will again be allocated to the airline that used the slot in 2001. Should there be no NSW Regional demand for April/October 2003, then the ring fence will come off and the airline that used the slot in 2002 will accrue historic precedence in 2003.”*

“This correspondence from Mr Krolke is contrary to the assurances from the Minister for Transport, John Anderson, that the slots would be safe for use by country people,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor is also concerned for maintaining the affordability of flying with regional air service providers.

“The so-called regional assurances don’t give any long term security of access at affordable rates and provide an avenue for the new owners, along with the airline operators to phase down marginal services to country towns.

Whilst the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will continue to monitor prices – does that include the capacity to pay ?” Mr Windsor asked.

“Governments must realise that airline access to capital cities such as Sydney, should not be seen as luxuries, they are essential services,” Mr Windsor concluded.