

# Ansett bidders seek key numbers

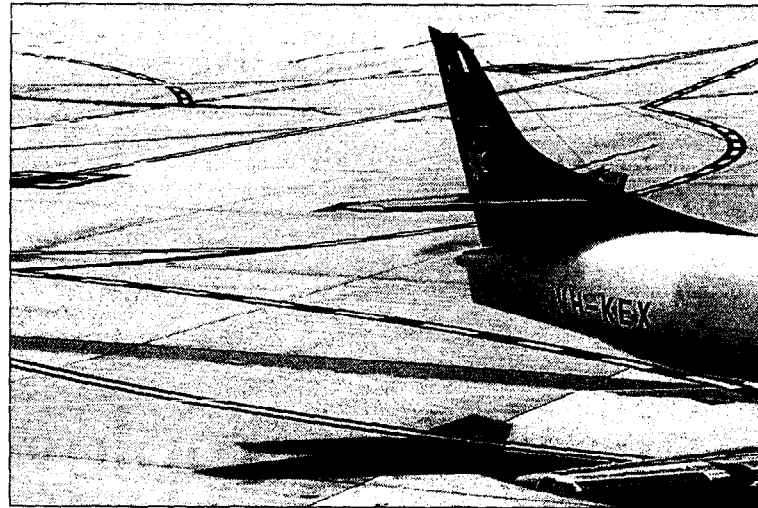
Jane Boyle, Katherine Towers  
and Mark Drummond

Lang Corporation and Virgin Blue could win access to key financial information about Ansett's assets that the airline's administrators have withheld for several weeks.

The administrators said yesterday they may seek guidance from the Federal Court to resolve a dispute over the requests for information by Lang Corp and Virgin Blue, which would enable them to make a counter-bid for Ansett's terminals.

The move follows approaches by Lang chief executive, Mr Chris Corrigan, to key Ansett creditors to try to win their support, despite the administrators' having reached agreement to sell the airline's mainline operations to the Tesna syndicate of Mr Lindsay Fox and Mr Solomon Lew.

Justice Alan Goldberg was told yesterday the dispute may be taken before the court as he again deferred a decision about whether to approve the terms of the Federal Government's \$195 million loan to cover



Ansett's assets still on the ground as further legal advice is sought. Photo: PETER BRAIG

Ansett redundancies. The administrators' lawyer, Mr Leon Zwier, said in court an "other party" was still seeking access to information about some Ansett assets which were included in the Tesna deal.

"Tesna has advised the adminis-

trators that it does not wish the administrators to give the other party access to the information," he said.

But after the hearing the administrator, Mr Mark Korda, said he was "not beholden to the purchaser necessarily" and was seeking legal

advice. "We are just trying to do the right thing by creditors. We are trustees of other people's money," he said.

Mr Korda pointed out that Lang had had access to the Ansett data rooms from October 1 to November 8. Tesna is also concerned about Virgin Blue, a would-be competitor, having access to the information.

There has been speculation that Lang could take legal action to try to win access to the information but Mr Korda said Lang had not threatened legal action.

Meanwhile, a consortium of about 20 West Australian investors, backed by broker ABN Amro Morgans, plans to float Skywest Airlines on the ASX in March or April after reaching an agreement-in-principle yesterday to buy Ansett's West Australian regional subsidiary for an undisclosed price.

The Airline Investments consortium includes former Skywest chief executive, Mr Bill Meeke, former Challenge Bank managing director, Mr Pat Ryan, and Esperance businessman, Mr Miles Cattle.