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KARRATHA & DISTRICTS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY  
**PRESS RELEASE** | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **KDCCI Calls for Regional Voices in National Airfare Inquiry**

The Karratha & Districts Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KDCCI) is urging members and the wider community to participate in the national regional airfares inquiry being conducted by the Productivity Commission (open until 15 March 2026).

The Commission's inquiry into regional aviation, including fare-setting mechanisms and affordability measures, presents a critical opportunity for regional communities to have their voices heard on an issue that directly impacts liveability, workforce mobility, and economic sustainability.

KDCCI has formally lodged a submission to the inquiry, highlighting the importance of affordable and reliable air services to support regional liveability, workforce mobility, and economic growth.

It is also important to recognise the impact that liveability has on employee attraction and retention, and the flow-on effect this has on productivity. Without affordable access to health services, cultural events and the ability to visit family, many people choose to leave the region or opt for FIFO arrangements. This creates a compounding effect on regional communities, with fewer permanent residents, fewer families and a reduced pool of local volunteers. Over time, this further erodes liveability and makes it even more difficult for regional towns to attract and retain a stable workforce.

Furthermore, current airfare levels also remain a significant constraint on tourism, limiting the growth of what is an emerging and important industry for the region. Affordable and accessible flights are essential if the Pilbara is to fully realise its tourism potential and support broader economic diversification.

While the Regional Airfare Zone Cap (RAZC) scheme has improved access for many regional residents, KDCCI has expressed concern about the recent increase in peak capped fares to \$385 return, along with ongoing issues around the transparency and availability of the advertised \$299 fares.

While the intent of the scheme is commendable, confidence in the program relies on consistent access, clear communication, and transparent implementation.

KDCCI CEO, Sarah Whelan, said affordable air travel is essential infrastructure for regional communities.

“For regional communities like Karratha, affordable flights aren’t optional — they are critical to our liveability and economic sustainability. When capped fares increase and lower fares are difficult to access, it directly impacts families, businesses and workforce attraction. We need transparency, consistency and a system that genuinely supports regional residents.”

KDCCI encourages all members to make a submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry and share their experiences, particularly regarding access to capped fares and the impact of airfare costs on business and community life.

Submissions can be made via the Productivity Commission website.  
[www.pc.gov.au/inquiries-and-research/regional-airfares/](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries-and-research/regional-airfares/)

For media inquiries, please contact Sarah Whelan at (08) 9144 1999.

#### **About Karratha & Districts Chamber of Commerce & Industry:**

The KDCCI was established to deliver a unique range of services and representation to the Karratha business community. Managed by a diverse board of active local businesspeople, who meet once a month to represent our membership base and run by a team of four dedicated and experienced business specialists, we provide services to all sizes of business and help to connect our 400+ strong member-base, which includes: multi-national mining and resource companies, government agencies, community service organisations and small to medium-sized enterprise. We are a part of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, and a founding member of the Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, where regional chambers from across the state work together and share information and resources to build a stronger business network in regional WA.

#### **Contact:**

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