

BUSSELTON–MARGARET RIVER AIRPORT — AIRLINE SERVICES

38. Hon COLIN HOLT to the Minister for Regional Development:

The minister has acknowledged that the newly expanded Busselton–Margaret River Airport offers immense opportunities for the economic development of the south west region. With the completion of runway infrastructure capable of facilitating direct interstate and international flights imminent, what is the minister doing to support the City of Busselton, the agricultural industry and the tourism industry to attract airline providers and freight enterprises to Busselton–Margaret River Airport?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question.

This project includes over \$56 million of state government funding that we committed to in the last budget, so we are absolutely committed to ensuring that the money is spent wisely and delivers benefit for taxpayers. Over the last 12 months, we have been working closely with the City of Busselton to ensure that this project can be delivered within the allocated budget. In August last year, I appointed Mr Nick Belyea as chair of the South West Development Commission. Mr Belyea has significant airline industry experience and tourism experience and has been liaising directly with airlines and providing direct support and advice to me and the City of Busselton. The state government, through the South West Development Commission, has been working in partnership with the City of Busselton’s airline attraction working group to attract and secure an airline to deliver services between Busselton and the east coast. We understand that only one major airline group is considering the route in the short term, and we expect a response from it by the end of the month. The South West Development Commission has also been working with the city to undertake a preliminary assessment of future opportunities for freight from Busselton into Asian markets.