

22 January 2019

Report Card in for NT Airports for 2018 - 19

In the current challenging economic climate, NT Airports is pleased to show some incremental successes on its report card for the past year; with more additional services and new routes on the horizon.

CEO NT Airports, Ian Kew said, "There is no doubt, the past twelve months have been tough and in the past few months we've seen some decline in passenger numbers through our airports. However there have been good outcomes in 2018 together with positive signs for the future."

"Significantly, May 2018 saw the arrival of Donghai Airlines first-ever scheduled air service between mainland China and Darwin. The new direct flight is expected to attract 30,000 visitors from China by 2020, making the launch a major milestone for the Territory."

"There's good news also to report for Alice Springs with Virgin Australia's twice weekly return service from Alice Springs to Brisbane launched in June 2018. Already this service has resulted in a 53% increase in the market for the FY 2017/18 year."

Both Darwin and Alice Springs tourism operators enjoyed a welcome tourism boost with visits from three Japanese charter flights touching down in August and October. The charters were arranged for high-yielding holiday visitors through JTB World Vacations, the largest wholesaler in Japan. Successful charter programs create demand for more charters and are often a precursor to regular scheduled flights.

Strong demand for Singapore and onward destinations in Asia and Europe continues with SilkAir adding two additional weekly services year-round in January 2018, to operate six times per week. As recently as last week, SilkAir announced a seventh weekly service on Saturdays,

commencing on 6 July 2019. Jetstar Asia also switched to a daily service during the peak holiday period of December and January.

In a major development for inbound tourism, the NT's capital city will now be connected to the NT's most popular tourism icon, Ayers Rock, when Qantas begin their new service between Darwin and Uluru on April 3. It is expected many Asian travellers will take advantage of the shorter flight time, rather than flying via Sydney to visit the NT. It is anticipated many visitors will also take the time to enjoy the Top End's festivals and events and explore Kakadu and Litchfield National Parks.

Bali, a long-time favourite holiday destination for Territorians, will now be perfectly serviced with two airlines operating at differing times to suit their own markets. Low-cost carrier Jetstar will continue to fly four times per week and full-service carrier, Virgin Australia, will fly three times per week, commencing a seasonal service from April until October between Darwin and Bali.

Territorians will be spoilt for choice for holiday destinations, as Airnorth makes a return to the Gold Coast with direct flights via Townsville commencing on the 3rd April.

Direct access to lucrative Asian markets is crucial to expand the NT's export opportunities for high value exports such as tropical fruits and seafoods. Darwin International Airport has received federal funding from the Building Better Regions Fund and North Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) to construct and develop a freight, cold storage and export hub. Construction of the facility is expected to commence in the second quarter of this year. NT Airports are looking forward to working with the government to expand export potential in the NT, creating more opportunities for our agribusinesses to export their goods to our northern neighbours.

CEO NT Airports, Ian Kew said, "It is essential for our population and economy to grow and that we convince airlines to fly to the NT. NT Airports works closely with the NT Government and Tourism NT as we have a shared interest in attracting more airlines to the NT. We will continue to develop domestic and inbound markets to bring new destinations on-line to increase tourism and freight opportunities and deliver Territorians greater choice and flexibility for their business and leisure travel needs."

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Fast Facts

New routes and additional services launched from NT Airports in 2018:

01 January - Silkair increased services from Darwin to Singapore to six times weekly year round

30 May – Donghai Airlines, twice-weekly service from Darwin to Shenzhen

19 June – Virgin Australia Airlines, twice-weekly from Alice Springs to Brisbane

28 October – Jetstar additional weekly (seasonal) service from Darwin to Singapore

August & October – JTB World Vacations Charter flights touch down in Darwin and Alice Springs

New routes and additional services to be launched from NT Airports in 2019:

3 April – Qantas, twice-weekly service from Darwin to Uluru

3 April – Airnorth, twice-weekly service from Darwin to Gold Coast (via Townsville)

10 April – Virgin Australia Airlines, three times weekly service from Darwin to Denpasar

06 July – SilkAir, additional Saturday service from Darwin to Singapore

Freight facilities development

10 July 18 - \$4.8 million funding announced under Building Better Regions Fund

6 September 18 - \$150 million finance approved by NAIF for the \$300 million expansion of airport facilities in Darwin, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. A portion of the funding will go towards the construction of a freight, cold storage and export hub at Darwin International Airport. Construction is anticipated to commence in the second quarter of 2019 and is expected to create over 100 jobs through the construction phase.

