

Media Release

The Hon Martin Pakula MP

Minister for Industry Support and Recovery

Minister for Trade

Minister for Business Precincts

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Racing



Monday, 22 November 2021

MORE INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS AS MELBOURNE'S RECOVERY TAKES OFF

Victoria is safely re-opening to the world with national carrier Qantas resuming international flights from Melbourne Airport today – reinstating our position as a global destination of choice.

Minister for Industry Support and Recovery and Minister for Trade Martin Pakula joined Qantas chief executive Alan Joyce and Melbourne Airport chief executive Lyell Strambi at Melbourne Airport as passengers on flight QF35 departed for Singapore.

QF35 is the first Qantas international passenger flight to depart Melbourne since March 2020, with flights to London and Los Angeles to resume in the next few weeks.

Qantas also announced a new passenger route from Melbourne to Delhi, starting on 22 December.

Prior to the pandemic, Victoria welcomed 178,000 visitors from India annually who injected more than \$500 million into the state's economy, and more than 67,000 international student enrolments were from India – the largest share of Indian students of any Australian state or territory.

Victoria is home to the largest Indian population in Australia, with more than 209,000 Victorians of Indian heritage recorded at the 2016 Census, and hosts leading Indian businesses including Cyient, HCL Technologies, Infosys, State Bank of India, TCS, Tech Mahindra and Wipro.

With quarantine-free travel now available for fully vaccinated international travellers, including international students returning under the state's International Student Arrivals Plan, the availability of a Melbourne-Delhi flight will help revitalise trade, tourism, international education, skilled migration and business connections.

The resumption of international flights will drive the recovery of the state's international aviation sector which directly employs 6,700 people and supports thousands of other jobs.

Before the pandemic, international flights brought more than 3.1 million international visitors to Victoria each year and injected \$8.8 billion of tourism expenditure into the economy.

International trade will also benefit from more international flights resuming as air freight is essential for high-value Victorian exports – \$7.3 billion in Victorian exports in 2019 were sent by air, supporting 23,000 direct and indirect jobs and contributing \$3.4 billion to Victoria's gross state product.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Industry Support and Recovery and Minister for Trade Martin Pakula

"A vibrant international aviation sector is what makes Melbourne a truly global city and reviving the visitor economy is key to our economic recovery."

"The new service to Delhi is wonderful news for our large Indian community as well as Indian business leaders, investors, international students and visitors."

"We're opening up to boost jobs, trade and tourism and most importantly, help Victoria bounce back bigger and better than ever."