

Govt must reject shunting regional passengers to Bankstown

23rd December, 2011 THE Federal Labor Government must immediately reject proposals in its leaked report on a site for Sydney's second airport to designate Bankstown as the 'hub' for all regional flights.

"We will not stand for it," Leader of The Nationals and Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Warren Truss declared today. "Treating regional passengers as second class travelers will not be tolerated.

"Under the proposal, regional passengers would have to commute from Bankstown to the main airport terminals to catch connecting flights. Bankstown cannot even accommodate the regional aircraft types currently in use and would require new runways and passenger facilities.

"That is not a solution, it's a slap in the face.

"Sydney is not just Australia's major international gateway, it is also the capital of NSW and, as such, people living across the state are entitled to fair and reasonable access to their capital city airport.

"In government the Coalition enshrined in legislation reserved slots for regional aircraft at Sydney Airport. On 17 September 2010 Minister Albanese committed Labor to retaining them as an election pledge. Reneging would be yet another broken promise from this government.

"The report is said to recommend that a second airport be built at Nepean, some 50km from the CBD, just west of the abandoned Badgerys Creek site. This site will face all the same inherent problems of Bdgerys Creek. A second airport will not be viable for generations, costing billions to construct and service, with taxpayers likely to foot hefty subsidies.

"The existing Sydney Airport is able to receive more passengers, including from regional areas, as airlines boost their fleets with larger planes and improved navigation systems.

"Many international flights use Sydney as a hub with passengers' final destinations being in other parts of the country. Increasing direct services to Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra, Newcastle, etc., can also take pressure off the growth in Sydney.

"Building a second airport so close to Badgerys Creek will require Labor to jettison another election promise when they ruled out a second airport site in the Sydney Basin.

"These leaks just two sleeps from Christmas Day appear to be part of a cynical Labor softening-up strategy – but we will not let them off the hook.

“It is staggering to think this process, which Labor started two years ago and is months behind schedule, has come up with such an unhealthy prescription for travellers.”

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