

# On the way back to KI

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## More flights, major rebuilds for premier tourist destination

Extra flights will be scheduled to Kangaroo Island to boost tourism as the region continues to recover from bushfires and the pandemic.

The SA Tourism Commission has reached a commercial agreement with Qantas to increase services between Kingscote and Adelaide to 12 return flights each week during the coming summer.

Premier Peter Malinauskas made the announcement during a visit to Southern Ocean Lodge, which is being rebuilt after it was destroyed by the bushfires of summer 2019-20.

He said more direct flights would open up the island.

"We're very optimistic about the future here and the more travellers we can get to the island, that's better for the

local economy and, as demand continues to grow, we would hope to see yet more capacity come online," he said.

Mawson MP Leon Bignell said the additional flights would also make it easier for locals to get to the mainland for health appointments and meetings.

The new schedule will mean, in summer, there will be two flights each weekday as well as daily flights on weekends.

Then, in winter next year, there will be nine return flights each week to the island.

Currently, there are nine weekly return flights in summer and six in winter.

The outbound time of flights will also change from 3.05pm to 5pm after requests from the community.

Mr Malinauskas said the amount of funding put forward by the state government as part of the Qantas agreement could not be revealed because it was commercial-in-confidence.

The flight changes will coincide with the reopening of the luxury Southern Ocean Lodge, which is due for completion this December.

Manager John Hird said the lodge, which caters to "high-value travellers", would be "bigger and better than it was before".

"I think it certainly puts KI on the map for South Australians, now we just need to re-expand it back to the world and with the Southern Ocean Lodge reopening that's certainly going to happen," he said.

The \$55m rebuild offers 25 rooms compared with the 21 of the previous site – with bookings now available starting at \$3400 per night.

Mr Malinauskas toured the Ocean Pavilion, which sleeps eight people at a cost of \$18,000 a night.

Also on Thursday, Deputy Premier Susan Close visited the new visitor centre at Flinders Chase National Park – another site that was destroyed by the bushfires.

The \$19.5m centre, which will include cafe and retail space, is due to be finished by mid-January 2024.

Mr Malinauskas, Dr Close, ministers and senior members of government are on Kangaroo Island for Country Cabinet this week.



Peter Malinauskas and his cabinet ministers visited the rebuild of Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island. Right, the lodge after it was destroyed by fire in 2020. Pictures: Supplied, 7NEWS