



The Old Fliers' Group

Attached to the Royal Aero Club of WA (Inc).

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Bulletin No 100, April 2013

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the group will be on:

Friday 26th April

Parking

Jandakot Airport Holdings has arranged free parking for the OFG in Car Park No 1 (the normal one) between the hours of 10.30 am and 2.30 pm.

100th Meeting

The one hundredth meeting of the group attracted a record 115 members and guests. Our speakers gave an informed and accurate snapshot of their area of expertise – both focussed on Perth Airport.

Keynote Speaker

Our *Keynote Speaker* was Geoffrey Thomas, author, editor and publisher. Among other things, he is Aviation Editor for the *West Australian Newspaper*, Publisher and Executive Editor of *Airline Review International*, and Airlines Editor for *Australian Aviation*. His talk was on “The Extraordinary Growth of Perth Airport”, and he asked the question, “Will it ever be ready?”

During his delivery, Geoffrey produced facts and figures which showed that the growth over the last fifty years has been close to 10% per annum – that’s about double the world average. In more recent years, the growth in fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) traffic, on top of the increase in domestic and overseas passengers, has added to the pattern of expansion. There have been occasions when the airport has handled close to 500 movements per day. This staggering number makes Perth Airport one of the busiest and fastest growing capital city airports in Australia – it places enormous pressure on air traffic controllers, pilots, airline staff and maintenance facilities, as well as the passengers.

All facilities are extended to the utmost between the hours of 5.30 and 7.30 each weekday morning – there are no more departure time slots available. Delays can be costly – a 30-minute delay of a 100-passenger aircraft can cost a mining company tens of thousands of dollars.

Overnight freighters from the East arrive before the early morning rush and about 50% of their load is transhipped to the mine sites in the north – by air.

The message delivered by Geoffrey was that the airline growth has out-stripping the airport growth. He said that the solution will not come from bigger aircraft as the runways at the majority of mining sites in our north are not designed for such traffic. The answer is a third runway at Perth – but when will it happen?

Supplementary Speaker

Peter Martinovich, as *Supplementary Speaker*, told us about the proposed rail link to Perth Airport. Peter is a long-time member of the Royal Aero Club and is Executive Director of *Infrastructure Planning and Land Services* with the railways, and is working on the proposed airport link with the *Project Definition Plan*.

He gave an overview of the best option available to the State Government and outlined the route, which involved a spur line from Bayswater. It required the resumption of a large tract of land, a bridge over the Swan River, an underpass at Great Eastern Highway, a station at Airport West, a tunnel under the main runway to connect to the current International Terminal, and an extension to the suburb of High Wycombe.

Apart from providing a fast link from the airport to the city, Peter said that the proposed line needs to effectively connect with the current metropolitan transport network so that it can be of value to the wider community, both now and into the future. He discussed a number of the engineering problems and alternatives that could affect the overall cost of the project. All who attended came away with a clear and up-to-date understanding of the issues involved.

Both speakers were asked a number of wide-ranging questions at the end of their talks.

Sincere thanks go to both speakers for making our 100th meeting a most memorable one.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Friday 26 April, the day after Anzac Day. Our *Speaker of the Day* will be Murray Fletcher who will discuss a painting titled "Strange Bedfellows". It represents an incredible incident that occurred between a WW II P-38 American pilot named Fredric Arnold, and a Luftwaffe pilot named Karl Muenster. Murray has corresponded with Frederic Arnold for twenty-one years.

Our *Mini Speaker* will be Ken Pittman. His presentation will be on the 1962 Farnborough Air Show – which he attended. Ken has a good collection of tales and memorabilia associated with the show.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan