



MEDIA RELEASE

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China Eastern Airlines to fly daily to Brisbane

Queensland is set to welcome more than 120,000 new visitors over the next four years with China Eastern Airlines to increase its direct Shanghai-Brisbane flights to daily.

Addressing State Parliament today, Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said the increase from four flights a week to a daily service would inject \$138 million in to the Queensland economy.

“The additional services have been secured with the support of our Connecting with Asia Fund and will provide Chinese visitors access to our best destinations right across Queensland,” Ms Palaszczuk said.

“China is Queensland’s most valuable and fastest growing international market, with visitors spending \$1 billion over the past year. We know that securing additional international flights to Queensland is the best way to grow tourism.

“At the 2015 election, I committed to boosting the Attracting Aviation Fund by \$10 million over three years for new flight routes attracting international visitors. Since then, we have secured new flights bringing 600,000 additional seats to Queensland airports from Coolangatta to Cairns, injecting \$450 million into our economy every year.”

“The latest international tourism data shows last financial year we welcomed more than 2.6 million overseas visitors, who spent an estimated \$5.2 billion in Queensland.”

Tourism Minister Kate Jones said the flights were secured through a Consortium including Tourism and Events Queensland, Brisbane Airport Corporation, Gold Coast Tourism, Brisbane Marketing, Tourism Whitsundays and Tourism Australia.

“With Brisbane the main gateway to Queensland, these additional flights are also a significant win for the Gold Coast and Whitsundays,” Ms Jones said.

“It will offer Chinese travellers easier access to many of our iconic destinations known for their world class beauty, natural environments, unique experiences and world-class events.”

The Palaszczuk Government is investing \$33.5 million through the Advance Queensland: Connecting with Asia Strategy matched by industry contributions to increase the growth of visitors from across Asia.

The Executive Vice President of China Eastern Airlines Mr. Tian Liuwen said the number of Chinese overseas travellers was increasing each year.

“Approximately 120 million Chinese visitors travelled overseas in 2016, with 1.2 million passengers coming to Australia. Queensland is encountering tremendous opportunities for development of tourism business from the Chinese market,” Mr Tian said.

“China Eastern Airlines will increase its flight frequency from four flights per week to daily, 11 months after the inaugural flight departed from Shanghai to Brisbane in December last year.

“It will not only fulfil the promise we have made, but also show our confidence in the Queensland market, as well as our cooperation with the Queensland Government.

“We truly appreciate the support from the Queensland Government through Tourism and Events Queensland as well as Brisbane Airport, Brisbane Marketing, Gold Coast Tourism, Tourism Whitsundays and Tourism Australia for the successful operation of this route.

“We also believe that China Eastern Airlines will open up new opportunities for economic and cultural exchange not only between Shanghai and Queensland, but also between China and Australia.”

Brisbane Airport Corporation CEO and Managing Director Julieanne Alroe said for an airline to grow to a daily flight in such a short time after launch shows the strength of the market and the popularity of the service.

“It is an enormous show of faith in the market by China Eastern and the result of positive collaboration with all the partners involved in promoting this service both in China and in Australia,” Ms Alroe said.

“The Chinese visitor market is currently the second largest for Brisbane Airport, averaging 14 per cent growth per year in the past five years.

“New daily flights will help grow this important market, providing benefits for every sector of our economy, from business and investment to tourism, trade and education.”

Lord Mayor Graham Quirk said China was Brisbane’s largest international visitor market and the increased services from China Eastern Airlines revealed the growing significance of the Chinese tourism market to the city.

“Brisbane is a major player in the Asia-Pacific region and continues to grow as we are recognised globally as a New World City,” Cr Quirk said.

“Brisbane already welcomes 217,000 visitors from China each year and we’re delighted China Eastern Airlines is opening up more direct access from Shanghai.

“Increased air capacity means extra investors, international students and tourists to Brisbane, which will continue to boost our strong economy and create new jobs right across the city.”

Tourism Whitsundays’ CEO Craig Turner said that this opportunity to connect our regional Whitsunday airports to the major gateway of Brisbane will provide significant opportunities.

“The Whitsundays is one of the most beautiful destinations in the world and to be able to

work with the consortium partners and the government to offer world famous Heart Reef, which can only be seen in the Whitsundays, and the iconic Whitehaven Beach to the Chinese market is a fantastic opportunity,” Mr Turner said.

“The Whitsundays has seen strong growth out of China within the last few years and our commitment to the ‘Connecting with Asia’ consortium underlines our commitment to growing the Chinese market and offering them a premium Great Barrier Reef experience.

“The Whitsundays represented 44 per cent of all visits to the Great Barrier Reef last year and we are committed to providing Chinese visitors with that amazing experience.”

Gold Coast Tourism CEO Martin Winter said increasing aviation access remained of critical importance to the Gold Coast in capitalising on the growth opportunity from China.

“Eastern China, through the hub of Shanghai, has long delivered a significant proportion of Chinese visitation to the Gold Coast, therefore these increased services with China Eastern is a welcome development for the city,” Mr Winter said.

Tourism Australia CEO John O’Sullivan welcomed the announcement.

“It’s great to see one of our key strategic Chinese airline partners reaffirming their commitment to Australia, and to Queensland in particular, with this significant addition in aviation capacity,” he said.

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