



South Hedland Branch

Economics and Industry Standing Committee
laeisc@parliament.wa.gov.au

On behalf of the South Hedland Branch we would like to express our concerns to the Economics and Industry Standing Committee about the high cost of regional airfares for Pilbara residents and in particular residents of Port & South Hedland.

Residents of this town don't understand and want to know why our current airfare prices are so extremely high compared to other airfares available to travel across Australia and overseas. The distance travelled in regional WA is shorter and smaller planes are used, so it's not the fuel consumption.

Most flights from our town are pre-booked and subsidised by mining companies who only pay a maximum of \$300 per seat whether it is used or not, so it's not the lack of patrons travelling or seats paid for. So what justifies the prices being charged to residents?

The Economics and Industry Standing Committee should be aware that not all residents are employed by companies that give free flights a year to their employees and independents; not all residents are on mining company wages or working full time; not all residents have family and support systems close by.

The over inflated fare prices impact our town socially and financially.

Socially the lack of services and visitors to our region affect our health and wellbeing. Most migrating residents are cut off from family support systems and family don't visit due to the unaffordable airfare costs. A family will find it cheaper to meet up in Broome for a holiday or travel to Perth in a car, increasing speeding and crash fatalities.

Financially fare prices impact potential tourism opportunities for the region, we know individuals residing in other states want to experience our unique Pilbara landscape but look at the costs to travel and know they can travel elsewhere cheaper, usually overseas.

To resolve all these issues we believe a reduction of airfare prices and set at a maximum airfare charge one way including taxes of \$199 from all Pilbara towns to Perth (e.g. PHE to PER and vice versa PER to PHE), would be fair for all regional residents to travel to their only state capital city.

I look forward to the Inquiries findings and hope you can take into consideration the benefits that changing the air fare costs will have to the region.

Yours Sincerely,

Tricia Hebbard
South Hedland Branch Secretary