

AusALPA Media Release:

16 September 2020

SHOPPING CENTRES MORE IMPORTANT THAN AVIATION SAFETY:

Australia's Professional Pilots respond to the ATSB investigation update into the approval process for Bulla Road Precinct at Essendon Fields Airport

On the 21st of February 2017, a Beechcraft King Air crashed into a building that is part of the Essendon Airport Bulla Road retail precinct, tragically killing all five occupants on board. This accident has put a spotlight on why a shopping centre was built closer to one of Essendon Airport's runways than international standards allow.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) has released a progress update to its investigation: "The approval processes for the Bulla Road Precinct Retail Outlet Centre", Investigation Number: AI-2018-010.

AusALPA believes that deep and latent safety problems exist in the system of airports regulation where aviation safety considerations are made secondary to development objectives. AusALPA asserts that the regulatory system is flawed due to an inappropriate bias that mandates that development proposals or airspace penetrations *must* be granted unless almost impossible to achieve risk thresholds are breached.

AusALPA hopes that the final report also addresses other related matters that have occurred at Essendon since the commencement of this investigation,

AusALPA calls for the establishment of a high level Government Review to address the safety and economic regulation issues of Australia's airports with an aim to genuinely reform airspace protection and other operational safeguards at Australia's airports.

Background

AusALPA is the Member Association for Australia and a key member of the International Federation of Airline Pilot Associations (IFALPA) which represents over 100,000 pilots in 100 countries. We represent more than 7,500 professional pilots within Australia on safety and technical matters.

AusALPA is committed to protecting and advancing aviation safety standards and our membership places a very strong expectation of rational, risk and evidence-based safety behaviour on our government agencies and processes.

--- END ---