



## MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016

### **Skytrans soars 365 days on with first birthday celebrations**

**Skytrans co-owner Johnathan Thurston today flew in to celebrate the mile-high list of achievements that the Skytrans team have achieved in their first 365 days of business.**

“Skytrans will tonight celebrate its first birthday with a bash in our hanger attended by community leaders from the Torres Strait, Cape York and Cairns. We will be treated to a display of local dancers and an incredible Skytrans cake.

“This celebration marks an important milestone as the team at Skytrans have worked very hard over the last year to turn the business into a dependable and profitable airline. This dedication has seen us go from strength to strength in such a short amount of time and secure our position as North Queensland’s number one regional airline.

“I’m probably most proud of how we have grown our team by 350% with 11% of the workforce being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander” said Johnathan Thurston.

To celebrate Skytrans first birthday, passengers who book a flight over the phone during the month of April 2016 will receive a complimentary 2016 Cowboys Membership Pack which includes a cap, travel mug, bumper sticker, lanyard and more.

“Skytrans is very proud to have our own North Queensland Cowboys captain as part of our team and therefore we wanted to reward our passengers with a cool Cowboys support pack to kick off the NRL season” said Michael Thinee, CEO of Skytrans.

Michael Thinee knows firsthand how important Skytrans is to the communities it services and the positive economic impact it has on the local economy. Before the airline collapse in early 2015, Michael Thinee was a commercial manager and was appointed to take the reins and rebuild the company by owners Peter Collings and Johnathan Thurston in March 2015. Under his leadership as CEO, Skytrans boasts a mile-high list of achievements in its first year which include:

- ✓ 48 RPT services each week throughout the Cape York
- ✓ Multiple daily services to all islands throughout the Torres Strait
- ✓ 350% workforce growth from 39 staff to 137 staff
- ✓ 11% of the workforce are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working in operations, engineering, and commercial functions.
- ✓ Opening of a new in-house Reservations Centre providing local employment opportunities
- ✓ Launch of the Local Fares Scheme with over 3,300 local fare bookings since September 2015
- ✓ New aircraft investment now providing a fleet of 3 x Dash-8’s, 4 x King Air’s, and 9 x Caravan’s
- ✓ Almost 300,000 kilos of freight have been carried by Skytrans and sister company West Wing Aviation including fruit and vegetables, medical supplies (dialysis equipment, blood samples, first aid supplies), crayfish for export and mail.
- ✓ Diverse community sponsorship portfolio including sports, education, arts and culture, and wellbeing
- ✓ A new \$25-million-dollar corporate contract with QGC, ex Brisbane

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