



South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **SUBSIDISE AIR SERVICES OR RISK MISSING OUT ON MINERAL WEALTH, PEAK BODY WARNS**

South Australia's strong mining sector growth will be hampered unless State and Federal governments subsidise regional air services, the SA Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME) warned today.

The State's peak mining lobby group says current services to regional towns including Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Coober Pedy and Wudinna fall "far short of the services necessary for these centres to be effective staging grounds or fly-in, fly-out destinations for mining projects".

SACOME Chief Executive, Mr Phil Sutherland, said the mining sector was calling on governments to review current regional air service arrangements to ensure that services more closely match industry requirements.

"SACOME believes that State and Federal governments should subsidise these vital air service routes," Mr Sutherland said.

"It is almost unbelievable that, in 2006, a large regional centre like Port Pirie – with a population of 16,000 people and the capacity to play a major role in the social and economic development of SA's mid-north – has no scheduled air service," he said.

"Wudinna is the gateway to the Central Eyre Peninsula region and the minerals rich Gawler Craton, and has no air service. Coober Pedy does not have the benefit of a daily service and Port Augusta had no air service for four months of the last financial year.

"This creates a huge gap in regional transport. As a result, mining and oil and gas companies are chartering flights with greater regularity, adding costs to their operations. The money would be better spent on employing local people.

"Air services are as essential to conducting business in remote areas as other infrastructure like road, rail and port transport links.

"Compared with the city, people living in regional areas do it tough. We should not underestimate the contribution they make to the social and economic fabric of South Australia. They are deserving of additional government support.

“The state government subsidises bus, train and tram services in metropolitan Adelaide to the tune of \$40 million a year. Financial support sufficient to bring a scheduled air service to Port Pirie and other regional towns is long overdue.”

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

**Phil Sutherland, Chief Executive SA Chamber of Mines and Energy**

**Tel: (08) 8373 9601 or Mob: 0402440339**