

REGIONAL AIR SERVICES, SKYWEST AIRLINES PTY LTD

376. Mr SWEETMAN to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

I refer to the unfortunate collapse of Ansett Australia and, in particular, the impact that the loss of air services is having right now on communities and small businesses in regional Western Australia. I want to talk up industry.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that Cabinet has rejected a package of measures aimed at getting our regional carrier Skywest Airlines Pty Ltd back in the air?
- (2) What action has the minister taken to ensure a full range of air services is available to the people of regional Western Australia as soon as possible?

Ms MacTIERNAN replied:

- (1)-(2) The Premier answered that question pretty comprehensively. However, I will add to his answer. I have had a meeting today with the new administrator that has been appointed. The Government has once again stressed to the administrator the absolute imperativeness of moving quickly in relation to Skywest Airlines Pty Ltd. The Government has urged the administrator to take whatever steps are necessary, and the Government will do whatever it can, from its end, to ensure that this airline becomes airborne. I stress that both the previous administrator and the current administrator made the point that they were and are not in a position to make an early decision. The administrator has told the Government that at this stage it is impossible to disentangle the affairs of Skywest from those of Ansett Australia Ltd, and it is not clear how it wants to deal with the Skywest asset. It is certainly not something of which the Government is in control. Basically, it is a matter for the administrator. The Government has offered every assistance possible to get Skywest operating again.