The Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries, Dr Chris Burns, today expressed his disappointment over the decision by QANTAS to use smaller planes during the wet season, leading to a temporary reduction in freight capacity on their Darwin routes.

"Air freight is an important issue for our primary producers, in particular those who undertake horticulture, and I am disappointed at the decision announced recently by QANTAS to temporarily reduce freight capacity," Dr Burns said.

"However, I am informed that Virgin Airlines have recently commenced freight services on their routes to Darwin, and this will greatly assist horticultural exports during the coming months.

"The fact that three airlines now carry freight into the Territory, Virgin Blue, Australian Air Express and QANTAS shows that freight services into and from the Territory are viable services.

"Having said that, this Government believes that aviation services in the Territory must be based on sound businesses cases, and we will continue to work with producers, QANTAS and other airlines to demonstrate the importance of air freight to the Territory," Dr Burns said.