

STATION	Perth 6PR
PROGRAM	Howard Sattler
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SUMMARY	Federal Minister for Transport Warren Truss has today announced that security upgrades are planned at regional airports across Australia. Interview with Norman Shanks, aviation security expert.

HOWARD SATTLER - PRESENTER:

Okay, well we talked with a gentleman some time ago ... in fact, he did the right thing and pulled up beside a ... I think a motorway over in Europe or somewhere for us, to talk with us about security, particularly at our airports. And today, it's been announced by the Federal Transport Minister Warren Truss that upgrades are going to occur at regional airports across Australia.

In Western Australia, the airports are Albany, Kalbarri, Meekatharra, Leonora and Jandakot. And they're going to be upgraded. Now, the overall cost of fifteen airports is four point six million dollars. That's across the whole spectrum.

Norman Shanks is my guest. He's an aviation security expert; he's worked in places like Heathrow and all over the planet, basically. Hello, Norman, nice to talk with you again.

NORMAN SHANKS – AVIATION SECURITY EXPERT:

Good afternoon Howard. Good to speak to you.

SATTLER:

Thanks for joining us. All right, well, four point six million dollars to fix up security at fifteen regional airports in Australia: Is that going to be enough?

SHANKS:

Ha, well, you know the airports better than I do, but I think that's a little thin.

SATTLER:

A bit thin?

SHANKS:

A bit thin. I gather that, from reading some of the press reports, they're looking at areas such as fencing, lighting ...

SATTLER:

Closed-circuit TV, access control, and those sort of things ...

SHANKS:

Yeah.

SATTLER:

... yeah.

SHANKS:

Yeah. What about people screening and baggage screening? Are they looking at that sort of stuff, because that's one of the fundamentals in airports, whether in major or regional airports. Because many of these regional airports feed into the big ones.

If you go back to a scenario, such as the Pan Am 103, where the bomb was supposed to have come in from a smaller airport at Malta, through Frankfurt, then into Heathrow, the problem starts at the beginning. So, in Australia the problem could well start here in the regional airports.

SATTLER:

Well, there's no mention of that. It just says, and I'll read it to you, transport minister said the upgrades would increase confidence at regional airports. He said, transport security programs were tailored to local conditions and funding would help regional airports increase and improve security measures such as fencing, lighting, closed-circuit television, and access control.

And I can just tell you, I mean, Albany Airport down in the south of the state for a start, they have planes, several planes, going up to Perth Airport every day. And they're going to spend a total of a hundred and thirty thousand here.

SHANKS:

Okay. And I guess that passengers coming in from Albany will just come straight into the (indistinct) to secure parts of Perth, and then transfer to other flights.

SATTLER:

Interstate or international, you're right.

SHANKS:

Yep, yep. Well, you know, security's got to start right at the beginning. I think what they need to do is conduct a pretty in-depth security review at these places, and start off with the basics, such as screening people and baggage.

(Indistinct) things, yeah, okay, it's an issue, but it's something that can be covered by making sure that the people on the ground, the baggage handlers, the loaders, the engineers, everyone on the apron keep an eye out for people that shouldn't be there.

At small airports, that's an awful lot easier than it is at larger ones, because you tend to know the people that should be in the secure areas, so you'd identify someone strange. But I would spend my money on screening technology, of people and baggage, rather than CCTV perimeters.

SATTLER:

Yeah, because whatever happens about ... you know, like the perimeter fencing or whatever, you ... it's actually what goes aboard the aircraft that's the threat, isn't it?

SHANKS:

Absolutely. And most airports, where they have secure areas ... in Europe they call them critical paths, and that doesn't (coughs) – excuse me - start at the perimeter,

that starts in a smaller area surrounding the loading of the aircraft, and the secure parts of the terminal.

So, the perimeter is a safety fence more so than the security fence in most places.

SATTLER:

Yeah, and I mean it ... when we're talking about country airports too, you can have a terrific security fence or perimeter fence, but I mean some of the parts of those airports are, you know, sort of bordering on bush and all that sort of thing. You can cut a hole in it no problem.

SHANKS:

Well, exactly. And a lot of these regional airports are serving the mining community, where getting hold of some explosives is probably a lot easier than it is in Perth, or Melbourne, or Sydney. That's the risk, you know. That's what I'd be looking at, so the first thing I would do is get an independent team down there to look at what exists, and come up with a plan for each airport. The basic part of that would be screening, screening of passengers and the baggage.

SATTLER:

Yeah, well that's what you've been calling for, and the baggage thing was most ... that occupied most of our discussion last time around, and I don't know that much has been done about that since then.

Norman, a pleasure to catch up with you again, and thank you for giving us your valuable time.

SHANKS:

Okay, it's a pleasure Howard. Thanks. Bye.

SATTLER:

Norman Shanks. He's an aviation security expert who should be listened to. He's had experience all around the world with that sort of thing. Shortly we're going to talk

about another aspect of this whole anti-terrorism thing, and concern from the legal eagles in this country that the reforms have gone too far, and there may be a bit of sneakiness involved as well.

END OF SEGMENT