

Qantas to resume flights to Malaysia

STAR 2 / DEC 2001

PENANG: Qantas Airways, through its subsidiary Australian Airlines, will resume flights to Malaysia either by September next year or January 2003, said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik.

He said he was told by Qantas Airways chief executive officer Geoff Dixon on Monday that the KL International Airport would be one of the destinations when the airline commences worldwide and regional operations "sometime in September next year."

"This will help boost tourism, trade and investment between Australia and countries in the region. It also means closer ties between Australasia and Malaysia," he told newsmen after briefing Penang MCA leaders on party matters at the Equatorial Hotel here on Tuesday.

Qantas withdrew its flights to Malaysia following the financial crisis in the late 1990s.

Dr Ling said: "Possibly Penang will also be one of the routes (for Australian Airlines). We will also look into (Australian Airlines) flights to Kuching and Kota Kinabalu," he said, adding his discussions with Dixon had been fruitful.

"They are expected to start flying either in August or September.

"Whether they can fly into KLIA by that time or by January 2003, it is up to them," he added.

On another matter, Dr Ling expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister-Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for agreeing to "usher in" the first batch of students to Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (Utar) in June.