



Bush airports fly high on biggest funding in State's history

COUNTRY airports will benefit from \$6.73 million State-wide to fund upgrades.

Agricultural Region MLC Brian Ellis, who travels extensively through the Wheatbelt and Mid West, said the amount for the 2009-10 funding round is the highest in the history of regional airport infrastructure development in Western Australia, and provides for improvements at 30 sites.

Mr Ellis said allocations to Mid West and Wheatbelt areas include: Cue - \$75,000 to install animal exclusion fencing, Dongara - \$56,500 to upgrade airstrip lighting, Kalbarri - \$110,000 to enrich seal runway and apron area, Murchison - \$155,000 for sealing and lighting facilities of runway and taxiway, Wiluna - \$14,400 for installation of new security fencing, Cunderdin - \$289,800 to grade the runway, install markers and markings to register the aerodrome, and Wyalkatchem - \$1.8million for runway, facilities, grounds and terminal developments.

The funding comes from the Royalties for Regions program and the Regional Airports Development Scheme which have provided about \$5 million and \$2 million respectively.

The largest grants were offered to Wyalkatchem (\$1.8 million) and Newman (\$1.4 million) for substantial upgrades to the runway and terminal facilities.

"I prefer to drive between country centres whenever possible so that I can maximize my personal contact and keep an eye on the electorate at grass roots level," Mr Ellis said.

"However, I rely on air travel for quick trips, to keep

a regular presence at my Geraldton office, and to reach the outlying areas of my region.

"I am also extremely conscious of the role regional airports play in keeping communities safe with Royal Flying Doctor Services, evacuating people in emergencies, providing remote areas with mail and supply services, and generating tourism income."



Airfields funding: Agricultural Region MLC Brian Ellis and Communities Minister Robyn McSweeney use regional airstrips, which have received a funding boost.