

BUSSELTON–MARGARET RIVER REGIONAL AIRPORT EXPANSION

617. Hon COLIN TINCKNELL to the Minister for Regional Development:

- (1) What steps has or is the government taking to support the City of Busselton in its efforts to attract a major airline to commit to the new Busselton–Margaret River Regional Airport expansion?
- (2) Will the government offer a commitment to go ahead with the building of the new proposed terminal before a major carrier is secured?
- (3) Does the government realise that without such a commitment, major airlines may be reluctant to invest in the Busselton–Margaret River area, while a government commitment to the project will almost certainly result in an agreement being signed with at least one major airline?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

- (1) The South West Development Commission is providing ongoing high-level support to assist the City of Busselton to secure an airline service. Both the South West Development Commission and Tourism Western Australia are assisting the project's airline engagement working group.
- (2) No. I remain of the view that the construction of the new terminal is not to proceed until an airline is secured or the airport is selected by Qantas as a site for the new pilot training academy.
- (3) The project budget includes a \$3.5 million allocation for airline attraction. It appears that this significant amount has failed to attract an airline to date.