

SUBMISSION NO 118

Secretary: *J. L. Moore*

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORT AND
REGIONAL SERVICES

SUBMISSION TO
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT
AND REGIONAL SERVICES

TERMS OF REFERENCE

**POLICIES AND MEASURES REQUIRED TO ASSIST
THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL AIR
SERVICES:**

AS PERTAINING TO

THE WEST KIMBERLEY REGION

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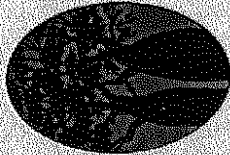
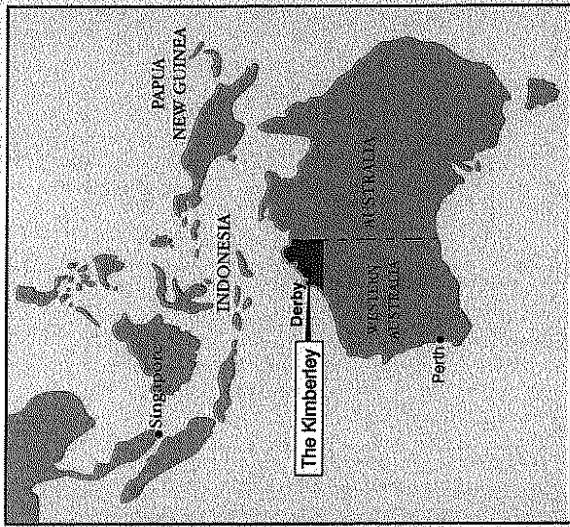
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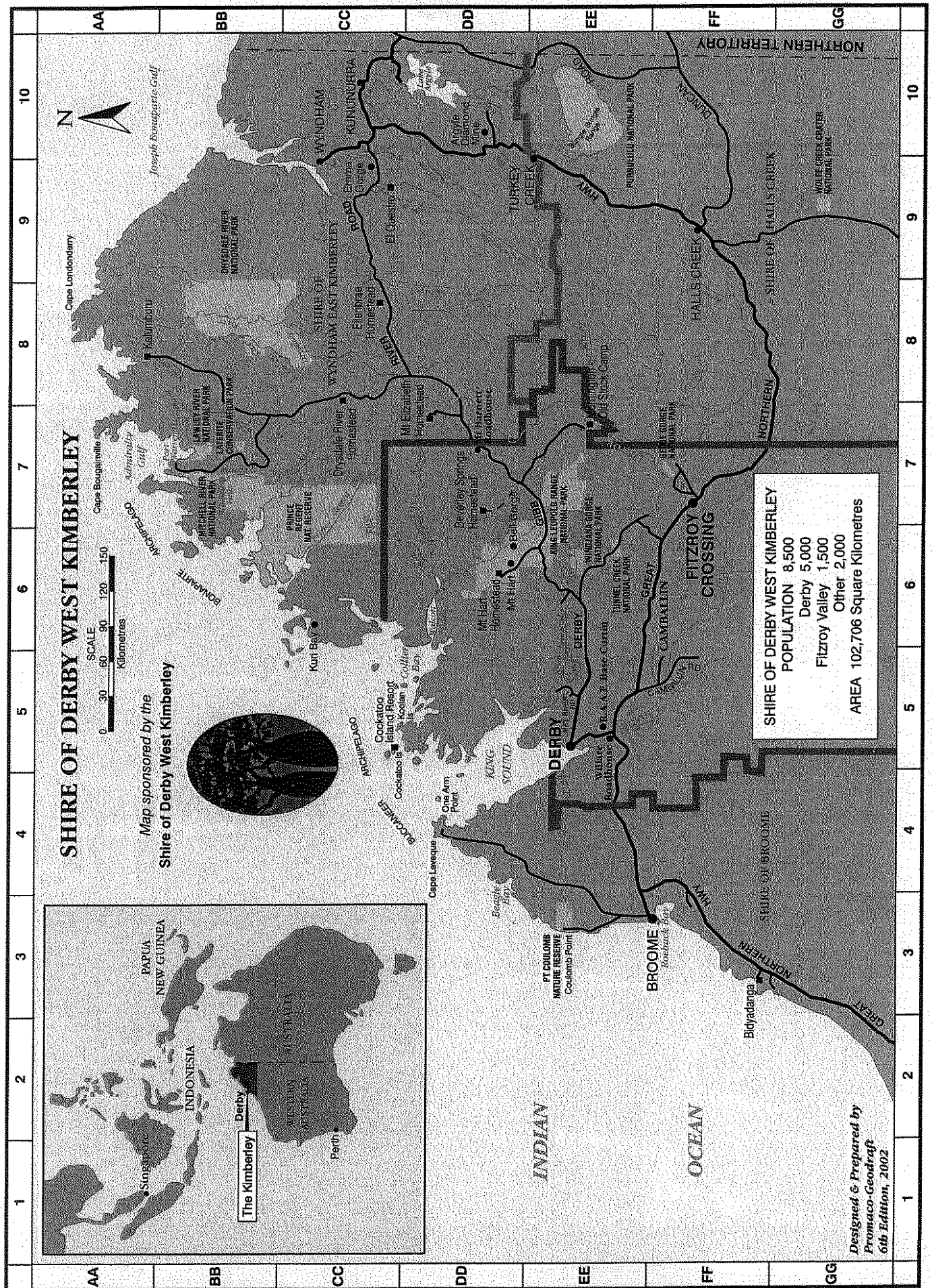
SHIRE OF DERBY WEST KIMBERLEY

