



DUBBO REGIONAL  
COUNCIL

## MAYORAL MINUTE: Qantas Group Pilot Academy

**AUTHOR:** Mayor  
**REPORT DATE:** 26 February 2018  
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To the Council  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Office of the Mayor  
Civic Administration Building  
Church Street, Dubbo

Last week, Qantas announced that there would be a number of flight reductions across regional Australia. These changes included a reduction of 8 flights to Dubbo City Regional Airport. Whilst the City still has over 70 weekly flights on the Sydney route it is disappointing to have a reduction in any airline services.

Airline schedules do change based on airlines own commercial reasons. As a Council operating a regional airport, it is critical that we work with any airlines to ensure that our regional community is getting flights to desired destinations, but also that there is a consistent delivery of services from airlines. On regular occasions, Council staff met with all of our airline partners to discuss concerns and opportunities to ensure good communication channels are open.

Qantas has attributed the change to their regional flight schedule on pilot and plane shortages. The company plans to address its pilot shortage by setting up what could be the southern hemisphere's biggest flight academy.

On Thursday 22 February 2018, Qantas Chief executive Alan Joyce announced that the carrier will spend up to \$20 million on the project in the 2019 financial year and is seeking additional financial support from the states and territories. The training Academy will eventually train 500 pilots a year and will be built in a regional location.

As a regional airport that is undertaking significant capital investment, including the current 10M Runway Strengthening and lighting upgrade, in addition to an \$8M GA Upgrade and Areomedical Facility project, Dubbo City Regional Airport is certainly positioned to put its hat in the ring for consideration for the Qantas Group Pilot Academy.

This training facility would be an ideal complement to the Royal Flying Doctor current infrastructure investment plans for pilot training within the airport precinct, in addition to existing aircraft engineering and maintenance services operating from the Airport.

The Dubbo region is also in a unique position of being able to offer Qantas the opportunity to utilise Dubbo City Regional Airport, Bodangora Airstrip and Narromine Airport to support the delivery of training programs.

In operating one of Australia's leading regional airports, Dubbo Regional Council has a responsibility to not only capitalise on the job creation and economic opportunities associated with such a facility being established in our region, but to also support airlines to deliver services that regional communities need. The proposed Qantas training facility will sure up the supply of pilots for many airlines and ensure consistent air services to regional communities across Australia including the Dubbo region.

I therefore recommend that Council make representations to the Federal Member for Parkes, Mark Coulton MP and the State Member for Dubbo, the Hon. Troy Grant MP regarding Dubbo Regional Council's interest in pursuing this incredible opportunity.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. That Council write to Qantas Chief executive Alan Joyce to express Council's interest in supporting the establishment of the Qantas Group Pilot Academy at the Dubbo City Regional Airport.**
- 2. That Council make representations to the Federal Member for Parkes, Mark Coulton MP and the State Member for Dubbo, the Hon Troy Grant MP, regarding the establishment of the Qantas Group Pilot Academy in the Dubbo Regional Council Local Government area.**
- 3. That the General Manager be authorised to submit a business case to Qantas for the establishment of the Qantas Group Pilot Academy at the Dubbo City Regional Airport.**

*Councillor Ben Shields*  
Mayor