

REGIONAL AIRPORTS — SECURITY MEASURES

**324. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the federal government's announcement about new security measures at Australian airports.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what impact this will have on Western Australia's regional airports?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house concerning the ability of these airports to fund the ongoing costs of these measures?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

I thank the member for Gosnells for the question.

- (1)–(2) As part of the recent federal government budget, changes to domestic aviation security were announced. Funds were allocated for the installation of improved screening equipment, but no funds were allocated for capital improvements or ongoing costs to adapt to these new security measures. This issue has been highlighted to me over previous months. In February, I wrote to the federal minister and said, "Look, we support increasing security and the need to protect our air travel, but it imposes significant costs on our airports and in particular on air travel." We have just had a significant inquiry—I again thank the Economics and Industry Standing Committee for all its work—to try to address the significant cost pressures of domestic or intrastate travel in WA. The concerns fed back to me through both airline operators in WA and councils is that these new costs could have an impact on the cost of air travel. We are talking about a potential further cost being imposed on intrastate travel in WA. I think they have legitimate concerns, and I have seen a lot of commentary in the past week about the potential impact that these new measures could have on the cost of air travel. I know you, Mr Speaker, have raised this issue with me previously in relation to Albany. We need to be trying to drive down costs and get our air travel costs and fares lower. Many people have said that this has come from out of the blue, but we are keen to see it addressed. I will meet with the federal ministers in Darwin tomorrow as part of the Transport and Infrastructure Council meeting, so I will take this up directly with the federal ministers to see how they can work with regional WA to make sure that we do not increase the cost of air travel in Western Australia.