



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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PM guarantees regional airline access to Sydney Airport Bankstown not acceptable alternative

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor today sought and received the Prime Minister's guarantee that regional airlines will continue to have access to Sydney Airport under the same conditions as were in place at the time when Sydney Airport was sold in 2002.

Mr Windsor is happy with the Prime Minister's answer squashing any proposal to move regional airlines to Bankstown Airport.

Mr Windsor's concern was raised after the release of a draft Productivity Commission report titled "Review of price regulation of airport services" on September 7 just gone.

"We fought very hard to get guaranteed Regional Airline access to Sydney Airport in 2001 and suggestions in the draft Productivity Commission report looked like we were going to have to prepare for the same fight again.

I'm sure that people living in regional NSW will remember the long drawn out fight that was had in the lead up to the 2001 Federal election with the then Minister for Transport and Regional Services, John Anderson saying in a press release of January 11 that year, "... We have guaranteed that regional airlines will continue to have access to Sydney Airport, and our guarantee is solid."

Mr Anderson went on to say, "Our guarantee on regional access will not be affected by the privatisation of Sydney Airport. The Sydney Airport slot management scheme is imposed under an act of Parliament. It can only be amended by the Government and the Parliament, not by the airport owner."

Mr Windsor is pleased with the Prime Minister's response but said that it was important for regional airline users to remain vigilant on this issue.

"The Productivity Commission is calling for comment on its draft report and I would encourage regional airline users to make a submission.

We must not become complacent in our attitude to always having access guaranteed for regional airline access to Sydney Airport just because it has been in the past.

Country people should be always vigilant about retaining this access as it not only services country people getting to Sydney but also provides an essential service to Sydney people getting to the country.

Our argument in 2001 included the need for medical specialists and other professionals and business people from Sydney and other capital cities to be able to fly into our country areas without having to leave the one airport.

Bankstown wasn't an acceptable alternative then and it still isn't," Mr Windsor said.