

Far North West Joint Organisation

Tuesday 27 August 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

FAR NORTH WEST COMMUNITIES TO TAKE OFF WITH RETURN OF PASSENGER FLIGHTS

The mayors of the Far North West Joint Organisation's (FNWJO) three member councils have applauded the return of passenger air services to Far North West NSW, made possible with \$8 million in funding from the NSW Government.

FNWJO Chair and Cobar Mayor Lilliane Brady OAM said the communities of Bourke, Cobar and Walgett shires each welcomed the convenience of being able to board a flight in their own backyard at affordable rates, with special prices for locals.

"The Far North West Joint Organisation received \$8 million in funding from the NSW Government for this project. On behalf of my fellow mayors, I must say how appreciative we all are to the NSW Government for its significant financial support," Ms Brady said.

"Some were sceptical that the Far North West Joint Organisation, founded only a year ago, could bring this project to fruition. Well, we showed them – we brought together an experienced, professional team and today's announcement is the culmination of the team's considerable efforts.

"I was really impressed with the collaboration between each of the member councils when the team made presentations to the Board. I believe this project will become a case study for government as to how Joint Organisations can work together to achieve results for their wider region."

Ms Brady said she looked forward to FlyPelican offering flights between Cobar and Dubbo, as well as direct services between Cobar and Sydney.

"I am excited about the availability of flights via FlyPelican, both departing and arriving at Cobar. There will be flights from Sydney to Cobar in the morning and return services from Cobar to Sydney in the afternoon, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays," Ms Brady said.

"In addition to direct flights to Sydney, flights between Cobar and Dubbo will operate on Mondays and Thursdays. I encourage the community to get on board with well-priced fares for locals, which we worked hard to achieve."

Member Councils: Bourke, Cobar and Walgett

All correspondence to the Executive Officer c/- Cobar Shire Council, 36 Linsley St, Cobar NSW 2835

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Local residents will benefit from special rates, with prices starting at \$503.50 (including GST) for Sydney-Cobar return and \$251.75 one way. A “local” is someone who holds government-issued photo identification, such as a NSW driver licence or Photo Card, with an address that falls within postcodes in Bourke, Cobar or Walgett shires.

The FNWJO has also classified Brewarrina Shire postcodes as “local”. More details of eligible postcodes are available on the air companies’ websites.

Bourke Shire Mayor Barry Hollman said the \$8 million grant from the NSW Government to resume Far North West air services was “a shot in the arm” for the communities of western NSW.

“It has been 12 long years since Bourke residents enjoyed the benefit of a regular air passenger service. Our geographic isolation has only compounded this challenge,” Mr Hollman said.

“Air Link Airlines will provide easy access to Bourke, Dubbo or Sydney. Flights from Dubbo will arrive in the morning on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, with return flights in the afternoon.

“All schedules will link with Sydney-Dubbo-Sydney flights so, this is fantastic news for Bourke. People will be able to travel from Sydney to Bourke and return, whether for work or leisure.”

Walgett Shire Mayor Manuel Martinez said he could not wait for return flights between Walgett and Dubbo to take off.

“This is an exciting time to be living in Far North West NSW. Return air services from Dubbo to Walgett will be available on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. And, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Air Link Airlines will fly to Lightning Ridge to service this iconic outback tourism destination,” Mr Martinez said.

“The return of passenger air services to the Far North West will open Walgett and the wider region to a wealth of new services and opportunities.”

*****ENDS*****

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