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Government working to fill gaps left by Airnorth

Government will immediately look at ways to fill any service gaps left by Airnorth’s decision to reduce its flights into Tennant Creek and Katherine, Acting Chief Minister Syd Stirling said today.

"Government has a team in place – made up of aviation experts, Treasury officials and other government representatives – who have been working with Airnorth and will now also work with other operators to explore a range of options that may enhance services to these centres," Mr Stirling said.

He expressed grave disappointment at the commercial decision taken by Airnorth.

"The Territory Government has a history of working closely with Airnorth, assisting them to pick up services to Groote Eylandt and Cairns.

"Over the past six months we have been working with them to find ways to keep the service viable, including:

- urging Government agencies to consider Airnorth for their travel first;
- providing expert advice on route scheduling and structure, and marketing initiatives;
- discussing through-fares with Qantas;
- holding discussions with airport operators; and
- holding public meetings in Tennant Creek.

"We are extremely disappointed that the situation has come to this, but our Government team has already started work on assessing the gaps in service Airnorth’s decision will create and how we can fill those gaps.

"The team will be looking at public servants’ use of the service; linkages with other airlines; and enhanced marketing and packages.

"They will also be talking to other operators about the areas of reduction to ensure that important services, such as mail, newspaper and medical deliveries, are still provided to Tennant Creek and Katherine residents."

Mr Stirling said the team would report back to Government within a month.

"The people of Tennant Creek and Katherine can be assured that Government will be acting in their interests," he said.

"Until Airnorth had made its final decision no one was certain of what would be left and what gaps needed filling. Government can now go about the business of putting into place the appropriate options," he said.
place services for both Tennant Creek and Katherine with some certainty."

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