

28 September 2007

Councillor Tony Northey
Maroochy Shire Council
PO Box 76
Nambour QLD 4560

Dear Tony

Re: Airport Master Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the community briefing recently following the Maroochy Shire Council's approval of the Sunshine Coast Airport Master Plan. The Airport Management should be congratulated for the development of this revised document following the public consultation on the initial draft document. We are pleased that the Management and Council have responded to the public consultation.

As you know, our principal interest is in the early development of the East / West runway. We acknowledge that the East / West runway is now firmly in the planning frame and that no further substantial development commitments will be made to the North / South runway. While it is noted that there is the possibility of some work on a parallel taxi-way for the North / South runway, our recommendation would be that this should not proceed at all but this small project should be dropped in favour of the earliest development of the East / West runway.

While the East / West runway is now within the time frame of the Master Plan, it is noted that the plan does not have it constructed until during the third five-year stage i.e. for more than 10 years. This is still not an acceptable time frame and community concerns with noise and safety will continue to be serious political issues until there is a firm commitment to the earliest construction of that runway. On this point, I noted that both Management and Council representatives expressed their intention for the earliest possible construction subject to completion of the necessary engineering, environmental and commercial studies. This was indicated to be seven years from now. I encourage all stakeholders to examine carefully the critical path items to see if this time can be brought forward – five years would be a good target to aim for.

It is acknowledged that the Master Plan does not include the business case for the East / West runway and that this will now be examined in detail, including the financing options. In developing the business case, it will be important to include a "Macro" case that takes account of the benefit to MSC from the enhanced rate revenue that will flow from increased property valuations under the current North / South approach and take-off zones. I would expect that this benefit, which will accrue to MSC rather than the Airport Corporation, would be quite significant.

The new Master Plan is a great step forward and we look forward to continued progress. We will continue to watch with interest.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Billard
President