Map sponsored by the
Shire of Derby West Kimberley



SHIRE OF DERBY WEST KIMBERLEY
 POPULATION 8,500
 Derby 5,000
 Fitzroy Valley 1,500
 Other 2,000
 AREA 102,706 Square Kilometres

Designed & Prepared by
Promaco-Geodraft
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INTRODUCTION

Historically and geographically Derby has been the service centre of the West Kimberley with both land and air transport modes.

With the awakening of Broome as a tourist destination and the closure of BHP's Koolan Island mine, Ansett began around 1990 what is now known as hubbing in Broome. By 1994 it had withdrawn its Derby Jet service, to be replaced by a Skywest 19 seat Jetstream 31 linking with all services operating through Broome.

Skywest, to their credit, tried every conceivable connection to service Derby but in the eyes of the Shire and townspeople they could do nothing right, even though the Perth – Derby Ansett fare was \$20.00 cheaper than the Perth – Broome fare at the time.

By 1999 Skywest had withdrawn from the service, to be taken up by Skippers Aviation with a Metroliner 23 aircraft which was required to be located in Broome as a back up aircraft for a mining company contract they held.

Finally the Derby – Broome airfare became an add on, no longer included in the Ansett fares to and from Broome.

SERVICE 1999 TO SEPTEMBER 14TH 2001

Skippers service consisted of a Broome – Derby leg, arriving Derby at 10.30 am, some two hours after Ansett's arrival in Broome, including the thirty-minute flight. This in turn gave one the opportunity to drive the 210 km, checking to see if you had beaten the Skippers aircraft as the Derby terminal apron is visible from the highway, 10 Km from Derby.

The second leg, Derby – Broome departed Derby at 11.25am, arriving Broome at 12.00 for Ansett flights departing Broome at 1.30pm , 2.30pm and later evening flights.

During the 2000 calender year, this service moved an average of 10.5 persons each leg and carried no freight. (Passenger numbers swollen by Curtin Detention Centre operation).

DIRECT RESULTS OF THIS SERVICE

No 1

The eventual collapse of the Derby to Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and return service with many options trialed. This eventually became a Broome to Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and return service to match up with on-forwarding aircraft.

Unfortunately the loss of this service has unintentionally created location problems for Atsic, Regional Government Departments and the Regional Hospital in their effort to service the area.

No 2

The flight cost became an add on to the cost of Ansetts tickets "to and from" Broome.

No 3

As mentioned, enough time elapsed to drive between towns and or leaving Derby by vehicle around 0600 would have you flying to Perth by 0930, to allow an afternoon's work in Perth.

No 4

The Skippers service was already back in Broome in shut down mode by 12.30 pm when the same day urgent airfreight arrived. This left urgently required breakdown parts and or blood and drugs stranded in Broome until the following morning or to be rescued by a charter aircraft for around \$655.00 for a few kg just to have them in Derby for onforwarding or saving a life.

SERVICE JANUARY 2002 TO PRESENT

Now that Qantas Broome services are stabilised with a good spread of flights, actually over 30 flights either Perth – Broome or Broome – Perth over the six days, Mon – Sat of which the current Derby services connects with only 12 flights directly.

To extend this lack of service;

The current Derby – Broome airfare one way \$197.00

Hire car (24 hr period)

One way

6 cyl car

\$150 per day

Relocation for one direction hire

\$110.00

Fuel

\$ 30.00

\$260.00

The Broome – Fitzroy airfare

One way and over twice the distance

\$198.00

Charter aircraft to arrive when you want to in Broome

Cessna 206 4/5 seat, so called crew change

Two people in two people out

\$655.00

Then to top that \$197.00 airfare, the Shire of Derby West Kimberley is forgoing over \$1,000 per week in charges diverted to the airline. (Six thousand passengers per year at \$10.00 per head plus an exemption of landing charges).

DIRECT RESULTS OF THIS SERVICE

In relation to pre September 14th services

No 1 unchanged Fitzroy services still by-passing Derby.

No 2 unchanged, an add on cost now \$197.00.

No 3 Qantas's first aircraft arrives Broome two hours later than previously did Ansett's thus removing most of the lost time.

No 4 unchanged as any freight not arriving on the first flight due to weight restriction ex Perth and same day freight stays in Broome.

