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Investigating Malaysia Airlines route to Darwin

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The Minister for Asian Relations and Trade, Paul Henderson, will meet with the Chairman and Managing Director of Malaysia Airlines to discuss ways in which the Government could help in bringing the airline back to the Territory.

The meeting is being held in Kuala Lumpur, where the Minister arrived this morning after a day of talks in Sabah.

"The Chief Minister met with Managing Director Dato' Md Nor Yusof, and at her request the airline agreed to undertake a joint feasibility study of restarting flights to Darwin," Mr Henderson said.

"The Territory Government, through the NT's Aviation Development Director, Peter Roberts, has worked closely with Malaysia Airlines during this process, and I will today investigate ways in which the Territory Government can further influence the decision to recommence services to Darwin.

"Malaysia Airlines is currently assessing its routes into China and the Middle East following the SARS crisis, and through this meeting I will reconfirm the Government's commitment to seeing international airline capacity into the Territory increased."

Mr Henderson said some of the assistance offered could be in the form of co-marketing and marketing assistance within the Territory, and promotion of charter flights to other destinations.

"Importantly, I will also be providing a detailed update on the progression of the Railway and the upgrade of the Darwin Port, which could also provide freight opportunities for Malaysia Airlines," he said.

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