

## **FROM THE CEO's DESK**

*16 June 2008*

Never underestimate what can be achieved in a week when you have the right people on your side.

Further to the 100 percent support and dedication of Tourism Minister and local member for Cairns, Desley Boyle, I would also like to acknowledge the financial commitment of \$4 million made this week in Brisbane by the Federal Minister for Tourism, Martin Ferguson, to complement the \$4 million from the Queensland Government.

Through this funding the Australian Government has acknowledged the severity of the impact from the loss of air capacity from Japan to Cairns and is providing an initial assistance package for our industry.

Following the announcement Geoff Buckley, Managing Director Tourism Australia, quickly joined us in Cairns to meet with 26 TNQ industry operators, Cairns Regional Mayor and CEO of Cairns Regional Council, to appraise us all of the discussions that brokered the deal. We thank Geoff for that opportunity.

TA recognises the status of Cairns as a significant destination and its need to be kept sustainable, and will now realign their budgets accordingly.

The Federal Tourism Minister is clear the money should be used for promotional activities. This prompted detailed discussion surrounding the branding and advertising of Australia in overseas markets. It was agreed by those present that more focus needs to be given to the Great Barrier Reef in TNQ, State, National and international advertising and promotional campaigns.

Moving forward - a working group will drive a long term strategy with a clear set of targets of opportunities outside Japan (China/Korea/India) and difficult markets (UK, Europe, NZ) will be prioritised.

We've already received positive news this past weekend as Air New Zealand announced they will increase their flights from Cairns/Auckland to four weekly beginning in November. Even better is the daylight flight departure times which will provide better connectivity to North American services along with Asian and domestic routes.

The short term solution is to pursue additional charters and other airline operators from Japan and China. Building on TA airline relationships, we will continue discussions with Emirates, Singapore Airlines, JAL and Jetstar International and move to leverage relationships with Cathay Pacific, Tiger Airways, Air Asia X, and Korean Airlines on the Japan/Singapore/Cairns and Japan/Hong Kong/Cairns routes. New strategies are essential, particularly to ensure retention of the school excursion market. The major review of aviation is currently being undertaken and will hopefully lead to positive changes.

I must thank everyone involved for their quick actions and hard work over the last 10 days. We are already making headway but there is still much to do.

This week many of us are in Perth at ATE, an opportunity for TTNQ to drive meetings to develop a planning team structure with a destination focus, and commence discussion with stakeholders. I am confident it will be a productive week.



**Rob Giason**  
**Chief**  
**Executive**  
**Officer**