No 5 the Metroliner 23 may look good on the airport apron but is reported to be one of the most uncomfortable aircraft to board or alight from of those available including even smaller aircraft. This therefore is a prime concern as most middle aged and elderly people in the area have one or more joints on the stiff list.

OBVIOUS NEEDS TO ACHIEVE FROM PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

To service as many of Qantas Broome arrivals and departures to cover passenger and freight needs economically as shown by customer requirements.

To bring Fitzroy/Halls Creek flights back through Derby with a minimal increase to elapsed times by providing total ground services at Derby and Fitzroy Crossing airports. One passenger a day increase would see added costs covered.

To reduce Derby – Broome airfares, full deregulation of the area would see North West Regional Airlines topping up empty seats either leg for just over \$100.00, no more than \$150 inclusive.

Current airfares show you that 2 x Cessna 402's or Piper Navajo's could run parallel, hence a similar aircraft running with the Broome – Fitzroy service sharing over flow on the Broome – Derby or Derby – Broome legs.

TO IMPROVE PASSENGER ATTITUDES TO SMALL AIRCRAFT

The reason for this submission is to point out problems I believe need addressing relating to the bigger is better syndrome that will eventually kill this regional centre if allowed to continue unchecked.

Problem No 1

A lot of the same people who don't like flying in small aircraft can be seen standing in the queue for a free flight in that same small aircraft. That is, passengers feel they shouldn't have to pay for the discomfort and or embarrassment in some cases for the antics and effort required to be seated in smaller RPT aircraft.

Most of these aircraft including the Metroliner 23 have steps in the fold down section of the door, supported by two drop wires or chains as handrails. Therefore, an immediate problem arises as the majority of people grab a handrail for added support before lifting a foot to mount any step.

The above aircraft steps require weight on the bottom step to make the poor excuse for handrails tight enough to offer some support. If the passenger had doubts about the aircraft they have just doubled with the moving handrails and in turn steps.

Possible Solution

Land based portable steps designed to suit one or several aircraft with firm and strong handrails engineered so that the passenger's head and shoulders still enter the aircraft as they make the top step.

Problem No 2

This problem is relative to most local people in country Australia during summer but even more so with Northern Australia.

The RPT aircraft sits on the airport apron as the surface temperature passes 40 degrees C, turning the closed up aircraft into an oven before being opened up by the pilot some 45 minutes before the passenger's board. The pilot then closes up the aircraft after boarding and carries out his check procedures, finally starting an engine and some slightly cooler air enters the cabin.

It is not until the aircraft has passed through a few thousand feet that passengers begin to cool down. Already they have damp to wet clothing and underwear, a discomfort that becomes magnified when transferring to that high flying jet aircraft at your nearest hub airport. (Makes you wonder if that cold or flu you return home with, blaming southern cities for, actually started during the flight south)

Possible Solution

A mobile external air conditioning unit cooling the aircraft down prior to passengers boarding and during the pilot carrying out his check procedures, even possibly covering start up of the off side engine. This then being disconnected and the aircraft closed up by airline ground staff or the Shire's recording officer before second engine start up.

In the case of the Shire of Derby West Kimberley the cost the Shire to provide a manpower service to RPT flights at both Derby and Fitzroy Crossing airports would only be a fraction of the more than one thousand dollars a week the Shire is forgoing with the present services.

CONCLUSIONS

This submission shows how the unintentional destroying of Derby as a regional base gained momentum with the Shires and Towns inability to adapt to and improve the Skywest service being further accelerated with the bigger is better syndrome. Introducing Skippers Metroliner with higher baggage allowances per passenger saw the start of a domino effect with the loss of the Fitzroy/Halls Creek service to Broome, then as each domino fell unwanted but understandably thereafter.

Twenty twenty hindsight is a wonderful thing but the chain of events once laid out surprised even myself as to the unintentional damage done as recent history has shown.

Hence with a Shire possibly close to or needing to be shocked into reality, both Commonwealth and State Governments have a chance to showcase a Regional Air Services Development post September 14th using smaller aircraft for the benefit of the region and it's population of both indigenous and Caucasian peoples.

REQUESTS

That the Commonwealth Government allocates R and D grants to develop the ground based equipment to support these smaller aircraft, hence changing passenger perceptions of small RPT aircraft throughout country Australia.

A full aircraft provides a very economical form of transport.

Then finally to the State Governments for interest free loans enabling the Shires (airport owners) to purchase this equipment to provide the service at their airports to attract the aviation services that will benefit their region.

ATTACHMENTS

The Kimberley Map

Skippers Aviation

Schedule and price list

Northwest Regional Airlines

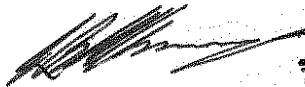
Schedule and price list

Attachments with printed copy x 2 following by express post

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


Shire Derby West Kimberley for the location page

Hema Maps for the Kimberley Map



30-8-02

Bruce McKenzie



30.08.02

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