



Media release

Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and
Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics
and Paralympics Sport and Engagement
The Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe MP

China Southern on runway to Queensland

- Direct flights to Brisbane from Guangzhou with China Southern Airlines restart in mid-November.
- Initially four flights per week, then growing to daily services.
- Predicted to generate almost \$441 million for the visitor economy over three years and support up to 1,790 good Queensland jobs.

The Palaszczuk Government's \$200 million aviation war chest partnership with the State's four international airports has locked in the first direct flights to Queensland from China since the pandemic.

From 17 November 2023, China Southern Airlines will fly four non-stop services a week to Brisbane from Guangzhou, growing to daily services within two years.

China Southern Airlines will land 59,000 inbound seats at Brisbane International Airport in the first year of operation.

Over three years, China Southern will fly almost 278,000 inbound seats into Brisbane, generating nearly \$441 million for the visitor economy and supporting up to 1,790 Queensland jobs.

In 2019 before the pandemic, China was Queensland's leading source of international visitors with 497,000 Chinese travellers contributing just over \$1.61 billion in overnight visitor expenditure.

China is also a significant source of international students for Queensland's biggest services export with 21,680 enrolments during 2022.

Last week, the Chinese Government announced it was lifting the pandemic suspension of its Approved Destination Status scheme, allowing travel agencies in China to book outbound group travel to Australia.

China Southern from Guangzhou is the 25th direct international service secured by the \$200 million Attracting Aviation Investment Fund (AAIF).

The 25 services are predicted to deliver more than 1.91 million direct, inbound international seats, up to \$1.49 billion for the visitor economy and 18,566 good Queensland jobs.

Tourism Minister Stirling Hinchliffe said:

"Securing China Southern from Guangzhou is a game changer, and an incredibly important step in rebuilding Queensland's international visitor economy after the pandemic.

"Previously, flights from Guangzhou have landed a lion's share of inbound travellers from mainland China, Queensland's biggest source of overseas visitors and contributors to our visitor economy.

"Queensland is Australia's favourite holiday destination, and we're keen to see Chinese travellers falling in love all over again with our awe-inspiring visitor experiences.

“China is crucial to Tourism and Events Queensland’s Blueprint for growing an \$11 billion international visitor economy on our runway to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.”

Jason Sun, China Southern Regional General Manager Australia and NZ said:

“Since 2009, China Southern Airlines has been actively pursuing its internationalization strategy, known as the "Canton Route."

During the challenging times presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, although we withdrew flights, we never gave up on this market and waited patiently for the right timing to come back.

The resumption of this flight is a testament to the valuable support provided by the Queensland Government and Brisbane Airport to China Southern Airlines and showcases our shared vision for the future.

“China Southern Airlines aims to further expand the "Canton Route" and, in turn, contribute to the influx of tourists from China as well as business and leisure travelers from other parts of the globe to Queensland.”

Brisbane Airport CEO Gert-Jan de Graaff said:

“Currently more than half of Queensland’s visitors from China are forced to fly via Sydney or Melbourne and the rest are coming via destinations like Singapore and Hong Kong. Today’s announcement will restore Queensland’s direct connection to our most lucrative market.

“No single country has a bigger impact on Queensland’s tourism industry as China. We welcome China Southern Airlines back to the BNE family, and the thousands of tourists who will follow, and the good jobs they’ll support across Queensland.”

Tourism and Events Queensland CEO, Patricia O’Callaghan said:

“This is news our tourism industry has been eagerly awaiting.

“Twice this year I’ve travelled to China to meet with stakeholders and rally Team Queensland to ensure we not just re-establish this market but hopefully grow it.

“When China’s borders opened earlier this year, we immediately kicked off the ‘Queensland is Good to Go’ campaign to encourage travellers back and will partner with China Southern to drive demand.

“We know how important this market is and will be working hard to put Queensland right at the top of the ‘must do’ list.”

Queensland Tourism Industry Council CEO Brett Fraser said:

“It is great to be welcoming back direct flights between Guangzhou and Queensland’s capital city. “The return of these giants of aviation to our skies is a good sign of tourism confidence and revitalisation.

“Better connectivity and greater availability of direct flights makes Queensland a more appealing destination and gives us a competitive edge in a highly competitive global market.

“We know that international visitors spend more and stay longer. The success of our tourism operators hinges on the return of the lucrative international market.”

Australia-China Business Council CEO Elizabeth Sullivan said:

“The return of these flights is hugely important for facilitating two-way direct people-to-people links, particularly for those in the trade and investment space, and across the broader community, including in tourism and education.

“Behind all the trade and investment numbers are hundreds of Queensland companies and thousands of jobs across the State. These flights will make it so much smoother and easier for those wanting to do business or to travel to now visit Queensland and/or China.”

Next generation aircraft

China Southern will operate the new generation Airbus A350 aircraft to Brisbane. The aircraft is designed to be 50 per cent quieter, delivering 25 per cent less fuel burn and CO2 emissions per seat, compared to previous generation aircraft.

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