MEDIA RELEASE

TOURISM FEELS THE PINCH

March 02nd, 2012

The decision by AirAsia to withdraw its Darwin service is disappointing for Territory tourism operators and taxpayers.

Shadow Tourism Minister, Willem Westra van Holthe, said the Territory Government invested $56,000 in promoting AirAsia when it first launched in Darwin in December 2010.

“It's a pity that investment wasn’t backed up with long term results,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“While AirAsia’s decision to pull out of Darwin was a commercial one, it brings into question the value of the $56,000 that was spent in the first place.

“The Territory has suffered disproportionately in terms of the impact of the Global Financial Crisis and high Australian dollar on international visitations.

“Australia wide, international visitors declined by 0.2% in 2011 compared with a 6% decline in international visitors to the Territory.

“What’s clear is that the Government’s marketing strategies aren’t getting the cut through that are required during tough economic times.

“Tourism Minister Malarndirri McCarthy is good at spreading doom and gloom – playing to the Global Financial Crisis and the high Australian dollar – but her challenge is to stop hand-wringing and find a solution.”

(See attachments)

Further comment: Willem Westra van Holthe 0414 778 430