



media release

We're doing it for you!

Corporate Centre
PO Box 1618
Bairnsdale
Victoria 3875
5153 9500
feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au
www.egipps.vic.gov.au

CONSULTANTS TO STUDY REGULAR AIR SERVICE FEASIBILITY

For Immediate Release – Tuesday, 17 April 2007

Leading Sydney based aviation consultants Network Airports and Aviation are to investigate the feasibility of establishing a scheduled air service to East Gippsland.

Representatives Neil Hansford and Catherine McDonald visited the region last week for initial talks with East Gippsland Shire's Economic Development Unit and regional interested parties.

East Gippsland's Economic Development Strategic Plan recognises that transport services are essential to improving the economic and social well-being of the region's economy,

The study will determine the most effective way Council can work with Commonwealth and State Government agencies and key regional stakeholders to establish a viable scheduled air service to the region.

Currently, the Shire maintains three commercial aerodromes situated at Bairnsdale, Mallacoota and Orbost (Marlo).

Network Airports and Aviation has undertaken air feasibility studies in Australia and overseas and will analyse the level of demand for air services to East Gippsland.

Shire CEO Steve Kozlowski said the study would involve community consultation, examine data and review airport infrastructure.

"Regional organisations, industry representatives, businesses and interested members of the community will be invited to participate," he said.

Mr Kozlowski said that the Federal Minister for Transport, Mark Vaile had expressed concern that rural and regional Australia was disadvantage because of the lack of regular air services.

“It has been shown that the economies of communities with regular regional air services grow 2.4 times faster than those without,” he said.

“We know that many sectors of our local economy would benefit from regular air services between Melbourne and the region including the conference market, the Gippsland Lakes and our mountain and wilderness areas.

“It would also improve links for local business and government agencies, executives and rig workers involved in the expanding oil and gas industry as well as medical specialists, and patients needing to access medical services in Melbourne.”

Mr Kozlowski said the most important parts of the study would be to establish passenger estimates, preferred frequencies and the economics of air travel versus traveling by road or rail.

“If the convenience of air travel can be helped by competitive costs it will go a long way towards making an air service viable,” he said.

Neil Hansford said that a generation had grown up in East Gippsland without an air service.

“With the community now having a long established ‘car culture’ when it comes to traveling to Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra, we have to investigate how to sustain a viable air service that will save patrons a significant amount of traveling time,” he said.

Mr Hansford said a two community workshops would be held on Friday 4 May - the first from 8.30 am to 11.00 am at the Shire’s Corporate Centre, Bairnsdale; the second from 12:30 pm to 3.00 pm at the Shire’s Palmers Road offices, Lakes Entrance.

* * *

Further information – Tim Cornell, 5153 9500