



## Next step for international flights & jobs

**JANUARY 29, 2016: DREAMS of flying high on direct international flights out of Mackay and Whitsunday Coast and providing a vital tourism boost to both centres have moved a step closer, with work underway on identifying the airport infrastructure and resourcing requirements needed to support international flights.**

Following my approaches to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection Peter Dutton, I have been informed that his department representatives are working with management at both Mackay and Whitsunday Coast airports to look at airport infrastructure and identify border agency resourcing requirements so we can make these plans a reality.

**I am told they have already visited the Mackay airport to meet with management there.**

**The Liberal National Government has been providing free customs and immigration services to the Townsville airport since it began international flights to Bali last year, and I am pushing for similar arrangements for international airport operations at both Mackay and the Whitsundays.**

The people of the region are keen to have the opportunity to fly direct to overseas ports, and incoming passengers will provide vital jobs in the hospitality and retail sectors.

**Some of the most important elements for a region's economic growth are connections with the wider world.**

**I welcome the prospect of more tourism and jobs that will inevitably flow from the introduction of international flights for the region.**

**This is an important step in broadening our economic activity.**

The addition of international flights will also provide new freight links to boost local industry and jobs at a time when it is badly needed.

Mr Christensen said he would continue to work with those involved to ensure proposals clear any regulatory hurdles.