
MEDIA RELEASE

Date: 8 June 2011

For immediate release

AIRLINE ANNOUNCEMENT CREATES OPPORTUNITY FOR NT

The International Business Council of Chamber of Commerce NT has welcomed yesterday's announcement of a long term partnership between Singapore Airlines (SIA) and Virgin Australia and believes it presents a great opportunity for the Northern Territory to bring SIA back to Darwin.

'The alliance will connect Singapore Airlines' extensive international network with Virgin Australia's wide range of Australian destinations. They will share flights, coordinate schedules and undertake joint sales and marketing programs'.

The tie-up will take effect on August 1 if approved by regulators and the Northern Territory Government should be in front of Singapore Airlines executives now to convince them of the benefits of hubbing through Darwin. Singapore Airline's SilkAir is a good fit as their business strategy is built around short haul destinations and they offer excellent connections into the South East Asian region.

The Chamber of Commerce believes that international air services are a vital cog in the economic development cycle and IBC Chairman Sean Mahoney said "we addressed air services as a key topic as part of the Chamber of Commerce's NT Business Summit in March 2011. The lack of a full service airline operating between Darwin and Singapore was identified as sadly lacking. Many international business travellers overfly Darwin or omit us entirely, as they will not utilise budget airlines", Sean added.

“This is of critical importance to the oil and gas sector and is one of the reasons that many of the industry players have not established offices in Darwin. The IBC recently lost one of its Executive Committee members who relocated to Singapore, quoting the inconvenience of using budget carriers into Darwin as a real hindrance to his oil and gas related business”. Sean said further that ideally the reintroduction of QANTAS services to Singapore would be the best option but if Singapore Airlines move quickly to fill the space, then the business community will welcome them with open arms.

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