

DON KENDELL - THE MAN

BEHIND THE AIRLINE

The success of Kendell Airlines, one of Australia's largest regional carriers, is due largely to the love of flying, persistence and business acumen of its founder and managing director ~~Don~~ Don Kendell.

It was on 21 June 1967 that Don Kendell and his wife Eilish set up Premiair Aviation with two Piper Cherokee aircraft. This was the beginning of Kendell Airlines.

In a business notorious for a very high failure rate, Kendell Airlines has prospered and grown while many other companies have come and gone.

Don ~~Kendell~~'s individual style and integrity has earned him enormous respect and admiration throughout the airline industry.

He has a simple philosophy: Offer a reliable, frequent service at the best possible price. He would also be the first to admit that there is no room for sentiment in the airline business - if a route does not pay then you cease to operate it. It is a yardstick that has stood Kendell in good stead.

Don ~~Kendell~~ was bitten by the flying bug when he was a schoolboy. He started learning to fly when a 19-year-old at Wagga Wagga and soon gained his private licence.

After a period in the RAAF Reserves, successful barnstorming trips around western Victoria and a round Australia odyssey looking for flying work, Don set off for England in 1955.

There he sat for and passed his commercial pilots licence and started working for British European Airways flying Herons, DC3s and later turbo-prop Viscounts. While in the United Kingdom he met and married Eilish Burke.

He returned to Australia and farming in 1959 but the aviation bug soon got a hold on him again. In 1965 he and his wife moved to Wagga Wagga. After failing to have success with a share in a small charter operation, in 1967 Don and Eilish established Premiair Aviation which later changed its name to Kendell Airlines.

In 1978 Kendell moved into the pressurised airline field with the purchase of its first Metro II and in 1985 its first Saab 340 state of the art regional airliner was delivered to boost capacity. This represented a major step forward in aircraft size and technology.

The next major step forward was in 1986 when Ansett closed Airlines of South Australia and Kendell moved in to fill the gap. This move doubled the Kendell network overnight and additional Saab aircraft were added to the fleet.

Kendell now operates 14 aircraft, Saab 340s and Metro, to major regional centres from Melbourne, including Albury, Wagga Wagga, Mildura, Portland, Mount Gambier, Merimbula, Cooma and the north west coast of Tasmania where Kendell is the main operator of services into Burnie and Devonport, King Island and all major destinations in South Australia from Adelaide.

In 1993 Kendell became the first civilian operator in the world of the Metro 23 aircraft.

In 1992, Don Kendell was made a member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Queen's Birthday Honors for his services to aviation.