



Hon Rachel Nolan MP
Member for Ipswich



**Queensland
Government**

Our ref: MC45763

Your ref: Petitions

3 DEC 2009

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie *Neil*

I refer to a petition number 1343-09 lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Jason O'Brien MP, Member for Cook on 12 November 2009 about the service changes by QantasLink in Northern Queensland.

In September 2009, the Department of Transport and Main Roads and QantasLink negotiated fare increases and some service reductions below the contracted requirement on the route from Cairns to Weipa and Cairns to Horn Island. QantasLink advised the department that it was losing significant amounts of money on these and other regulated routes and was therefore, granted permission for the changes.

The department thoroughly assessed QantasLink's proposal for a temporary reduction in services and fare increases to help cut losses on these routes during the current economic period and this was considered to be a reasonable approach under the circumstances. The department has also notified QantasLink in writing that these changes will only be on a temporary basis and that normal service levels will return, when there is a visible increase in passengers and revenue across the network. Under the contract, the department currently reviews and analyses monthly data from Qantaslink on patronage and revenue.

A significant factor impacting on the viability of the Cairns to Horn Island route is the delay in upgrading the airport, which is owned and operated by the Torres Shire Council. At present, QantasLink is unable to land the larger Q400 aircraft, which has a detrimental impact on running costs, freight and patronage capacity. The state government committed \$2m to the upgrade of this airport and is in regular negotiations with the council to encourage a solution to this issue.

Minister for Transport

LAI	
UPON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE	
No.:	<i>5309T1537</i>
	04 DEC 2009
MP:	<i>Hon. R. Nolan</i>
Clerk's Signature:	<i>[Signature]</i>

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The Weipa Town Authority and members of the community through the Air User Group have raised some issues with the departure times on the Monday morning service. QantasLink representatives are currently discussing options with the Weipa Town Authority and Rio Tinto to determine whether there are potential options for departure time changes to better suit the community. The community will be notified as soon as possible of the outcomes of these discussions.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Nolan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

RACHEL NOLAN MP
Minister for Transport