

MEDIA RELEASE



For Immediate Release
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Airport Flying High With 80,000 New Seats

Whitsunday Coast Airport is flying high and have the magical 500,000 passenger barrier in their sights after securing a major deal with Jetstar for an extra 434 flights annually from July 1.

The deal, brokered after lengthy negotiations, will include an increase to daily direct flights return to Melbourne, return flights direct to Sydney 6 days a week and increased flights to Brisbane.

Mayor Andrew Willcox said he was excited that the extra flights have the potential to add 80,000 extra visitors by Jetstar to and from The Whitsundays.

"We need bums on seats, bodies in beds and buyers in our big and small retail outlets so it is great that our airport is delivering by increasing visitor numbers.

"This is a significant deal and will increase capacity by 27% on our 2019 numbers which to date, is our highest year on record," he said.

"Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic we had our sights set on breaking the magic 500,000 passenger barrier and this new deal puts us in the box seat to achieve that in the 2021/22 financial year.

"I am grateful for the support of our airline partners who have shown confidence in the ability of our region to be one of Australia's peak domestic tourism destinations.

"Our airport team deserve praise for taking the lead to reinvigorate our region as a destination as a lot of collaborative work has been done behind the scenes," Mayor Willcox said.

"We will continue to build relationships with all our airline partners and the community can be confident that the Whitsunday Coast Airport team will continue to work with all brands to continue increasing capacity."

Whitsunday Coast Airport Chief Operating Officer Craig Turner said the additional flights reflected the positive working relationship that existed with Jetstar.

"As we recover from the dark days of the pandemic Whitsunday Coast Airport continues to be one of the fastest growing regional airports in Australia.

"It is also a positive sign for our tourism operators and other related stakeholders that their resilience during recent challenging times is paying dividends," Mr Turner said.

"Tourism will continue to be one of the main economic drivers in The Whitsundays and these 434 extra flights from Jetstar will provide increased capacity to ensure we remain a tourism hotspot," Mr Turner said.

Tourism Whitsundays Chief Executive Officer, Tash Wheeler praised Council and the airport team for securing extra flights and said the increased capacity is fantastic for the region.

"These results demonstrate that our collaborative marketing efforts are cutting through domestically and driving tangible results.

"Our operators have continued to pivot their businesses during COVID to ensure they are putting their best foot forward which is kudos to them.

"The additional 80,000 seats with Jetstar reinforces that The Whitsundays is one of the most sought-after domestic holiday destinations and we can't wait to welcome more tourists over the next 12 months." Ms Wheeler said.

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About Tourism Whitsundays: *Tourism Whitsundays (TW) is the organisation responsible for destination marketing and visitor attraction for the Whitsunday region. It is the lead agency recognised by Tourism and Events Queensland and the Whitsunday Regional Council to lead the promotion of the region as a tourism destination. Tourism Whitsundays markets all aspects of the region including the Great Barrier Reef, Whitsunday Islands and Coast, accommodation, boating and sailing, fishing, touring, recreational activities, adventure, dining, shopping, weddings and honeymoons, conferencing and business events.*

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