

Question on Notice

No. 518

Asked on Wednesday 16 April 2008

MR KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (MR MICKEL) —

QUESTION:

Now that Queensland's largest privately owned airline, MacAir, has been sold—

- (1) Will the Government ensure that flights between Townsville and Mt Isa are maintained at current levels?
- (2) Will the Government commit to maintaining its subsidy for flights between Townsville and Mt Isa?

ANSWER:

(1) Following the announcement of the sale of MacAir, representatives from Queensland Transport met with the new owner, Mr Terry Byrt, to discuss the future of regional air services to rural and remote Queensland communities. I am advised that Mr Byrt gave a commitment to continue the operation of air services to these communities, without any change to the current minimal services levels. I am further advised that Mr Byrt also gave his undertaking to honour the contract between the Queensland Government and MacAir, which will ensure communities have access to essential medical, educational and business services in larger provincial and capital cities.

(2) In order to honour the next generation of air service contracts and ensure that air travel between Townsville and Mount Isa is kept at an affordable level for the next five years, the Queensland Government will continue to provide subsidies. I am advised that on Northern Route 2, which services Townsville to Mount Isa via Hughenden, Richmond and Julia Creek, 1887 passengers travelled in 2006-07, equating to a subsidy for each passenger of about \$680. The next generation air service contracts are effective from 1 April 2008 until 31 December 2013.