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Tuesday 31st January 2012

BOEING 717 FLYING KANGAROO JETS INTO ROCKY

Today's announcement by Qantaslink to introduce Boeing 717 services to Rockhampton on 15th March has been hailed as great long awaited news by the region's peak tourism and economic development organisation, Capricorn Enterprise.

Two major airlines service Rockhampton Airport with an annual capacity of up to 750,000 passengers. Virgin Australia currently provides more capacity than Qantaslink, largely attributed to its provision of a jet service and direct flights to Sydney as well as Brisbane. Qantaslink today announced two new 115-seat B717 services in Queensland which will commence into Rockhampton Airport on the 15th March, providing 598 additional seats to Rockhampton, offering over 8,400 seats per week.

Domestic capacity into Rockhampton during February 2012 is 4,683 seats per week with Virgin Australia and 3,825 per week seats with Qantaslink. CEO of Capricorn Enterprise Mary Carroll said "Qantaslink have clearly been watching these figures and has made a very good business decision to keep up with competitive advantage".

"Considering the amount of corporate travel into the Rockhampton airport, it is absolutely essential that both major airlines provide jet services with business class capacity. This announcement is long overdue considering the competitive advantage Virgin Australia has held over Qantaslink over the past few months in regards to provision of jet services."

"The business community have been wanting a jet service by Qantaslink for some time and it is refreshing to see their call has been answered." she said

Rockhampton Airport is the 12th busiest airport in Australia, with capacity ramping up in neighbouring ports of Mackay, Gladstone and Emerald. "It is very important that the Council owned Rockhampton Airport also keeps up with the demands of its customers, as has Mackay airport, and investigates the provision of Business Class lounges for both major airlines" she said.

"I'd like the next announcement by Qantaslink now to be the provision of direct flights from Rockhampton to either Sydney or Melbourne!" she said

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MEDIA RELEASE