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## **Fiji Airways route to entice North Americans to Cairns**

The announcement by Fiji Airways today (November 20) that it will launch direct services to Cairns from April 10 will speed up recovery from the North American market, according to Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ).

TTNQ Chief Executive Officer Mark Olsen said the new route would be the fastest flying time to Cairns from the United States, slashing nearly three hours off travel from Los Angeles making it just 16 hours away, and offering reduced flight times from San Francisco and Dallas.

"The new service via Fiji presents the opportunity to bring an estimated 52,000 additional US visitors annually injecting more than \$160 million into the region's economy," he said.

"The US is currently our second largest international market and has recovered by more than 73 per cent with 83,000 visitors and North America collectively brought in 101,000 visitors in the past financial year.

"A one-hop service from the US would create the potential for Cairns to be the first port of arrival for more North Americans and help to build their average length of stay.

"Pre-COVID the North American market delivered 139,000 visitors to Tropical North Queensland, but the region saw a reduction in the average length of stay from the peak in 2016 of seven nights to five nights.

"Many operators attributed this reduction in holiday time to the cost and availability of the domestic connections to Cairns.

"The new Fiji Airways flights come after substantial investment in the North American market by TTNQ with the assistance of the Federal Government's International Tourism Recovery Program.

"To date we have launched 18 campaigns in the US and Canadian markets with seven of those completed generating more than \$15 million in sales.

"Two of the recent campaigns have been developed in partnership with Fiji Airways and a trade partner in the US to further grow this market, with more campaigns to be developed with Fiji Airways to directly promote this new route."

Federal Minister for Trade and Tourism, Don Farrell, welcomed the increased aviation links, recognising their importance to Tropical North Queensland.

"The Albanese Labor Government understands how important the tourism industry is to destinations like Cairns, and that is why we supported TTNQ with \$15 million to ensure the tourism industry of Cairns and Tropical North Queensland can continue to go from strength to strength," he said.

"Cairns and Tropical North Queensland is a favourite holiday destination for me and my family, and more international flights into Cairns means more families from around the world will have the opportunity to holiday in Cairns."

Fiji Airways will operate to and from Cairns Airport three times a week on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday on a Boeing 737-8 aircraft with eight business and 170 economy seats.

**This project received grant funding from the Australian Government, under the International Tourism Recovery Program administered by Austrade.**

# MEDIA RELEASE



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