



**Hon Peter Lawlor MP**  
Member for Southport



**Minister for Tourism and Fair  
Trading**

**16 May 2009**

**"Best Job in the World Island" receives more good news**

Following on from the announcement of Hamilton Island's Island Caretaker, Virgin Blue's new direct flights from Sydney to Hamilton Island could not have come at a more fitting time, Tourism Minister Peter Lawlor said.

"Virgin Blue's new daily flights from Sydney direct to Hamilton Island coincide with Tourism Queensland's Island Caretaker campaign, bringing more good news for the region," he said.

"The Best Job in the World campaign has so far raised in excess of \$120 million of international publicity for the region, and Virgin Blue's flights will significantly increase the island's accessibility and potentially increase tourism.

"The flights start on 4 July this year, and will provide about 1000 extra seats per week, meaning a 23 per cent increase in capacity to Hamilton Island from around the country, and an 81 per cent capacity increase from Sydney."

Mr Lawlor said Tourism Queensland's long and close relationship with the Virgin Group will be strengthened by the new flights.

"Tourism was a key economic driver for Queensland and maintaining and growing air access is critical to increasing visitation," he said.

"More than 768,000 domestic and international visitors came to the Whitsundays in 2008, injecting more than \$723 million into the Queensland economy.

"Virgin Blue's introduction of direct daily flights to Hamilton Island, the home of the recently announced Island Caretaker, Ben Southall, will make it cheaper and easier to visit the campaign's island home.

"With more than 34,000 applications, the Caretaker of Islands of the Great Barrier Reef was arguably the most sought-after job in the world.

"The worldwide response to the campaign was nothing short of phenomenal, and with these added flights in tow, tourism to the region should significantly increase.

"The Queensland Government is committed to increasing tourism and will continue to work to ensure the future of Queensland's tourism industry remains bright."

**Ends**