



# Media Release

## John Anderson

Deputy Prime Minister • Leader of The Nationals  
Minister for Transport and Regional Services

### A New Era for Search and Rescue in Northern Australia

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An advanced high-speed aircraft will provide northern Australia with an unprecedented level of search and rescue support under a \$24.5 million deal announced today by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, John Anderson.

AeroRescue Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of the Paspaley group, has won the contract to provide a Dornier 328 twin-engine turboprop aircraft based in Darwin that will be on permanent stand-by for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).

“The aircraft will be fitted with surface search radar, a Forward Looking Infra-Red camera and direction finding equipment. Under the contract, it will be ready to respond to an emergency within 25 minutes,” Mr Anderson said.

“This will be the first time a rapid-response aircraft with these capabilities has been available in northern Australia. The aircraft is capable of flying in all weather conditions and of speeds in excess of 600 kph. It will be able to deploy life rafts and other emergency equipment across Northern Australia.

“The new dedicated service for northern Australia is part of the four year \$18.9 million funding package announced in the 2004 Federal Budget to strengthen AMSA’s search and rescue capability.

“This enhanced capability demonstrates the Australian Government’s commitment to boat and aircraft operators around the country and will be of particular benefit to regional Australia.”

AeroRescue won the seven-year contract after a competitive tender process.

The contract will commence in February 2005, with the Dornier 328 coming into service in August 2005 after the installation of sophisticated search and rescue equipment. In the interim a Beech 200T twin-engine aircraft will provide a rapid-response search and rescue service for AMSA.

“At present, search and rescue operations in northern Australia are carried out by general aviation companies using staff trained in search and rescue techniques as part of their overall operations,” Mr Anderson said.

“Australia is responsible for providing search and rescue across 10 per cent of the earth’s surface. In the last six years, maritime and aviation search and rescue operations coordinated by the AMSA have saved more than 2000 people.”

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\* A digital image of a Dornier 328 Aircraft is available.