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21 January 2021

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

RE: Social and Environmental Sustainability in the Indian Ocean Territory

I wish to advise that RDA Pilbara strongly support the City of Karratha in their pursuit of regular direct flights from Karratha to the Indian Ocean Territories.

We see numerous benefits in having these flights including:

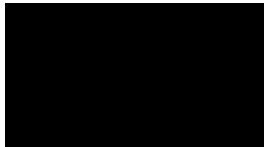
- **Tourism** – This will open Karratha and surrounding areas up to many more people who may not otherwise have chosen to visit the area for holidays but would be happy to stay on the way to or from Christmas & Cocos Keeling Islands and experience what Karratha has to offer. This could lead to return visits once they realise the beauty and diversity of the area. Tourism would also grow for the Christmas & Cocos Keeling Islands due to increased numbers of Pilbara residents using the IOT as a new holiday destination. This would in turn provide opportunities for the residents of the IOT to grow their tourism businesses and start new ones.
- **Economic** – Increased visitors to both the Pilbara region and Christmas & Cocos Keeling Islands would see additional spend throughout multiple layers of the economy.
- **Lifestyle** – This will enable residents of Karratha and surrounding areas to have a new holiday destination on their doorstep, that is not “overseas” but feels like it. Being so close to Karratha, it would also allow the residents of the islands to visit the mainland more regularly to shop, attend medical appointments or take a break somewhere different and it would all be just a couple of hours away.
- **Employment** – As Karratha is in the heart of the Pilbara and the Mining and Gas industries, having these flights would provide opportunities for the residents of Christmas & Cocos Keeling Islands to obtain FIFO jobs which might not be as appealing now, as they have to fly to Perth and then back up to Karratha. With these flights it would be quicker to fly to Karratha for them than it would be to fly to Perth, so would be more economical for the companies employing them.



- Infrastructure – Having the flights from Karratha to Christmas Island would provide the City of Karratha with the means to upgrade the airport to a fully functioning International Airport which would mean that we would then be open to take flights from other destinations such as Singapore, Bali and beyond. This in turn would provide further economic, lifestyle, employment & tourism opportunities to not only Karratha and the Pilbara, but also to the Indian Ocean Territories as Karratha would become the hub of the North West for all international flights.

In closing, I can see no downsides to these flights being implemented, only benefits to the entire region, and look forward to a positive step forward for all concerned.

Kind regards,



Tony Simpson
CEO
Regional Development Australia Pilbara