06 November 2002
Seasonal demands temporarily impact on Virgin Blue

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Virgin Blue’s decision to reduce its daily services to five per week for two months during the Wet Season is disappointing but in line with seasonal travel patterns, Minister for Tourism Chris Burns said today.

The decision was announced by Virgin Blue today, and will take effect from Monday 20 January 2003 until Thursday 27 March 2003. The Monday night and Wednesday night service will be removed for these two months.

"Passenger demand during this time of the year traditionally decreases, so Virgin Blue is adjusting its schedules to match the demand", Dr Burns said.

"Airlines generally alter their schedules to the NT to reflect seasonal travel patterns."

Dr Burns said that the potential passenger load factors over this period was the primary consideration in Virgin Blue’s decision.

"I have received a firm commitment from Virgin Blue management that the daily service will be reinstated from 27 March of next year, in accordance with increase in demand for travel to the Top End at that time."

Dr Burns said that a key priority for the NT Government was to maintain and support existing aviation services and to increase competition in the market.

"Airlines make commercial decision based on routes, that is why it is extremely important for the NT to attract sustainable routes while continuing to focus on maximising demand.

"The Northern Territory Tourist Commission will conduct a public relations and marketing campaign in support of the shoulder season (March - May) in 2003, in its efforts to increase consumer demand from key east-coast domestic markets."

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