

## EOFY – PAST HISTORY – COSTS.

There is a saying that “those who do not learn **history** are doomed to **repeat** it”.

The corporate history in government aviation departments and its agencies is limited to recent history due to the turnover of aviation staff in the Department of Infrastructure and its agencies. Basically, since the formation of CAA/CASA and AirServices, aviation in rural Australia has been steadily declining. Is rural aviation declining because of safety requirements, red tape or economic restrictions or both.

If you asked every regional office of CASA for their true opinion of GA, they would tell you that GA is almost dead. Yes, there are the odd busy airports but not like it could be if there was a new modern “*Main Object*” and “*Part II*” of the Civil Aviation Act. If the government wants jobs to be created, then they need to amend these sections of the Act.

In addition, they also need to look at the regulatory responsibilities of airport owners/operators. Airports are the hard surface of highways in the sky. Do communities collect fees for every private vehicle that drives through their community? Who should fund the airport needs to be changed because airport operators only see airports as a way of making money at the expense, in a lot of cases, of the aviation lessees on airport land. They are not restricting lessees on the airport to aviation businesses.

Instead of creating regulations to enable aviation to locate and survive in rural Australia, we have created economic restrictions on aviation sectors subject to regulatory oversight that operate in the same sector as those that have been regulatory exempted from regulatory oversight. Worse still, the regulatory sectors are prevented from operating the same aircraft as the non-regulatory sector standards. How does this government meet its international obligations to oversight aviation?

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## 1. Why are there Economic Restrictions?

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Does CASA really think it has done well for the aviation industry? Why has aviation changed from an industry sector where school leavers found attractive to current day where aviation is no longer seen as attractive stable career path by school leavers?

Why has rural aviation jobs been declining since the creation of CAA?

Pre the CAA, rural airports had many resident aircraft, many private operators, small businesses and small commercial aviation operators/organisations. Every regulatory change has applied economic restrictions on what was a very successful and viable GA cottage industry because of lobbying by other sectors.

Safety cannot be an issue because the non-regulated sectors are permitted and supported by regulatory restrictions preventing the VH sector from using the same standards. Why isn't the same standards applied the aircraft, pilot and maintenance engineer qualifications? Other Regulators can do it.

Without these economic regulations, as applied to VH GA, means non-VH can operate with lower costs to operating under additional safety regulations. They are also anti-competitive that is not suppose to happen under Federal Acts and Regulations.

The same applies with flying schools. All we have in VH Australia if CASR Part 141 schools. How many of these exist in rural Australia?

- The FAA has independent flight instructors, Part 61 schools (not FAA approved) and FAR Part 141 training schools providing full time courses. More participation.
- CASR standards prevents the VH registered sector accessing independent flight instructors or Part 61 like schools from existing.

More economic restrictions on the VH sector. It is why we lost the hundreds of rural based flight instructors the industry had pre CARs.

The anomaly is that CASA is very willing to bring back the independent LAME with the FAR Part 65 Inspection Authorisation to work in GA even though it will add costs if employed in a maintenance organisation.

Independent is OK in one sector but not in the other.

Aviation grew in this country because it had minimum regulations for the GA sector that encouraged jobs to be created.

CASA needs to remove economic restrictions that have been applied simply because they have been captured by one sector or another.

CASA has not created a safe and viable industry – it is restricting safe growth.

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## 2. Access to Rural Australia Airports

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The above was adopted from a US review of the benefits of rural airports to the local communities. Aviation is not the real beneficiary of an airport, the local community is. The funding model adopted by most community airports is flawed because there is no regulatory imperative to grow the aviation participation at their airport.

We have real estate airport managers who are looking at best returns on the land they can generate. Look at the airports that slug aviators as though they are fully responsible for funding the airport.

We know of airport operators that serve notice on existing aviation businesses to vacate their premises so they can convert to non-aviation industrial parks. Rural airports are losing aviation participation because aviation participants are being priced out of the airport.

Small VH private aircraft below 5700Kgs should be regulatory exempt from landing fees at non major airports and minimum parking fees. The standard anchor wire system should not require a parking fee for this class of aircraft. Some airports have adopted this approach.

The Government does run a grant system to fund airport upgrades but day by day costs are stopping private GA flying.

To encourage aviation, rural airports should be encouraging aero clubs to be set up on the airport. Clubs will attract school leavers to aviation.

Why can't clubs be permitted to allow an independent flight instructor and LAME to support the aero club. It would remove the cost of a future pilot from travelling to the coast for flight training.

Attracting and growing aviation will bring economic benefits to the local community.

The problem is that the aviation GA sectors are suffering under COVIG-19 but the commercial reaction of many airports is to raise parking fees, close businesses and look to profiteer during this period.

Except for the exceptions, most are not concerned with the problems associated with a closed down GA. This sector is not looked upon for assistance like the airlines are.

The future is so hard to pick. AMROBA will continue to lobby for cost effective safety regulations and standards. If we can get a viable GA then all other sectors will profit from a source of skilled pilots and LAMEs that can be upskilled to all other sectors.

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