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CANBERRA SET TO BECOME WORLD CLASS TRAVELPORT

The Capital Airport Group has unveiled plans to transform Canberra International Airport into a world class TravelPort - a major transport terminal where fast air, rail and coach services will converge to provide seamless travel for business and leisure passengers.

The terminal's new strategic Terminal Precinct Plan, the Canberra TravelPort will handle more than six million passenger movements a year - three times the present passenger volume.

When completed, says Group Executive Chairman, Terry Snow, the Canberra TravelPort will offer a fast, efficient and comfortable transport system with easy access to air, rail and coach services.

The first stage, to begin in December at a cost of $2.6 million, includes construction of a new car park which will increase capacity by 25 per cent, a new apron for Kendal Airlines to accommodate their new jet services, and new road links to a service station to be built and a hire-car parking compound.

The second stage begins in July 2000 with construction of a new Ansett Airlines terminal, estimated to cost $15 million, relocation of two airfreight buildings and development of the Kendal Maintenance hangar, to cost about $5 million.

The remaining stages which include new roads, the coach terminal, rail terminal and international aircraft terminal will be constructed once the very high speed train service has been finalised.

The Terminal Precinct Plan, prepared by Daryl Jackson AWOW, Canberra’s most awarded architects, includes construction of a new platform terminal for the Very High Speed Train, scheduled to start services between Canberra and Sydney in 2004, a bus terminal and a new terminal for international travel. The Plan foresees major changes to the airport’s gateway, giving visitors a sense of arrival and a clear view of its aircraft movements.

The TravelPort aims to reduce the distance passengers have to walk between various terminals. It will spread over two levels, including car parks and feature a tree-lined boulevard through its centre.

"The most significant construction project since the opening of Parliament House", says Terry Snow.

"We are working to create Australia’s first genuine multi-modal TravelPort because the national capital deserves nothing less.

"The convergence of the Very High Speed train with Canberra provides the airlines with opportunities to develop more direct flights from the national capital and reduce congestion on our highways and in the stores over Sydney’s Kingsford Smith airport.

"The Very High Speed train has the potential to attract more than 500,000 overseas visitors to Canberra and we must be in a position to maximise the enormous economic and social benefits that will bring to communities in our region".

The Terminal Precinct Plan reflects a world trend toward linking airports with fast, cost effective rail services. "The TGV terminal at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris and the inter-city express at Frankfurt airport in Germany are two examples where short haul trips are better serviced by Very High Speed trains", says Snow.

"We are fortunate because the key players - the ACT government, the Speedrail Group and Qantas and Ansett - are willing and enthusiastic supporters of our plans to create a TravelPort.

Through the development of our Master Plan, we are now well positioned to start work on Australia’s most advanced and strategically located TravelPort."
The Speedrail Project, a joint venture between ALSTOM and Leighton Contractors, is the preferred proponent to build and operate the Very High Speed Train – a new millennium project that will cost an estimated $3.7 billion and create 18,500 jobs during its four years of construction.

"They're confident the project will go ahead – and I share their confidence."

Speedrail's Director of Public Affairs, Dale Budd, has been the driving force behind the visionary rail project for more than a decade. "We had to meet two critical benchmarks" he says. "First, we had to equal air travel times on a door to door basis and, secondly, we had to cut the car journey time in half in order to attract people out of their cars and into the trains."

"We must both win", says Budd. "Extensive research undertaken by the Speedrail group has established that about 70% of train journeys are undertaken between Canberra and Sydney each year, making it one of the busiest transport corridors in the country. Almost half are end-to-end trips."

Of the 6 million end to end journeys, more than 70% are undertaken by car, less than 15% by air, about 10% by coach and 4% by rail. "When Speedrail undertakes its first trip, sometime in late 2004, it will complete the journey in 81 minutes and travel at a cruising speed of 330 kilometres an hour", says Budd. "This will diminish the already small travel gap between air and train."

