



MEDIA RELEASE

AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
OVER 50 YEARS AS THE VOICE OF GENERAL AVIATION IN AUSTRALIA

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For Immediate Release

Lack of Aviation Policy

Alan Jones' opinion piece this morning on 2GB in Sydney regarding the events at Bankstown Airport was most timely and appropriate.

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association fully supports Save Our Secondary Airports, the action group that is campaigning about unjust practices against general aviation operators at Bankstown. We also support groups protesting about similar events in Brisbane (Archerfield), Perth (Jandakot), Canberra and Adelaide (Parafield).

Operators can face being locked out and/or fenced in (see Australian Flying Sept/Oct 2006. p37) if they have difficulties with their property-developer landlords. They are being forced off airports with little or no recompense for any improvements or building costs incurred. There is no effort at enhancement or assistance for existing aviation small businesses – instead they are told to pay more and earn less, or leave. Small business is Australia's largest employer, and the nation's continuing prosperity demands that respect and consideration of this should be paramount.

If the smaller aviation maintenance and support businesses at Bankstown and other airports are driven away, imagine what will happen to vital community services such as:

- Royal Flying Doctor Service
- CareFlight
- Angel Flight
- Emergency Services such as Bushfire spotting, control and water bombing
- Police Air
- Aerial surveys
- Coastal surveillance

Does the community really want to go without these valuable assets?

AOPA is concerned at the national decline in General Aviation activity, which we believe needs a credible aviation policy at both State and National levels.

We, along with other significant aviation groups and personalities, have identified this lack of a coherent aviation infrastructure and action policy as a major drain on the Australian community. The skill base, export capacity and national assets are being diminished at a frightening rate. Australia was once a world leader in aviation – this is in danger of being lost for all time.

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