



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard 11 December 2001

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Australian Airlines, Cairns

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.57 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to be able to add my support today for the establishment of the Australian Airlines base in Cairns. The Cairns region is the third biggest holiday destination in Australia for international visitors and has an increasing level of domestic visitors. There were over two million domestic passenger movements into Cairns airport in the year ended 2000-01. Importantly, there were also over one million international passenger movements through the Cairns airport. The introduction of a new passenger airline servicing Asia and using Cairns as the hub can only enhance the position of Cairns and the tropical north as one of Australia's premier tourist destinations. The value of tourism to tropical north Queensland is estimated at \$1.2 billion per annum which makes it by far the biggest industry, employer and driver of the north Queensland economy.

This initiative by Qantas, supported by the Queensland government, can only add to the economic and social benefits for all of Queensland and certainly assists the Cairns region in maintaining momentum after the Ansett collapse and the events of 11 September. Even before the announcement of the Australian Airlines decision, the Cairns airport was directly responsible for the creation of 2,200 jobs and the flow-on effects support thousands of other jobs in the community. This announcement today is expected to lead to another 350 direct new jobs in Cairns and thousands of additional associated jobs in the tourism industry in Queensland and elsewhere. This will increase over time as the airline expands its services to meet growing demand. Significantly, many of the associated services such as training of staff, provisioning and maintenance will add more employment into the region.

Through the state's ownership of Cairns airport, the state government has been able to provide additional incentives to attract this project to Queensland. These incentives include reduced airport charges, construction of essential infrastructure including provision of a hangar and office accommodation, and rental concessions. The Cairns Port Authority will also contribute to promotion and marketing, which will have a major benefit not just for the new Australian Airlines but in promoting Cairns and the tropical north as a destination.

In September I established a task force to work closely with the Cairns Port Authority to examine the financial and operational issues at the airport, including the possibility of a single integrated terminal. This task force is close to finishing its report, and I look forward to considering its recommendations in the new year. This investment by the state government through its ownership of the Cairns Port Authority will reap long-term dividends at the port authority, in the region and throughout the state.
