



Media Release

Department of Tourism, Sport and Culture

Donghai Airlines Announces More Flights on First Year Milestone

30 May 2019

Donghai Airlines has announced it will increase its Northern Territory flights from two per week to three per week from mid-July through August, based on increased demand over this peak period. The news comes as the airline celebrates one year of servicing the Northern Territory.

The first-ever direct air service between Darwin and mainland China is achieving results, bringing more Chinese visitors to the Territory and delivering significant flow-on benefits to the economy.

Between 30 May 2018, when the service began, and the end of February this year, Donghai Airlines has carried 7005 passengers on the route, according to the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, International Airline Activity.

Of these 7005 passengers, 3715 were inbound to Darwin and 3290 were outbound. The vast majority of visitors on the service have been Chinese nationals, reinforcing how valuable the route is for boosting inbound tourism.

Using an average spend of \$1916 per Chinese visitor (the latest figures from the International Visitor Survey for the year ending December 2018) these flights have brought \$7.1 million in new visitor expenditure into the Territory - this is additional money that would not be coming into the Territory economy if not for these flights.

Donghai Airlines has carried 70 tonnes of freight, of which 71 per cent, or 49.4 tonnes, was outbound. This means for each imported tonne from China, more than two tonnes were exported from Darwin. This is money in the pockets of Territory exporters, their employees and suppliers.

Inbound passenger load figures between Shenzhen and Darwin were 74 per cent in January 2019 and 65 per cent in February 2019.

Tourism Research Australia data for the year ending December 2018 shows Chinese visitors increased by 55 per cent compared to 2017, bringing Chinese visitors to 27,000 for the NT overall.

Once 12 months of flight data is available, it is anticipated the NT Government's

2020 target of 30,000 Chinese visitors will be exceeded, and China will have moved up the ranking from its current position as the NT's fifth largest international visitor source market.

The additional service is on a Friday (19 July, 26 July, 2 August and 9 August 2019), in addition to flights on Wednesdays and Sundays.

Quotes from Andrew Hopper, Department of Tourism, Sport and Culture Deputy CEO:

"These figures and the announcement of an extra flight per week from mid-July through August are great news for our tourism sector.

"It will take time to build sustainable demand for direct travel between China and Darwin, but already we are seeing promising results.

"To build on these results the NT Government, through Tourism NT, is continuing to invest in inbound tourism.

"We will continue to work towards reaching our 2020 target of 30,000 Chinese visitors per year, because more visitors means more money injected into the local economy and more jobs for Territorians.

"We also encourage Territorians to use the flights to access not only Shenzhen but also Hong Kong and other Asian destinations."

Quotes from Ian Kew, CEO NT Airport:

"The commencement of the Donghai services to Darwin has resulted in real benefits to the NT economy. These services create ongoing opportunities to support business and tourism growth, international education and open up new supply channels for air freight.

"Chinese visitors arriving in Darwin on the Wednesday service from Shenzhen can now connect directly to Uluru on the new Qantas direct service from Darwin, which will be a very attractive option to time-poor Asian and European travellers. It also allows holiday makers to visit both the Red Centre and the Top End for the ultimate Territory adventure.

"During the Chinese New Year period this year, many local families took the opportunity to visit China or to host relatives in Darwin for the first time, resulting in full flights during what is traditionally a very quiet period for both inbound and outbound travel.

"NT Airports will continue to undertake in-market activity to build outbound travel. So far this has included an airfreight seminar, travel agent familiarisation and sponsorship of various charities, business events and radio competitions."

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