



PRESS RELEASE

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NEW STAIR LIFT TO IMPROVE SERVICE TO PASSENGERS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY

The Cayman Islands Airports Authority (CIAA) is pleased to announce the implementation of enhanced enplaning and deplaning processes at Owen Roberts International Airport (ORIA) for Passengers with Reduced Mobility (PRM) in the form of Ambistair Stair Lifts.

With the CIAA's approval, Fixed Base Operator and Ground Handling Service Provider, Island Air, now operates two Ambistair Stair Lifts which give airlines the ability to provide passengers with reduced mobility a safer and more comfortable experience when embarking or disembarking aircraft in Grand Cayman. The Ambistair design, which is based on the wheelchair lifts used in homes across the world, has been modified to allow access on the same aircraft stairs used by able-bodied passengers and is approved for use by international aviation regulatory bodies.

According to Marcus Cumber, Managing Director and owner of Island Air, his company wanted to ensure that any equipment purchased would enhance the safety of passengers with reduced mobility, while at the same time allowing families of the disabled passengers to board together, without any delays. Mr. Kerith McCoy, CIAA's Senior Manager Airport Operations (ORIA), is extremely pleased that Island Air has partnered with the CIAA to provide this needed equipment. Mr. McCoy, remarked, "While meeting recognised industry standards in PRM handling, the provision of this service will further enhance the customer experience at Owen Roberts International Airport. We sincerely thank Mr. Cumber and his team for realising this objective which will significantly benefit airport users with reduced mobility."



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The Premier, Honourable McKeeva Bush, also offered congratulatory remarks to Island Air in making this service available at the airport, “I am excited, as is the Department of Tourism, to see that we are taking additional steps to ensure all of our guests experiences are as memorable as possible. Due in part to our exceptional marine and dive environment, and the generally accepted understanding that diving is beneficial to persons with disabilities; we have been seeing an increase in disabled divers coming to the Cayman Islands. While our dive operators have been praised on their professionalism in the execution of dive activities for the disabled, we still have much further to go generally for persons with disabilities.”

The Hon. Rolston Anglin, JP, Minister of Education, Training & Employment also expressed his appreciation, “On behalf of the Ministry of Education, Training & Employment and our Committee for Persons with Disabilities, I wish to thank Island Air for providing this crucial service for persons with disabilities living in and visiting our islands. This service has been needed for a long time and will truly improve the safety and experience of persons with mobility challenges when boarding and deplaning an aircraft. Many services for persons with disabilities are still needed in our country but through the support of such private entities as Island Air we can achieve our goals and develop a more universally accessible community for all persons. I would also like to congratulate the airlines that have contracted these services and, also, thank the Airports Authority for assisting with the arrangements to ensure that this service became available. Through such teamwork and partnerships, our country benefits immensely.”

Expressing her delight that this service has finally become available, after so many years of airline personnel having to manually carry her son up the stairs of the aircraft for boarding and deplaning, Ms. Mitzi Callan remarked, “I congratulate the CIAA and Island Air for recognizing the importance of safely-lifting mobility-challenged persons on and off aircraft! My son, Morgan, travels frequently and is always apprehensive about boarding. This new system is considerably safer for both the disabled and staff. For that, we thank the CIAA and Island Air.”



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Mr. Roger Muller, Founder and President of Stay-Focused Inc., a US-based non-profit organisation that offers scuba diving experiences to teens and young adults with disabilities, also remarked, “As someone who works with persons with disabilities and has brought numerous program participants to Grand Cayman for the past eight years, I am delighted to see that Island Air has taken the initiative to introduce this service. Persons with disabilities are always aware of efforts that have been made to offer them access, and the process of getting on and off a plane can be challenging. Most importantly, they want to retain their sense of independence and dignity, and the stair lifts will provide excellent support for those choosing to make use of them. The stair lifts will also ensure passenger safety, which is always a priority. Island Air’s introduction of the stair lifts sends a positive signal to the disabled community and speaks well for Cayman’s commitment to treating all persons equally.”

The Ambistair stair lifts are fully operational and passengers with reduced mobility can now make arrangements with their travel agents or airline for provision of this service.

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