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making a difference

Mr David Mason
Director Disability Rights Policy
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
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SYDNEY NSW 2001

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Dear Mr Mason

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Tiger Airways application for exemption from provisions of the *Disability Discrimination Act*, Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.

The Disability Services Commission is the Western Australian State Government agency responsible for advancing opportunities, community participation and quality of life for people with disabilities in Western Australia.

It is important to note that the inability of a person with a disability to readily fly also impacts on their family, friends, carers and traveling companions. This inability also has a consequential detrimental economic impact on other businesses and services that depend on travellers for income.

The Commission is concerned that, in recent years, the ability of people with disabilities to access travel by air appears to have been restricted rather than increased. At a time when significant achievements are being made to most forms of public transport, people with disabilities are finding it difficult or impossible to undertake flights that they have been taking for years. The Commission is aware that some people in Western Australia have become isolated because of their inability to meet recent requirements established by airlines.

The Commission acknowledges Tiger Airways' concerns regarding commercial arrangements it would have already entered into and expects that part of any commercial arrangement to operate in Australia incorporates compliance with relevant legislation, including the *Disability Discrimination Act*.

Should an exemption be granted, the Commission requests that Tiger Airways:

- develops an action plan that details tasks to be undertaken within a realistic but tight timeframe to minimize the significant impact and restrictions already affecting travellers with disabilities; and
- ground and aircraft staff be trained in meeting the needs of travellers with disabilities.

Should additional information be required, please contact Mark Hutson, Principal Officer, on telephone 08 9426 9276.

Yours sincerely



Dr Ron Chalmers
DIRECTOR GENERAL
DISABILITY SERVICES COMMISSION

18 December 2007