Budd says one of the most frequently asked questions about the Speedrail project is its viability – will it attract sufficient passengers?

"Speedrail has just completed its most comprehensive survey of the market and its needs – more than 9,000 interviews were conducted – and the results reveal a very strong market for the Very High Speed Train. Our research indicates that around 45 per cent of motorists currently driving between the two capital cities will use the train. About 20 per cent of air travellers will make the same decision."

Speedrail knows it has a market winner because it will capture more than 25 per cent of the current Sydney to Canberra market – the level at which the project becomes viable.

"The Very High Speed Train will stop at Sydney Airport, Campbelltown, Northern Beaches and Goulburn and terminate at Canberra International Airport."

Budd says the high-speed rail network is designed to link its airport up with the Very High Speed Train. "Washington Dulles is linking up with Europe's high-speed rail network for journeys of 1000 kilometres or less."

The combination of the train and the airport maximises the intermodal opportunities, particularly for international flights. With congested highways and increasingly crowded skies, particularly over Sydney's Kingsford Smith airport, Speedrail's Very High Speed train offers a safe, comfortable and high-tech form of transport for the cost conscious traveller of the new millennium."

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**Did you know?**

Canberra International Airport plans to spend about $20 million on its Year 2000 improvement program.

In line with its long-term plan to become an international airport, the Millennium Improvement Program includes:

- The redevelopment of the main terminal with better food and retail outlets.
- The construction of a new multi-user facility to improve facilities for major airlines, regional and corporate jets and, in the longer term, international flights.
- New commercial ventures such as a regional aircraft maintenance centre and an air road transport centre.
- 51 per cent of all passengers using Canberra International Airport travel for business reasons; 65 per cent of them are males in the 35 to 54 age bracket working or visiting people in the public sector and more than half travel to the airport by taxi.
- Women represent 65 per cent of all recreation travellers; the majority is younger, in the 18 to 44 age categories and most are likely to drive to the airport or be dropped in a private car.
- Taxis are the most popular form of transport accounting for 45 per cent of airport arrivals; about 30 per cent of passengers are dropped off by private car and a further 10 per cent drive and park.

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*Speedrail scheduled to start 2004.*
NEW HOME FOR AVIATION REGULATORS

Australia's key aviation regulators - Airservices Australia and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority - are establishing new bases at Canberra International Airport.

After negotiations between the Capital Airport Group and representatives from the two organisations, Airservices will shift to a new location and a modern, purpose-built office is already under construction for the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

Costing $150,000, CASA's new building will accommodate 20 technical staff from regional NSW. The Capital Airport Group has signed a five-year lease with the safety regulator to construct a quality one-storey building in the general aviation precinct. The building will be air-conditioned and span some 400 square metres of conference rooms and office space.

Building contracts, Canberra Building Services, plans to have the project completed by the end of September.

The Capital Airport Group has also negotiated new accommodation for Airservices Australia on the Farbarn RAAF base.

The shift, negotiated also with the Department of Defence involves 19 staff who provide essential technical and maintenance services for the airport's landing systems, communications and navigational aids.

"By moving to existing office and workshop accommodation within the RAAF base, Airservices will be relatively well positioned in the airport terminal which forms a key part of future airport development plans," says Airservices spokesman, Richard Dudley.

Having both regulators based at Canberra International Airport is a significant coup for the airport owners. "Their presence adds credibility to the airport and further consolidates its position as the major transport hub for southeastern Australia," says Executive Chairman, Terry Snow.

AIRPORT ONLINE

Canberra International Airport is about to go online with its own website - http://www.canberrairport.com.au

The website will also highlight much important documents as:

- The Master Plan - the blue print for the airport's future development over the next 20 years
- The key findings of an economic study into the impact of the airport on Canberra and surrounding regions and
- The Environment Strategy

"We are currently negotiating with the airlines for permission to carry information about flight arrivals and departures," Milton says.

Website users will also be able to access 'The Hub' the airport's e-monthly newsletter designed to inform and educate the public about airport activities.

