

Reference: A10035
Enquiries: Penny Holloway



13 June 2014

The Director
Standing Committee on State Development
Legislative Council
Parliament House
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Dear Director

Re: Inquiry into Regional Air Services

I refer to the letter of 3 June 2014 from the Hon Rick Colless MLC, Chair of the Standing Committee on State Development, regarding the Inquiry into regional aviation services.

The Lord Howe Island Board was asked for any comments on the evidence received, in particular as it relates to landing facilities at Lord Howe Island.

I have carefully reviewed the comments made by Mr John Gissing, CEO of Qantaslink, regarding the Lord Howe Island runway, and they are generally correct. Because of the size of the Island, the runway, which runs from one side of the Island to the other, is restricted in length. This means that the largest passenger aircraft capable of landing on the runway is the Dash 8-200. Qantaslink has a licence to operate the route to Lord Howe Island until March 2018, but beyond that date there is no certainty. This is of grave concern to the Lord Howe Island Board and the community. We are very hopeful that Qantaslink will continue to operate the route during the next licence period beyond March 2018.

As far as improvements to the runway are concerned, a complete runway reseal is being undertaken in winter 2015 at the cost of \$8 million, with funding from the State and Federal governments. Visitation to Lord Howe Island has improved with increased marketing efforts. As a consequence, passenger numbers have increased and it is expected that the threshold figure of 30,000 passenger movements will be reached for the 2013/2014 financial year, which as Mr Gissing advised the Inquiry is a viable payload.

Thank you for the opportunity of commenting on the evidence received in the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Penny Holloway
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

