



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 23 June 2003

Chair: Paul Neville MP

Inquiry into regional aviation in Australia

Virgin Blue to give evidence at inquiry into regional aviation Canberra, Wednesday 25 June, 2003

The House of Representatives Transport and Regional Services Committee is examining the adequacy of regional aviation services in Australia and transport links to Australia's major populated islands.

The committee will hold the 13th public hearing of its inquiry in Canberra this week, to gather evidence from Virgin Blue.

Virgin Blue, based in Brisbane, commenced operations in Australia in 2000. It now flies to 26 destinations in Australia, including regional destinations of Alice Springs, Broome, Cairns, Coffs Harbour, the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, Launceston, Mackay, Rockhampton, Townsville and Whitsunday Coast.

On 21 July 2003, an alliance between Virgin Blue and Regional Express (REX) comes into effect, increasing the competition on Australian regional air routes.

House Transport Committee Chair, Mr Paul Neville MP, says "It is very encouraging to see Virgin Blue expanding its operations during very difficult times in the aviation industry generally".

"The evidence gathering phase of the inquiry is drawing to a close," Mr Neville said. "The next steps are to consider the evidence from the more than 180 submissions we have received and the many witnesses who have appeared at our public hearings, and to draft our report. I am proposing to table the report by the end of this year."

Media and the public are most welcome to attend the public hearing, details of which appear below.

PUBLIC HEARING: Wednesday, 25 June 2003, 9.30am - 10.15am

WHERE: Committee Room 1R4, Parliament House, Canberra

SCHEDULED WITNESS: Virgin Blue

For **media comment**, please contact:
Paul Neville, House Transport and Regional Services Committee Chair, on (02) 6277 4940

For **background information**, including the full terms of reference and copies of submissions, please contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2352 or visit the Inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/trs/aviation/index.htm