

Red Tape

19/3/19

**RETAINING A VIABLE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY WHILE REGULATING  
FOR IMPROVED WATER QUALITY IN THE WAIKATO.**

There is deep concern among Drainage District Representatives on Waikato Regional Council Drainage Advisory Subcommittees that the increasingly restrictive regulatory environment Drainage Districts are having to operate in is adding so much unproductive decision making delay and administrative cost, that the financial viability of many Drainage Districts has now come into question. Not only that but rising administrative costs is leaving insufficient funds for maintenance works.

There is a lot written about the impact of New Zealand's livestock industries on water quality and global warming. However when I look ahead at the most logical strategies New Zealand needs to adopt to address both these issues, they depend on maintaining the economic viability of the farming industry. For example how is this country going to continue to enjoy its first world standard of living that enables us to purchase the electric cars, solar panels and wind turbines that are needed to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels if we are smothering our most important tradable sector with regulation.

It is not the fault of the Waikato Regional Council (W.R.C.) that the Resource Management Act (R.M.A.) is overdue for reform and is acting as an expensive handbrake on efforts to renew Drainage District Resource Consents such as the Lake Waikare Northern Outlet Control Gate or to bring down house prices in NZ's major cities.

The Drainage Districts of the Lower Waikato see themselves presently in the same position as the small operator regional aviation industry of Australia in 1990, when a new Civil Aviation Safety Authority was set up with the singular mandate to -

"REGARD SAFETY AS THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION"

This is because in my view, the N.Z Resource Management Act and the Waikato Regional Council's Plan Change 1 also appears to have the same singular mandate -

"TO REGARD THE WATER QUALITY OF RIVERS AND LAKES AS THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION"

The eventual outcome of the Australian 1990 Civil Aviation Safety Authority's singular focus on safety, over a 15 year period, was the closing of many regional airfields serving the smaller rural towns and the near collapse of the small aircraft operator by the early 2000's, with major ramifications for the flying doctor service and the pilot training industry. (a halving of the number of pilots being trained in Australia over 15 years). Nobody can say that the pilot training industry of Australia was a sunset industry, as over that same period, a growing pilot shortage ended up having to be filled with overseas trained pilots. The small scale aircraft operator was just being smothered by RED TAPE from an Aviation Safety Authority with a singular focus on safety.

The danger the Drainage District Representatives see is that the Resource Management Act in its present form, going hand in hand with Plan Change 1 will eventually lead to the collapse of many farming businesses in the Waikato and the prediction is that the first to go will be in the Drainage Districts.

The Australian Government's response to the near collapse of their small operator Aviation industry has been to change the mandate of their Civil Aviation safety Authority to-

"BALANCE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SAFETY IN AIR NAVIGATION WITH THE NEED FOR AN EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE AUSTRALIAN AVIATION INDUSTRY".

This I believe is the same reform that is needed to the Resource Management Act and Plan Change 1. in N.Z./ the Waikato-

"TO BALANCE ACHIEVING THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF RIVER AND LAKE WATER QUALITY WITH THE NEED FOR AN EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE N.Z./ WAIKATO FARMING INDUSTRY".

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# THE AUSTRALIAN

FOR THE INFORMED AUSTRALIAN

## Prioritise safety in a viable general aviation industry

*Pilot training is collapsing under the burden of regulation*

General aviation in Australia — charter, private and business flight operations, training, maintenance, aerial agriculture and aerial ambulance, excluding major airlines and defence — is on an alarming decline. Despite our population increasing by six million from 1990 to 2015, business and private flying hours declined 42 per cent during the same timeframe. From 2001 to 2015, the number of general aviation pilots in Australia dropped by a third, from 26,000 to 18,000. Flying training has declined by 30 per cent in five years. In December, we reported that foreign pilots were to be allowed into Australia on temporary work visas to plug shortages that had led to the cancellation of scheduled regional flights and the grounding of aircraft.

Faced with the parlous state of an essential industry, especially in regional and rural areas, Infrastructure and Transport Minister Michael McCormack should revisit the reforms his predecessor, Barnaby Joyce, had endorsed, with the backing of opposition transport spokesman Anthony Albanese, to cut regulatory costs and pointless red tape. In February, Andrew Burrell writes today, Mr Joyce and Mr Albanese agreed to remove a part of the Civil Aviation Act that requires the Civil Aviation Safety Authority to “regard safety as the most important consideration” in regulating the industry. Under the changes, CASA instead would be required to balance the “highest level of safety in air navigation” with the need for “an efficient and sustainable Australian aviation industry”. The sector supports

the proposed change and wants it legislated before the next election.

Safety, of course, must always be authorities' main consideration. But as businessman and former CASA and Civil Aviation Authority chairman Dick Smith said at a recent aviation summit at Wagga Wagga, NSW, only a viable industry can be a safe industry. Parts of the general aviation sector, Mr Smith said, were close to collapse after years of bad decisions by bureaucrats. He cited the problems of flying schools, which were going broke under the burden of additional costs, paperwork and bureaucracy. Some had been sold at bargain rates to Chinese companies, which were training mainly Chinese nationals. China, which will need an extra 110,000 pilots by 2035, relies on other countries for training because of its heavy smog, military-controlled airspace and a lack of English-speaking instructors. A better-managed general aviation sector in Australia would be capitalising on such demand. Instead, the cost of pilot training for Australians has soared, making it unaffordable for most young people, apart from those with wealthy parents.

In December, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association chief executive Ben Morgan called on CASA to allow independent instructors, similar to those who train most US pilots, to play a greater role in training. To assess the situation and arrive at the best decision in the interests of taxpayers and the industry, Mr McCormack needs to look beyond bureaucrats and consult widely with experienced pilots, training school owners and companies.