



MEDIA RELEASE

28 March 2022

Airport upgrade key to keeping Tassie tourism and business on top

Right now, Tasmania's tourism industry is the best in the country, winning eight gold medals out of 24 at the recent national tourism awards. The broader business community is also recovering after a difficult two years. The biggest challenge Tasmania faces now is how to stay on top. Hobart Airport has welcomed the support for a runway upgrade from a coalition of business groups, including the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Tasmanian Small Business Council.

Hobart Airport CEO, Norris Carter, said a runway upgrade would be a game-changer for business as well as the entire community in Tasmania. "Tasmania has what the rest of the world wants with some of the most amazing exports and experiences on the planet," Mr Carter said. "Our job as an airport is to help connect communities and make it easier for the rest of the world to find out first hand what makes Tasmania so unique.

"By upgrading the runway, we can unlock the potential of our business sector and help build Tasmania's future. Already we're seeing the benefits that direct international flights can bring. The passenger service between Auckland and Hobart is very popular and is helping to build links across the Tasman. Our direct freight flights in the south east Asia are a massive boost for businesses and exporters. By upgrading the runway we can do so much more to help tourism, small businesses and our export industries, particularly by tapping into new markets in Asia. "We have had some very positive discussions with both sides of politics about runway upgrades and with the support of the Tourism Industry

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Council of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Tasmanian Small Business Council, our case is now much stronger.”

Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania Chair, Daniel Leesong, said this month’s success at the national awards was great recognition for the entire industry.

“Tasmania’s tourism industry isn’t punching above its weight, we are Australia’s undisputed heavy weight champions,” Mr Martin said.

“But that means the rest of the industry around the country is going to try even harder to compete with us. We need to stay one step ahead and for an island state like Tasmania, that means we need to step up our game especially when it comes to access. All of our ports are important, whether that’s the Spirit terminal in Devonport, regional airports and our main airports in Launceston and Hobart.

“However, Tasmania is the only state in the country that doesn’t have a runway that can service the newer, larger and heavier aircraft that are now commonly flying on international routes and that needs to change. The Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania fully supports the proposal to upgrade Hobart Airport’s runway and we call on both Labor and the Liberals to make it a key commitment at the upcoming federal election.”

Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO, Michael Bailey, said better air freight links would kickstart a new wave of growth in our economy.

“The tyranny of distance has always been a challenge for Tasmanian business,” Mr Bailey said.

“Upgrading the airport will help unlock Tasmania’s export potential. The limited freight flights that have operated out of Hobart so far show that there is demand there, we just don’t have the infrastructure to service it.

“The runway upgrade has the potential to create or support hundreds of new jobs right around the State in a range of industries.”

Tasmanian Small Business Council CEO, Robert Mallett, said the small business sector would be a big winner from the upgrade.

“The runway upgrade is not only good news for tourism and exports, it will help a range of small businesses that support the defence and Antarctic research sectors,” Mr Mallett said.

“The runway upgrade would help cement Tasmania’s spot as the gateway to the Antarctic and the Southern Ocean. It would help grow Hobart’s role as a centre for logistics and for resupplying military or research missions and we already have a very strong network of small businesses in that area who stand to benefit. The runway upgrade will help Tasmania’s small business community connect with the rest of the



world and also tap into new opportunities here in Tasmania. It's a win-win."

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