

Statement from Helloworld Travel CEO Andrew Burnes

21 February 2019

Helloworld Travel CEO Andrew Burnes today corrected erroneous information aired in Senate Estimates:

"I did not organise any meetings between Russell Carstensen and Joe Hockey. Mr Carstensen's own email of 24 April, 2017 shows that he organised the meeting with Mr Hockey and I was simply CCed on the email."

"Further, Mr Hockey and I did not discuss the meeting in Washington at any time after it took place. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) employees were present at all times in that meeting and the meeting was disclosed by Mr Carstensen to Department of Finance and Administration (DOFA) at the time, as was appropriate and necessary under the contractual arrangements with DOFA."

"I emphatically deny ever having told Mr Carstensen that Mr Hockey "owes me" or any words to that effect. Joe Hockey and I have been close friends for 20 years and it would be ridiculous to suggest I would say or imply he owes me anything."

Mr Carstensen, who was head of both QBT and Air Tickets at the time of the meeting with Mr Hockey and the DFAT employees, resigned from Helloworld Travel in May 2018 and left the business immediately.

Mr Burnes pointed out that he had never received special treatment from Liberal Governments. He said the Whole of Government Accommodation Management contract awarded to AOT, which was founded by Mr Burnes in 1987, was won under the federal Labor Government in 2012. In 2015, AOT tendered for the Whole of Government Travel Management contract – under a federal Coalition Government – and was unsuccessful. AOT was a competitor of Helloworld's when both these contracts were awarded and the two companies later merged in 2016.

-ENDS-

About Helloworld Travel Limited

- Helloworld Travel Limited (ASX: HLO) is a leading Australian & New Zealand travel distribution company, comprising retail travel networks, destination management services (inbound), air ticket consolidation, wholesale travel services, corporate travel management services and online operations.
- HLO has over 2000 staff located in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, the USA, Asia, India and UK/Europe and over 2300 members of its travel agency networks in Australia and New Zealand.
- Helloworld Travel is the proud naming rights partner of Volleyball Australia and the *Helloworld Travel Volleeyroos* men's and women's national teams.
- HLO's corporate businesses include QBT, APX (NZ), GO C&I, AOT Hotels and from today, Show Group Enterprises.

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