

**LOIPUNE COOPERATIVE**

*North East River,  
Flinders Island, Tasmania*

Mail to: The Secretary,  
Loipune Co-Operative,  
32 Dorrit St,  
Carlton 3053 Vic

---

24th July, 2003

Mr Ian Dundas  
Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Transport & Regional Services  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

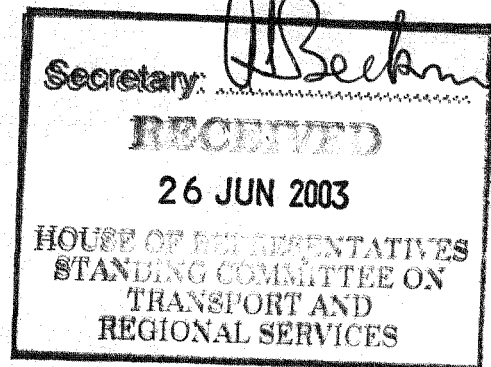
Dear Mr Dundas,

I am a member of the Loipune Cooperative on Flinders Island and wish to express our concern about the air services between Victoria and Flinders Island.

Loipune Cooperative is a private conservation cooperative established in 1991 under the Victorian Co-Operation Act of 1981. Our aim is to "protect the land owned by the Co-operative and the natural environment and beauty of the Flinders island environment generally by working in a cooperative way."

We have a twelve-bed house on our land at North East River, Flinders Island, overlooking a great beauty spot. Our eleven adult members reside in Melbourne. In the past, most members have made between two to and five visits a year to the island and usually bring family and friends. However it is increasingly difficult to obtain seats on the current airline and we have growing concerns about the viability of this service.

Flinders Island's economic survival depends on increased tourism and population growth. The Flinders Island Visitor Survey conducted in 2000 identifies the potential Victorian tourist market. As we are demographically similar to this target market<sup>1</sup> our growing travel difficulties illustrate the need for urgent improvements in Flinders Island's air transport arrangements.



---

<sup>1</sup> middle aged, secondary/ tertiary qualifications, working full time, non-residential children

We contribute as much as we can to the Island economy by buying goods and services from island businesses. This contribution would increase if we could visit more often and stay for longer periods of time. Sadly, the cost, infrequency, and unreliability of the current air service is reducing the number of visits we can make to the island. Many friends who loved their time on Flinders Island, now go elsewhere for cheaper and more convenient holidays where they obtain better value for money. e.g. Queensland.

Like the members of the survey's potential Victorian target market, our members and visitors work or run businesses in Melbourne. We need to be sure that we can get back in time to meet work, school or other obligations in Victoria so it is very troubling when we hear of cancelled flights, rerouted flights or mechanical problems. As well as causing inconvenience, these problems create a very bad impression and have scared off guests who would otherwise have returned but will not travel again on a "shoestring airline."

Flinders Island needs to increase its population for economic reasons. As some of our members approach retirement age, we would like to live on the island or visit for many months at a time. Unfortunately there are obstacles in the way, i.e. the increasing isolation of the island; being unable to leave easily to meet deadlines or in emergencies; not being visited by children and grandchildren as much as we would like. Other members have young families but cannot visit the island as much as they would like because of the cost and unreliability of air and sea transport from Victoria.

I therefore ask that you address the following needs and possible solutions:-

1. A sealed and well-lit runway at Whitemark Airport, which can land larger aircraft.
2. Capital assistance and ongoing subsidies from the Federal Government to enable the above.
3. Predictable, regular and safe flights to Melbourne.
4. Increased passenger capacity on such flights.
5. A scheduled and upgraded passenger service by sea between Victoria and Flinders Island.

**Margaret Lord**

*Member of The Loipune Cooperative*