



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle

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QANTASLINK DECISION SHOWS NEED FOR INVESTMENT IN SKILLS

Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson says Qantaslink's decision to suspend its Newcastle-Sydney service, whilst disappointing, highlights the need for a renewed push for investment in skills and training - particularly in regional Australia.

Qantaslink today said it didn't have enough pilots to continue operating the route, and this is an issue right around regional Australia.

"I have spoken with Qantaslink and we are hopeful that there will be no job losses among pilots, check in staff, baggage handlers and other workers at Williamstown," Ms Grierson said.

"I also understand that Aeropelican will continue with its Newcastle-Sydney services and may be able to negotiate with Qantaslink to pick up some of the flight slots."

"The nationwide pilot shortage has been building for some time, and is just one part of the massive skills crisis that has been left after ten years of the Howard Government."

"Two weeks ago, the Rudd Labor Government introduced into Parliament legislation to establish *Skills Australia* - a statutory body to assist the Government target its investment in training."

"This is a first step in addressing the skills crisis in Australia that is holding back productivity right across the economy."

"Qantaslink's decision today shows just how vital the Government's investments in skills will be for our region's future."

"I will keep working with Qantaslink, workers, airport management and other carriers to minimise the impact on workers and travellers."

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