



Katherine Town Council Submission to Aviation Green Paper

Objectives: Katherine Civil Airport upgrade to meet the needs of the developing northern economy and provide essential services to regional and remote northern territory population.

- Improve passenger air services and transportation of essential goods and services and food security to remote communities within the Big Rivers region and beyond.
- Meet the operational requirements of industry, including resources, energy, aeromedical, construction and government services in the region.
- Support the tourism industry through expanded routes, frequency and capacity of air transport to and from Katherine.
- Pursue opportunities for new freight network demand to improve regional supply chains. Enable international freight networks to develop directly from the source.
- Reinforce the importance of this northern region for military operations, ensuring separation of military/civil operations.

Background:

The Big Rivers Region boasts some of the most significant economic activity in Northern Australia, including:

- one of the largest deposits of zinc-lead in the world at McArthur River Mine
- the exploration of the Beetaloo Sub-basin as a world-class shale gas resource and home to over three-quarters of the Northern Territory's prospective shale gas resources and;
- RAAF Base Tindal Redevelopment and United States Force Posture Initiative Airfield Works

Katherine is positioned as the service and supply hub of the region. Despite this, an unrated drainage culvert that runs beneath Taxiway Echo at the Katherine Civilian Airport limits the Maximum Take Off Weight (MTOW) of aircraft to a conservative 25 tonnes.

This significantly reduces the commercial air transport capability of aircraft to a maximum of 30 seats, restricting opportunities for economic growth, including servicing large scale projects and local FIFO employment opportunities.

Requests have been fielded for larger charter aircraft to land and utilise Katherine Civil Airport but these have had to be refused due to this culvert limitation.

Project proposal:

The airport's runway and taxiways and civilian airport are owned by the Australian Government Department of Defence. The civilian airport terminal is leased to Katherine Town Council who manages the operations of the civilian airport.

Katherine Town Council holds an in principle agreement from the Department of Defence that the culvert could be upgraded. This is proposed at Defence cost as it does not sit within council leased area. Once upgraded, the apron will also need to be reinforced for increased weight capacity.

Katherine Town Council seeks the support of the Australian Government to upgrade the drainage culvert beneath Taxiway Echo at Katherine Civilian Airport, at Defence cost and support the upgrade of the apron area from the Australian Government.

Economic and Social Benefit

Beyond the direct economic benefits of the project during construction and operations, this project presents an opportunity to improve the capacity, efficiency and reliability of air transport services in Katherine, and new and expanded opportunities for tourism and trade within the Northern Territory. With the increase in construction development in Katherine has come a huge increase in traffic movement on the Stuart Highway between Katherine and Darwin. With no logistics hub in Katherine, freight is shipped to Darwin, then returned to Katherine. With increased passenger and freight capacity at Katherine Airport, it can remove some of the road traffic on an already overburdened, limited highway between Darwin and Katherine. Also reducing incidents of road trauma.

Proposed cost:

The estimated capital cost of this project is up to \$1 million. However with existing machinery, manpower, engineers, materials and project management currently on site at Tindal, this could be significantly less.

Economic stimulus during consultation:

The total estimated construction impact is \$170 million and expected to create 66 jobs during construction. These combined flow on effects are estimated to generate an additional 127 direct jobs.

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November 2023