

# Media Release

**The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP**  
Minister for Jobs and Industry  
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples  
Minister for Women



Friday, 19 January 2024

## MELBOURNE THE PICK FOR TURKISH AIRLINES' FIRST AUSTRALIAN FLIGHTS

One of the world's largest airlines has chosen Melbourne to launch its inaugural flights to Australia, bringing thousands of visitors to Victoria each year, increasing export capacity and creating hundreds of local jobs.

Minister for Jobs and Industry Natalie Hutchins today welcomed Turkish Airlines' decision to introduce direct flights between Melbourne and Istanbul, Türkiye, starting with three services each week from March 2024 with potential to grow to a daily service in the future.

Backed by the Allan Labor Government and Melbourne Airport, this is the first time an airline has offered direct flights between Türkiye and Australia.

A Turkish Airlines daily service would add 109,500 seats to Melbourne each year, contribute more than \$132 million annually to the state's economy and create an estimated 840-plus jobs in our aviation and tourism sectors.

The new flights will connect Türkiye to Australia's largest Türkiye-born community, and boost Victoria's access to key European, Middle Eastern, Balkan, and African markets via its hub in Istanbul – growing our tourism, international education, business and trade markets.

The Türkiye, Middle East and Africa region is one of Victoria's major trading partners, with two-way merchandise trade valued at \$5.48 billion in 2022-23. Daily flights by Turkish Airlines would add 3,650 tonnes of air freight capacity annually.

Turkish Airlines will commence its direct flights to Melbourne via Singapore, with plans to acquire new aircraft with the ability to operate the Istanbul to Melbourne service non-stop in the future.

In a significant recovery milestone, Turkish Airlines is the 39th international airline to service Melbourne Airport, restoring international seat capacity beyond 100 per cent compared to pre-pandemic.

Turkish Airlines joins a growing list of international airlines the Victorian Government has supported to increase flights to Melbourne including LATAM, Cathay Pacific, China Southern, Sichuan Airlines and Air India.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Jobs and Industry Natalie Hutchins**

*"Attracting a major international carrier like Turkish Airlines to Melbourne is a huge win for Victoria – it shows the strength of our tourism and export markets, whilst boosting local jobs across our state."*

### **Quote attributable to Melbourne Airport Chief Executive Officer Lorie Argus**

*"Turkish Airlines proudly serves more international destinations than any other airline and this will open up huge opportunities for Victorian travellers and exporters."*

### **Quote attributable to Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and Executive Committee Prof. Dr. Ahmet Bolat**

*"As the airline flying to more countries than any other, we are excited to add Melbourne to our flight network. Trade and business opportunities will boom as we bring Turkish and Australian people closer."*