



# Media Release

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## ***Ballina Byron Gateway Airport ready to take off after major funding announcement***

Early this morning the Minister for Regional Development, Skills and Small Business John Barilaro and North Coast Nationals MLC Ben Franklin announced major funding to upgrade the terminal building at the Ballina Byron Gateway Airport.

The \$5.4 million Terminal Precinct Expansion Project, with \$4.5 million from Regional Tourism Infrastructure Funding will allow Ballina Shire Council to improve an already great community facility and will see:

- The major expansion of the Departure Lounge and provide extra seating, dining and lounge areas
- A new café, sports bar and three additional retail shops
- Three additional undercover external walkways
- New parking areas for shuttle buses and taxi operators
- New entry and exit points to the main parking area
- Landscaping to the forecourt

Other features will include improved pedestrian access, external street furniture, public art and a larger pick up and drop off area.

"This funding is tremendous news! With this upgrade we can provide additional air services, plus improved services and comfortable facilities for passengers. There will also be great economic benefits for the region with increased tourism and employment during and post construction," said Airport Manager, Neil Weatherson.

"Now our funding is secured we can now complete the terminal design and necessary documentation. Then we will appoint a contractor, and I expect to commence construction in June 2017.

"Our passenger numbers have been steadily increasing over the past five-years with annual figures far exceeding 480,000. We have 58 flights per week and are ranked number 12 in the top 50 Regional Airports in Australia and number two in NSW after Newcastle. It's a fantastic day for the Northern Rivers and all airport stakeholders!" declared Mr Weatherson.

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