



25 January 2013

Mr Mike Mrdak
Secretary
Department of Infrastructure & Transport
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mike,

The RAAA noted with interest the PM stated in a major recent national security speech that the national risk profile has changed significantly. Her new security priorities are clearly those risks associated with tensions arising because of behaviour between sovereign states.

The lesser risk now is that of non-state protagonists such as terrorist groups. This group has been the main driver of aviation security policies for over a decade and this notion has been challenged by the PM.

The speech has significant security policy implications for aviation and particularly regional aviation. For years the RAAA has warned that increased aviation security measures have been implemented with almost undue haste, yet lower security threats have met with very minor security decreases. This behaviour places unnecessary cost burdens on a large range of regional operators, burdens that are thwarting route growth and regional development. Last July passenger and checked bag screening was applied at the 20,000kg MTOW threshold, as opposed to the previous 30,000kg trigger. Even though it has been requested repeatedly, no cogent security or technical argument has ever been provided to the aviation industry for this draconian and very costly measure.

In keeping with the PM's new security priorities it would appear more than reasonable to revisit aviation security policies in general, including those that apply to the 20,000kg trigger. It is logical to suggest that the security trigger should now return to 30,000kg alongside a more than 70 seat criterion. This would seem to be a measured easing of the security requirements.

Government assesses national security risks, not industry. Changing risk levels and counter-measures must be taken on faith by industry given this is exclusively and necessarily a core government function. The head of our government has stated that the risk profile is changing ie towards state based risk as opposed to stateless terrorist risk. This should lead to changes in aviation security policy that would provide some relief from the costly and unnecessary regional security measures now in force.

The RAAA is ready to discuss this important matter further at your earliest convenience.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Paul Tyrrell', is positioned below the 'Regards' text.

Paul Tyrrell
CEO

Serving regional aviation, and through it, the people and businesses of regional Australia

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