



## **District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

**SEPTEMBER 27, 2017**

#### **Port Lincoln Airport - comings and goings**

The Port Lincoln Airport continues to be a hive of activity with a number of activities and comings and goings.

District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula Mayor Julie Low said the Council was pleased to have now completed resealing work at the airport with Fulton Hogan undertaking the work on the Taxiway and Apron during the past week.

This completes a \$500,000-plus reseal project, which included the main runway which was sealed in March this year.

Mayor Low said Council was extremely grateful to the state government's Support Regional Aviation funding program, which provided 50 per cent of the project funding.

Mayor Low said financial management of the airport remained a priority for the Council, noting that passenger numbers at the airport have declined from 190,000 to 175,000 over the last two years.

This has had a negative impact on the airport budget to the tune of in excess of \$100,000 per year.

The eight per cent decline in passengers is in line with the trend in regional aviation across Australia in recent years.

Mayor Low said that Council has welcomed Regional Express recently introducing mid-day flights from Port Lincoln to Adelaide, noting this adds opportunity for half day trips to and from Adelaide, as well as opening up a new opportunity for people to visit friends and relatives.

She also noted that Qantaslink has shown commitment to its operations in South Australia, under pinned by its Adelaide to Port Lincoln leg.

Council has budgeted to make a small operating loss of \$7000 at the Port Lincoln Airport for the 2017/18 year.

However within this budget Council has made allowance to repay \$450,000 of debt during 2017/18.

Mayor Low said this was in line with the long-term financial planning strategy to repay all airport debt over the next seven years related to the \$13m terminal and car park upgrade works, which were completed in 2013.

To ensure financial sustainability for the airport Council has made modest increases to both the passenger levy and the car parking charges.

The passenger levy paid by airlines operating Registered Passenger Transport services between Port Lincoln and Adelaide will be increased by \$0.50 per passenger from January 1, 2018, while car parking charges have been increased to \$4 per day, noting that four hour free parking is allowed to enable drop off and pick up of passengers at no cost.

Mayor Low said the airport charges remain on the lower end of industry standards, as Council makes every effort to minimise the impact on passenger ticket pricing from airport costs.

“Car park charging is aimed at ensuring a contribution is made by users towards maintenance and upgrades to car parking facilities, while ensuring that car parking spaces are available to the general public,” she said.

Council has this year budgeted to spend a small percentage of passenger tax on marketing and promotion to raise the profile of Port Lincoln and Eyre Peninsula as a destination.

This initiative has been discussed with Regional Express and Qantaslink, and Council aims to work with the South Australian Tourism Commission to enhance experience-based marketing campaigns to highlight our abundant attractions and visitor experiences.

Airport Manager Barrie Rogers concluded his employment with Council on Friday, September 29.

“Council thanks Barrie for his contribution to the Port Lincoln Airport over the last four years and wishes him well in his new role at Parafield Airport in Adelaide,” Mayor Low said.

Council has restructured its airport staffing model, and welcomes Peter O’Rielly as the new Airport Operations Manager.

“Peter comes with a wealth of experience in the airport industry, most recently at the Kalgoorlie airport in Western Australia.”

**Media contact:**

Rod Pearson - 8676 0400

Chief Executive Officer

District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula