

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: Submission to Enquire into Regional Airfares in Western Australia

From: Samantha Duddy

Sent: Tuesday, 29 August 2017 6:55 PM

To: Committee, Economics & Industry Standing <laeisc@parliament.wa.gov.au>

Subject: Submission to Enquire into Regional Airfares in Western Australia

I moved back to Kalgoorlie in 2011 as my father was seriously ill and I naively thought I would be able to frequently pop back to Perth to visit friends and attend concerts and other events. It's only a one hour flight. The cost of airfares has made this impossible.

Let me give you some examples:

In 2012 I had tickets to go to a Florence and the Machine Concert at Burswood Dome. I was planning to drive down the day of the concert, however late in the afternoon the day before I heard that there had been a chemical spill on Great Eastern Highway and the road was closed. No estimate was given as to when it would reopen. I had no alternative but to fly down and catch the train home. It cost me over \$500 on airfares.

This year I have unfortunately lost 2 close friends and wanted to attend their funerals. It has cost me \$700 each time. I am flying next weekend to attend the Wallabies match in Perth. I have to fly because I can't get time off work. That is costing me another \$600. There will be no holidays this year because this has cost me all my savings - for a one hour flight where we get a snack or at best, a muffin. Just for comparison - I flew to Singapore last December for \$600 return, a flight of some five hours with full meal service.

My uncle passed away in Sydney, also this year. My mother cannot travel without assistance. It would have cost us over \$1000 just to get to Perth, and then the same again to get to Sydney. We had to make the difficult decision not to attend his funeral.

My siblings do not come to Kalgoorlie to visit my mother. The airfares are too high, and they holiday in Bali or Thailand instead.

People who have to travel for medical treatment (and their families) also face huge travel costs. Yes, I am aware of the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme. However I am also aware of people who have been instructed by their doctor that they must fly because they cannot sit for extended periods, only to have the PATS staff insist that they come by train. Quite often these people just pay for their own flights because it's easier than trying to argue with the staff.

I have seen people comment that we have the option to drive. This is not always possible if you need to travel at short notice, or can't take a lot of time off work. In the past I have driven down on the day of a show and then been too tired to attend. Not to mention that the road is appalling - we are just getting overtaking lanes. On one trip I had to pull over between Southern Cross and Coolgardie because I thought I had blown a tyre. I hadn't, it was just the terrible vibration from the road surface on what is supposed to be a major National highway.

Of course the other alternative is the train, which is often late (for the evening trains) and you get to enjoy 2 day old sandwiches because they don't take on board any fresh food in Kalgoorlie.

There is a lot of talk about boosting tourism in the Goldfields region but I cannot see how that can practically be achieved when it is so expensive to fly here.

I think that a lot of Goldfields residents would have similar stories to share, but unfortunately the public hearing was scheduled during working hours which effectively prevents many people from attending. I hope that this enquiry can produce an effective reduction in the costs of airfares for regional residents. Thank you for your time.

Regards
Samantha Duddy

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It is often said that before you die your life passes before your eyes. It is in fact true. It's called living.

Terry Pratchett