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# News on aviation front takes flight for Japan

AS always, aviation is top of mind for the Tropical North Queensland tourism industry and there has been some very positive news on that front over the past few weeks.

Just last week saw the announcement of a series of JAL charter flights from Fukuoka, Japan, direct to Cairns for the month of November 2008 and annually thereafter.

Thanks must go to the Cairns Port Authority, Tourism Queensland, the local tourism industry, Tourism Australia and JTB Kyushu and JTB Australia, all of whom worked with TTNQ to ensure the region won this business.

Through the work of inbound tour operator JTB, the flights will be largely filled with high school students coming to experience farm stays in the Atherton Tableland and Innisfail area.

In light of recent declines in Japanese visitor numbers, this is important new business for the region which, previously, went to New Zealand and for which our region was chosen over the likes of Singapore and other Australian destinations.

Just before Christmas came the excellent news that there would be charter flights from China direct into Cairns for Chinese New Year this February from three airlines, Qantas, China Southern and Viva Macau.

With the latter two new to Cairns, this represents an exciting new development in our aviation future as we



work towards securing regular direct services from China.

Continental Micronesia doubled the number of weekly services between Cairns and Guam to provide a total of four flights per week from January 6 to 20.

These northern winter peak flights connected directly with Guam through Sapporo, offering good connections into Cairns for Japanese from that area.

Meanwhile, just as you are reading this, we have 12 local tourism operators and two national operators with Tropical North Queensland interests participating in the Queensland on Tour India Mission forming a huge majority of the 19-strong Queensland-wide contingent.

The region continues to explore the potential of the Indian market and I congratulate TTNQ members who are embracing the opportunities it presents.

Again, aviation will be a determining factor in our ability to develop this market to its full potential, and is something we will continue to work on with our key partners.