



Up and away: Funding for five Mid West airports was welcomed by Agricultural Region MLC Brian Ellis pictured with Communities Minister Robyn McSweeney at a bush airport.

\$400,000 for Mid West airports

Air upgrades

AIRPORTS in the Mid West will receive more than \$400,000 to upgrade facilities as part of the Regional Airports Development Scheme, Transport Minister Simon O'Brien announced this week.

The Murchison was the big winner in the region, receiving a grant

of \$155,000 for sealing and lighting of its runway and taxiway.

Kalbarri airport received \$110,000 for its seal runway and apron area; Cue's airfield \$75,000 for animal fencing; Dongara \$56,500 to upgrade airstrip lighting; and Wiluna \$14,400 for new security fencing.

Irwin Shire President Robyn Parsons said Dongara was "over the moon" over the funding, as the airstrip lighting had experienced technical difficulties for 12 months.

"The Royal Flying Doctor is the one who mainly flies in at night; this will save them from having to go to Geraldton

if something urgent happens," she said.

"The lights were experiencing technical problems so when the Royal Flying Doctor was coming we had to send the ranger down to make sure it was all working; it was an ongoing problem."

Agricultural Region MLC Brian Ellis also welcomed the upgrade.

"I am extremely conscious of the role regional airports play in keeping communities safe with RFDS services, evacuating people in emergencies, providing remote areas with mail and supply services, and generating tourism income," he said.

The Regional Airports Development Scheme is part of Royalties for Regions.

Airports around the state received \$6.73 million in funding for upgrades.

Mr Ellis said it was the biggest funding in the State's aviation history.

Regional Development and Lands Minister Brendon Grylls said the funding for airports would help make regional communities more robust and encourage visitors to regional areas.

"Regional airports will continue to play a vital part in supporting businesses and tourism in our beautiful State," he said.

— Megan Bailey