



PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING, MP ACCEPTANCE CEREMONY FOR ANSETT AUSTRALIA'S FIRST BOEING 747 AIRCRAFT, MASCOT, 29 AUGUST 1994

Well, I think today's a great day for the Australian aviation industry.

It's also a great day for Australia.

Ansett Australia's acceptance of this, its first, Boeing 747 shows that we have truly broken the traditional distinction between domestic and international services.

It also shows we have a robust internationally competitive aviation industry that delivers a quality service at a competitive price.

And we've reached this milestone for two main reasons.

The first derives from the Government's decision to deregulate the aviation industry and the second derives from the way the industry, and its people, have responded.

Some time ago, the Government took the view that we needed to restructure our aviation industry.

We wanted competitive arrangements that would deliver significant benefits to both Australian and foreign consumers.

We wanted competitive arrangements that would enable Australia to realise its enormous tourist potential.

We wanted an aviation industry ready for a new century.

And that's what we've got.

Since 1990, the number of domestic passengers has doubled.

Domestic airfares are now 25 per cent lower in real terms.

And, on a comparable basis, that makes them among the lowest in the world.

There are now more carriers offering services into and out of Australia, on more routes and city pairs, and with greater frequency, than ever before.

These achievements have gone a long way to driving the growth of the Australian tourist industry - an industry that last year grew at three times the world average and now accounts for 12 per cent of our total export earnings.

Clearly, Ansett Australia has embraced the commercial opportunities provided by deregulation.

It has expanded its services to Bali to six a week.

This week, with its new 747 Spaceship, it will commence five 747 services a week to Osaka.

And next week, it will commence three 747 services a week to Hong Kong.

But the reform that has occurred in the industry can't just be measured in the number of new flights.

Change in the industry has been anything less than "micro" for those organisations and people most directly involved.

And it is individual people in organisations such as Ansett and Qantas that have given us a world class aviation service at a competitive price.

You will excuse me, of course, if I make the observation how impressed I am by Ansett's new livery.

The Southern Cross incorporated into the gold "A" and set against the blue background will give the airline an unambiguously Australian face in both Australia and Asia.

For mine, that's a smart move.

I'm also pleased to know that the service offered to Asian consumers, who now account for one in every two of our international visitors, will be tailored specifically to their needs.

After all, you can't expect to gain a good slice of the world's fastest growing market without a strong customer focus.

And that's exactly what Ansett offers with its specially trained and multilingual flight attendants.

All up, it's a very impressive performance.

It shows an Australia serious about doing business in Asia.

And it shows an Ansett Australia very much an integral part of our robust internationally competitive aviation industry.

Congratulations to one and all, and long may she fly.