

Tourism takes off with Attracting Aviation fund

11 February 2023

- The Attracting Aviation Investment Fund (AAIF) has secured more than \$839 million in overnight visitor expenditure for the Queensland economy each year since launching 12 months ago
- 14 deals struck through the fund to introduce or restart services to Queensland's four international airports.

Twelve months since launching the \$200 million aviation war chest, the AAIF has secured more than \$839 million in overnight visitor expenditure for the Queensland economy each year delivering an additional 1,068,808 inbound airline seats along with 7,715 good jobs.

Tourism Minister Stirling Hinchliffe today marked the anniversary of the AAIF, a nation-leading partnership with Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Cairns international airports.

The fund has struck 14 deals with the aviation industry to introduce or restart services to the airports, including three new routes, attracting visitors back from the US, Canada, Asia, New Zealand and the Middle East to experience Queensland's world-class tourism experiences.

Deals signed under AAIF include new direct flights from San Francisco to Brisbane on United Airlines along with returning services from Haneda to Cairns on Virgin, Kuala Lumpur to the Gold Coast on Air Asia X and EVA Air's additional flights from Taipei to Brisbane.

Through AAIF, Philippine Airlines has increased services from Manilla to Brisbane to five per week, generating more than \$12 million for the economy along with 17,520 inbound seats per year and 110 good jobs.

The combined \$200 million investment is estimated to deliver up to 5.3 million airline seats per year, generating almost \$4 billion in overnight visitor expenditure.

The one-year anniversary of the fund follows a strong festive season for domestic tourism in Queensland with holidaymakers spending more than \$4 billion in the state's visitor economy. From 10 December to 9 January, Queensland and interstate holidaymakers generated 15 million visitor nights, up almost 2.5 per cent on the 2021 festive season.

Tourism and Events Queensland's (TEQ) \$5 million [Queensland is Calling](#) campaign driving future bookings, calling on travellers from New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand to discover something new in the sunshine state this year.

Media Release



TEQ is also working with overseas travel and airline partners to entice international visitors back with a number of campaigns live around the world – from ‘Good to Go’ in newly re-opened markets like Hong Kong and China to ‘A Beautiful Way to Be’ in other markets and a major new partnership with global travel heavyweight Expedia to launch next week.

For more information on the AAIF, visit <https://www.dtis.qld.gov.au/tourism/aviation>.

Tourism Minister Stirling Hinchliffe

“It’s terrific to celebrate Queensland’s strong domestic tourism recovery, but we know there’s more work to do on rebuilding international holiday arrivals.

“Rebuilding international visitor numbers is high on our agenda as more flights mean more tourists spending money in Queensland, creating good jobs.

“I’m looking forward to signing more deals with all of our international airports to continue restoring the vitally important international travel market.”

Brisbane Airport Corporation Executive General Manager of Aviation Ryan Both

“During December and January, international travel at BNE was back to 61 per cent of pre-Covid levels, so we still have a way to go to rebuild our network. But compared with one year ago when we were at just 2 per cent capacity, we have come a long way.

“There remains a shortage of aircraft and flight crew so every time a jet becomes available, we are competing with cities across the globe for that new service. This fund helps give Queensland the edge at a time when every flight means more local jobs and more Queensland exports.”

Queensland Airports Limited Chief Commercial Officer Adam Rowe

“Through the support of this initiative, Queensland Airports Limited has been able to secure half a million additional seats on international services through Gold Coast Airport.

“This has helped restore important overseas connections into Queensland from destinations such as Singapore, Japan, Kuala Lumpur and New Zealand.

“There is a lot to look forward to this year, and with the continuing support of AAIF, we are welcoming back AirAsia X’s Kuala Lumpur service to the Gold Coast which will deliver an important link from Malaysia into Queensland.”

Cairns Airport CEO Richard Barker

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“We have seen the significant benefits of the AAIF here in Cairns with the commencement of Virgin Australia’s year-round, daily direct flights from Tokyo Haneda, in partnership with All Nippon Airways (ANA), along with the restoration of flights to Singapore and New Zealand.

“Data shows us that more Japanese tourists are likely to visit Cairns when a full-service carrier offers direct flights to Tokyo. We have not had these services in Cairns for more than 10 years, and we expect that the commencement of these flights will lead to a major increase of Japanese tourists in the region, particularly given Virgin Australia’s powerful affiliation with ANA, a trusted global carrier.

“International passenger figures remain at approximately 45 per cent of pre-Covid, with 6,800 passengers per week passing through the international terminal. With international airline capacity from key markets to Cairns slow to return, we are cautiously optimistic we may reach 60 per cent by the peak winter season.

“We are grateful for the support Cairns Airport has received from the AAIF so far and we look forward to working with the Queensland Government on further opportunities with our airline partners in this space.”

Sunshine Coast Airport CEO Andrew Brodie

“It is critical for the future growth of the Sunshine Coast and wider region to have direct international connections into Sunshine Coast Airport.

“International connections will have far reaching benefits for the region and we look forward to working with Government to identify opportunities that will bring international visitors directly into the Sunshine Coast and support the airport’s role as the third gateway airport for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.”

Tourism and Events Queensland CEO Patricia O’Callaghan

“Traditionally international visitors stay longer and spend more and that’s why it is so important for us to rebuild the international market.

“We’ve been working hard since international borders re-opened to reconnect with the international trade distribution system as well as keep Queensland top of the list in a very competitive environment.

“TEQ has rapidly returned to a significant international marketing schedule working with airlines, trade partners and Tourism Australia to bring international visitors back to Queensland.

“Supported by the AAIF program, there is partnership right across Government and the industry to see these valuable markets return.”

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QTIC CEO Brett Fraser

“Re-establishing and attracting new direct international airline routes is fundamental to the revival of Queensland’s tourism industry.

“For the last two years, Queensland’s visitor economy has been kept afloat by a thriving domestic tourism market, but our continued success now relies on the return of international guests.

“The \$200 million aviation war chest will help secure millions more airline seats each year and will generate almost \$4 billion in overnight visitor expenditure. Numbers as big as these will have a huge impact on our Queensland tourism operators.”

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Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is the peak industry body for tourism in Queensland representing more than 3,000 members. QTIC is a private sector, membership-based organisation which, since 2001, has worked to influence and shape the state’s tourism business environment that directly contributes \$27.2 billion to the Queensland’s economy and employs more than 237,000 Queenslanders.

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