



KANGAROO ISLAND COUNCIL

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Kingscote Airport.....to do nothing is not an option!

Kangaroo Island Council have been working with KIFA (Kangaroo Island Futures Authority) who has financially supported Council in the technical, engineering and business planning stages of future options for Kingscote Airport. This support has provided an opportunity to explore all options without cost to the Council or Community of Kangaroo Island.

Mayor Jayne Bates said "we feel that we must clarify the critical need to secure our Community's long-term air access, to foster the support and growth in tourism on Kangaroo Island and to dispel incorrect assertions currently being made in the community about the potential for upgrading our Airport".

Some key points to note:

- The current REX (Regional Express) Saab 340 planes are the largest regular passenger service aircraft able to land consistently on the current airstrip.
- The planes used by REX are no longer manufactured and any upgrade to their fleet will necessitate them purchasing larger aircraft, which are unlikely to be landed at the airport in its current state. Such a fleet upgrade may be 8-12 years away (possibly longer), but Council must plan for the future.
- With larger aircraft come other responsibilities, such as increased security requirements and the associated costs. Council are cognisant of these costs and recognise that support during the early years following any form of upgrade is something that will need to be taken into consideration during decision making.
- REX has and is providing an excellent and valued service to Kangaroo Island, but passenger numbers have fallen consistently over the last 5 years despite a general growth in visitation to the Island. This is considered to be mainly due to competitive marketing from the ferry route operator.
- Kingscote Airport will be no longer able to cover its costs if this decline continues.

Mayor Jayne Bates affirms that "there is no suggestion that this Council would be looking to increase rates specifically to cover any upgrade or change to operating costs".

Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Boardman said "the opportunities for tourism growth with an airport upgrade are significant and may provide critical mass for a second operator, which in turn brings competition."

"The Airport cannot attract other opportunities without a significant upgrade because available plane sizes and their associated capacities, dictates the use of aircraft beyond the capability of the existing runway and associated facilities".

"This project does not impact on Councils other works, responsibilities or budget; it is not an either / or situation as the funding will be specific for regional airports" said Andrew Boardman.

Regarding the Kingscote Airport, Mayor Jayne Bates concludes in saying "the imperative for an upgrade has become more evident though the completed works - to do nothing is not an option for the Council".

For further information:

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