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Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Minister's Statement at Media Conference, MH370 Ministerial Tripartite Meeting, Malaysia

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Thank you Minister Liow.

I would like to thank you and Minister Yang, for our productive discussions and the cooperative manner in which you have approached the complex issues that we have discussed today.

Today's announcement is very significant not only for our three countries, but more importantly for the family and friends of those on board the aircraft. I take this opportunity to honour the memory of the passengers and crew on board MH370 and acknowledge the enormous loss felt by their loved ones.

The search for MH370 is currently ongoing. At this very moment vessels are in the search area carrying out their challenging work and we remain hopeful the aircraft will be located.

However, should this not occur, we have today agreed to suspend the search at the completion of the 120,000 square kilometre search area.

This decision was not taken lightly nor without sadness and I want to emphasise that our work is continuing in analysing data, inspecting debris and considering all new information.

However, in the absence of credible new evidence to assist in identifying the specific location of the aircraft, a further search is not currently

viable. We have been mindful that any future search needs to have a high likelihood of success to justify raising the hopes of family and friends.

I want to impress upon the families the enormous task that has been undertaken over the last two and a half years and assure them that every effort has been made to locate the aircraft.

We have used the best science available, cutting edge technology, as well as highly skilled professionals who are the best in their field.

I have been overwhelmed by the commitment and dedication shown by the hundreds of people involved in this unprecedented challenge.

I want to reassure family and friends: we are all on the same team, we all want to find answers to the questions about what happened to MH370 and we all want to locate the aircraft.

I would like to make particular mention of the crews on the ships that have continued to work in extreme weather conditions in one of the most inhospitable areas in the world, in an attempt to provide answers.

I also commend all those involved on land, planning the search, analysing data and coordinating search efforts. Their tireless work has continued to improve our knowledge of the search area and is critical in our efforts to find the aircraft.

I note media commentary regarding the identification of the priority search area and offer the following comment:

Everyone is entitled to an opinion but I won't be second guessing the experts.

We have relied on expert analysis of the facts we have to work on and made decisions to search in the 'most probable' location for MH370

This decision was based on what we know from the last satellite communications with the aircraft. This information shows the aircraft was in a high rate of descent, so we believe the aircraft will be located somewhere near what is known as the 7th arc.

We remain hopeful that we will still locate the aircraft in the remaining priority area, but if we don't I hope that new information will come to light and that the aircraft will be located.

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