



**TERRY MILLS** MLA | **Member for BLAIN**  
CHIEF MINISTER OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **FOCUS ON GARUDA**

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December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Garuda Airlines will send a team to the Northern Territory early next year to examine the case for the resumption of commercial flights into Darwin.

Chief Minister Terry Mills and Business Minister Peter Chandler met with Garuda's President and Chief Executive Officer Emir Satar at the airline's headquarters in Jakarta to discuss opportunities for the resumption of air services between Indonesia and the Territory.

"It's no secret the Northern Territory Government wants Garuda to return to Darwin, the challenge now is persuading airline executives there is a sound business case to do so," Mr Mills said.

"Next year's visit will be an opportunity for the Territory Government to outline options for Garuda's return to Territory skies and for airline executives to hear the case for the resumption of flights and be briefed on plans for proposed upgrades at Darwin Airport.

"Garuda has a long history of flying into Darwin, with its twice weekly flights between Bali and Darwin increasing to three in 2008.

"The service was suspended in April 2009 when the Global Financial Crisis prompted a review of all its operations.

"Indonesia is one of the top destinations for Australian residents from Darwin Airport. In 2011 an estimated 81,000 Australian resident movements were recorded out of Darwin for Indonesia.

"During the meeting I also raised improved connectivity with Indonesia's eastern provinces and the possibility of flights into Kupang."

Mr Mills also met with Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa, who indicated his support for plans to hold an AusIndo forum in Darwin as a way to build closer ties between Australia and Indonesia.

"I made it very clear to the Minister it is a priority of mine to re-engage with Indonesia at all levels," Mr Mills said.

"As a long-time friend and neighbour, I wanted to assure Mr Natalegawa the strong ties that have existed between northern Australia and Indonesia for centuries are not, and never will be, taken for granted."

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