

REGIONAL AIR SERVICES

**1036. Mr S.R. HILL to the Minister for Tourism; Small Business:**

The Gallop Labor Government is committed to working to improve air services to regional Western Australia. Can the minister give the House an update on the progress of this commitment?

**Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:**

I am delighted to inform the House of two new services. An announcement was made by airlines last week about services specifically to the communities of Broome and Kununurra. I am very pleased to advise the House that the first announcement was a new Skywest Airlines Pty Ltd jet service to Broome. This justifies the enormous amount of work that has been done by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Hon Tom Stephens and the members for Geraldton and Kimberley, who have done a great deal of work with the air services in those areas. This will provide Broome with a local jet service. It has been a real problem. It will improve the economy and the small business prospects in the area, particularly as the aircraft that Skywest will use is configured to carry both freight and passengers, which was something that was not available with the previous Qantaslink service to the area. As much as Qantas has done for the area, it has serviced passengers as opposed to freight. Qantas also announced a link to Kununurra with weekly air services during the peak tourism season from May to September 2004. This has resulted from a great partnership between the ministers and the members to whom I have already referred and small business and tourism in the area, particularly the Western Australian Tourism Commission. Globally, this is now showing in the return of confidence in our airline industry. Operators like Skywest and Qantas have also shown confidence in the future of the State. I congratulate both the airline companies and the ministers involved in making sure that links to the north of the State are restored.