

## **Submission Supporting Master Plan**

Canberra International Airport

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **PROVEN PERFORMANCE:** The pace and quality of development at the Canberra International Airport ('Airport') over the past decade demonstrates a strong record of performance, responsibility and accountability by the current Airport owners.
2. **MULTI-MODAL HUB:** The vision to transform the Airport into a multi-modal passenger and freight hub is an effective, efficient and strategically important extension of the current infrastructure, as much to the Nation generally as the Canberra region specifically.
3. **ECONOMIC ENGINE:** The importance to the local economy of both the Airport owner's substantial investment in the Airport to date and its planned future investment cannot be overstated.
4. **AVIATION GROWTH:** The Airport's ability to continue to efficiently and effectively service a rapidly growing region of obvious geopolitical significance is critical and mandates the continuous upgrade of the Airport's aviation infrastructure.

## DETAILED COMMENTS

### 1.0 **PROVEN PERFORMANCE:**

- 1.1 Since privatisation in the late 1990's, Canberra Airport has been successfully transformed by the massive investment of its current owners from an undercapitalised (and therefore underutilised) airport and terminal facility to a vibrant, multifaceted, sustainable, state of the art precinct servicing the Nation's capital.
- 1.2 The Airport's current owners have proven not only their ability to manage an asset of National significance, but their tireless commitment to developing it to its full potential despite the complex planning and regulatory framework involving almost all levels of State, Territory and Federal Government in which they operate.
- 1.3 The work done to date by the Airport's owners in creating vibrant commercial and retail precincts and other airport infrastructure is considered to be innovative in almost every respect by other institutional asset owners and there is little doubt that that the future plans envisaged in the master plan will transform the Airport into a truly world class facility.

### 2.0 **MULTI-MODAL HUB:**

- 2.1 It is obvious that Canberra's relative geographic isolation together with its smaller permanent residential population has historically made it susceptible to being overlooked by large scale investment of the order and magnitude contemplated in the Airport master plan.
- 2.2 However, we strongly endorse the view of the current owner's that it is these same characteristics that present substantial investment opportunities by having the Airport become a multi-modal passenger and freight hub to efficiently service other Eastern sea-board and surrounding inland populations, including Sydney.
- 2.3 The Airport's location within both Canberra's East-West Transport Corridor and its East-West Employment Corridor, together with its proximity to Sydney, the Southern Highlands, the Central West, and South Coast, all highlight the impetus for this vision of the Airport to be realised – in our opinion sooner rather than later.

### 3.0 **ECONOMIC ENGINE:**

- 3.1 Canberra's overall transformation over the past decade has in no small way been a result of the substantial investment made to upgrade the Airport, which in turn has led to enormous investment in public infrastructure which is also often subsidised by the Airport owners (the current upgrade of the surrounding road network is just one example of this).
- 3.2 The addition of substantial commercial and retail precincts at the Airport and the corresponding construction work this has necessitated has created vast opportunity for local private sector service providers in related industries, and the corresponding contribution to Canberra's overall development as the Nation's Capital could not be overstated.
- 3.3 Hence, the refurbishment of the Fairburn Precinct, the passenger terminal upgrade, the continued expansion of the Brindabella and Majura Precincts and the upgrade of the surrounding road network are critical works, not only to improve existing uses at the Airport and enable their future development, but to the survival of Canberra's private sector.

### 4.0 **AVIATION GROWTH:**

- 4.1 It is clear that Canberra's role as the Nation's Capital requires the airport owners to anticipate ever increasing volumes of passenger traffic. The substantial investment made to date in upgrading the existing runway infrastructure and the impending replacement of the passenger terminal contemplate and facilitate this growth.
- 4.2 The vision to have both domestic and international flights to and from Canberra will help consolidate Canberra's rightful position in the world's political arena and one can only wonder how international visitors to Canberra currently perceive the Nation's capital given its relative inaccessibility by direct international flights.
- 4.3 The ongoing development of the Canberra to Sydney corridor, expansion in the Canberra sub-region and rapid growth of Canberra itself all indicate a substantial need for continued investment in the upgrade of the aviation infrastructure at the airport to ensure it continues to be able to properly service this important region.

## **CONCLUSION**

We would like to both congratulate the existing airport owners on the significant and substantial achievements their stewardship of this important facility has produced over the past decade and commend them for their impressive vision of the Airport moving forward.

We are of the view that the master plan prepared by the Airport's owners comprehensively addresses all of the critical issues impacting upon their bold but appropriate vision for the Airport – one which their track record would suggest will no doubt become reality.