

## **PRIME MINISTER RUDD COMMENTS ON QANTAS GROUP'S DECISION TO CUT FLIGHTS FROM JAPAN TO CAIRNS**

12 June 2008

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd held a press conference in Japan today after his meetings with Japan's Prime Minister Fukuda. These meetings were held to discuss how to further enhance the Australia-Japan relationship in the future.

During his international media address, Mr Rudd included the following with regards to Qantas Group's decision to cancel flights from Japan to Cairns in December:

"Finally on tourism, tourism has been affected significantly by recent decisions by Qantas in terms of routes between Japan and Australia, including to Queensland, including to Far North Queensland and Cairns in particular. That's underpinned a statement by the Tourism Minister Martin Ferguson yesterday to match a Queensland Government injection of \$4 million to support further tourism promotion for Queensland in particular.

"That will also form part of a broader and new international advertising campaign designed to further promote Australia as a tourism market given these recent challenges arising from decisions in the aviation industry.

"Also regional tourism organisations will now have access to the export market development grants scheme and we hope to have further to say about our overall tourism strategy for the future. This is very significant for Queensland, for Far North Queensland, and other parts of Australia affected by these decisions. I've just been speaking to Jim Turnour on the phone, the Federal Member, and it's quite clear that this has had a strong impact in his community and we have been very sensitive to his representations to the Government about the need to act on the question of the effective promotion of Queensland and those affected centres in the international tourism market which is a very competitive and difficult place to be."