

INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL AVIATION SERVICES

Name: Mr Frank Irving

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To whom it may concern,

It is a shame that the air transport for regional NSW has not kept pace with other modes of transport, this must surely be due to the lack of competition and current monopoly situation.

Some years ago our local airport at Merimbula had two operators Kendal and Hazelton, my wife and I traveled regularly on a flight Hazelton introduced to link the South Coast of NSW and the Victorian Gippsland region to Tasmania, this was a very popular service which we and many others used, the plane was always full both ways and Tasmanians' were getting to find there were alternatives to catching a plane to the Gold Coast for their annual holidays, our beaches were just as good and did not have the commercialization of the North. This flight was suddenly abandoned about the same time as Rex arrived, this direct flight would have competed slightly with other airlines through the major airports such as Melbourne, was a squeeze applied?? The sad part is, this trade was most likely new airline traffic as it made travel much easier to and from our region. A lot of the non-flying public are reluctant to tackle the huge Capital city airport complex's.

We are regular travelers to Tasmania as we have family there and we promote our region to Tasmanians, the problem is there is no direct flight so it all gets a bit hard especially now that you can only link up with Rex on Thursday, Friday and Sunday as on all other days their flight leaves Melbourne at 7am before any flights from Tasmania and no doubt many other areas get in to Melbourne!!

We book our trips well in advance as the price of flights booked at short notice is ridiculous. If we have to make an unscheduled trip we slip up to Canberra as that works out cheaper in most cases.

Hope my comments are taken seriously as regional NSW could benefit hugely by a bit of lateral thinking by the powers that be.

Regards,

Frank Irving