AIRPORT COURT VICTORY

The Canberra International Airport has won a significant battle against the Quorum Group developer of "The Poppies" after a Federal Court ruled cleared it of breaching the Trade Practices Act.

The Poppies developers had alleged that comments made by the airport's Executive Chairman, Terry Snow, undermined the Quorum Group development were misleading and in breach of the Trade Practices Act. Mr Justice Roger Gyles ruled the comments could not breach the Act because they were not made during the course of trade or commerce.

"It's a victory for common sense and vindicates our decision to raise the levels of noise awareness and tell the whole story about the impact of aircraft noise," says Snow.

"The proposed Poppies residential development is directly under the airport's flight path and should not proceed."
For twelve months, Army Lieutenant Brett Shipps will live, eat and breathe helicopters. Brett is currently training for his flying badge or ‘wings’ at the Australian Defence Force Helicopter Flying School at the Fairbairn RAAF base. Having completed six months of theoretical training at Tamworth, he’s enjoying the chance to test his new skills with the disciplined hands-on approach at the school.

The training is challenging and constant, he says. Training to become a helicopter pilot was a natural progression for Lieutenant Shipps. His father was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and he still remembers growing up on the Fairbairn RAAF base.

Lt Shipps, age 26, is under the watchful and vigilant eye of Captain Shane Anderson. Only three years his senior, Capt. Anderson is a highly experienced flying instructor. One of 21 instructors at the school, Capt. Anderson finds the training very rewarding. “I get a big buzz out of training my students because I can compare their progress with mine when I was training to be a pilot.” His training was very exciting. At 22, I was allowed to fly a million dollar helicopter”, says Capt. Anderson.

Capt. Anderson stresses that motivation and enthusiasm are a must in order to successfully complete pilot training.

Soon to celebrate its tenth anniversary, the helicopter school was originally created from No 9 Squadron RAAF which has a proud history dating back to 1925. No 9 Squadron has supported operations in Israel, the Sinai, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and PNG. In Australia, the Squadron has assisted in bushfire relief, search and rescue and other assisted police tasks. It was also involved in support roles for the army.

The ADF Helicopter School is in charge of helicopter training for the Air Force and the Navy. The School currently uses 17 Squirrel light helicopters, has a staff of 67 Army, 9 Navy, 1 Defence civilian, 50 Boeing maintenance contractors and five training contract personnel.

While the future of the helicopter school at Canberra may be uncertain, the future of its pilots and students appears ensured thanks to a training regime which demands discipline and delivers excellence.

Canberra Flying School

A Canberra flying school has spread its wings to the South Pacific. The Fairbairn Air Charter Training School, based at Canberra International Airport, has entered into a joint venture with Air Fiji, to operate a pilot training school at Nausori.

Air Fiji has invested $150,000 building the school and purchasing the training equipment, says Fairbairn School Director and Chief Pilot, Ben Hotink. “The facilities are magnificent”, he says. “We have signed a five-year contract with Air Fiji to provide the syllabus and the instructors. We will carry responsibility for running the course and conducting flight training.”

The Air Fiji Aviation Academy has also attracted students from Australia and England. “The joint venture is exciting and a challenge because the Academy has the potential to become the flight training centre for the South Pacific region.”

Students attending the course would receive an Australian commercial pilot’s license enabling them to fly anywhere in the world.

A dynamic and experienced aviation and businessman, Ben Hotink was Chief Pilot for Kendell Airlines for 10 years before launching his Canberra flying school in 1983. In 40 years of flying, Hotink has logged up more than 26,000 hours – making him one of the most experienced pilots in the southeast region. Looking for younger and fitter than his 70 years, he describes flying as a lifestyle – a lifestyle that obviously suits him well.

Hotink is far from daunted at the prospect of starting a new business enterprise thousands of miles from Canberra in the South Pacific.

“I can see a good future for the business”, he says, “and spending a lot more of my time in Fiji won’t be difficult either”. &