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Peter Styles’ ignorance of Qantas and airlines services is obvious

Opposition Transport spokesman, Peter Styles has shown his ignorance of his shadow portfolio in his criticism of Qantas’ commercial decision to close its Bennett Street Travel Centre.

Tourism Minister Malarndirri McCarthy said that the Member for Sanderson reacted to a media story about one part of Qantas’ Darwin operation without first seeking a briefing either by Qantas or by the Government on airlines services in the Territory.

“Qantas celebrates 90 years of operations next month and if it was left up to Peter Styles and the Country Liberals they would take the “nt” out of Qantas which would see no Qantas flights into the Territory at all,” said Ms McCarthy.

“Qantas has a long history with the Northern Territory including the record evacuation of 673 people from Darwin after Cyclone Tracy in 1974, its support in transporting stranded passengers in the wake of the Ansett Airlines collapse in 2001, and its aircraft and uniforms displaying Indigenous art from Northern Territory artists.

“Peter Styles obviously does not understand his shadow portfolio, or the art of diplomacy.

“The Northern Territory Government has been focussed on building relationships with the airline industry and providing Territorians with travel choices.

“I am constantly engaging and negotiating with the domestic and international airline industry on behalf of Territorians and we know that more and more people are booking flights directly online.

“I immediately contacted Qantas about this decision and I was reassured by its NT Regional manager Julian Barry and Qantas Sydney head office that it will not affect Qantas flight operations in and out of the Territory.

“This is part of Qantas’ own internal changes to business and they will be working with all their staff across the Northern Territory during this very difficult time.

“Qantas further reassured me that their flights have in fact increased with the Canberra to Darwin direct flights and the recent announcement of its Cityflyer Melbourne to Darwin service which will commence early next year.

“Peter Styles will now seek a briefing from Qantas after he has already gone to the media and bagged Qantas without first getting the full story from them.

“Nor has Peter Styles sought a briefing from the Government on any aviation issue, which I would be happy to give him, if he only asked.”

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