

Media Release

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



Saturday, 2 March 2024

TURKISH AIRLINES, WELCOME TO MELBOURNE

Turkish Airlines' inaugural flight to Australia touches down in Melbourne today, paving the way for increased international trade and tourism and creating hundreds of local jobs.

Minister for Small Business Natalie Suleyman today represented Minister for Jobs and Industry Natalie Hutchins to welcome flight TK168 from Istanbul to Melbourne Airport.

Turkish Airlines – one of the world's largest airlines – will initially offer three services a week with a stop-over in Singapore, with potential for the flights to grow to a daily non-stop 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, providing better connections to the nation's largest city and Victoria's Türkiye-born community.

Introducing a Turkish Airlines daily service would add 109,500 seats to Melbourne each year, deliver an annual \$132 million boost to the state's economy and create an estimated 840-plus jobs in our aviation and tourism sectors.

The new flights will strengthen Victoria's access to key European, Middle Eastern, Balkan, and African markets via Istanbul – a major global trading hub – growing our tourism, international education, business and trade markets.

The Türkiye, Middle East and Africa region already has a strong relationship with Victoria as one of our major trading partners – two-way merchandise trade was valued at \$5.48 billion in 2022-23.

Melbourne Airport became the first capital city airport in Australia to exceed its pre-pandemic international seat capacity, signalling the strong recovery of Victoria's aviation industry.

Quote attributable to Minister for Jobs and Industry Natalie Hutchins

"Our international aviation sector continues to go from strength to strength. With more airlines choosing Melbourne, we're boosting tourism, trade, international education, business connections and local jobs."

Quote attributable to Minister for Small Business Natalie Suleyman

"Victoria is home to Australia's largest Turkish community and all Victorians will benefit from more direct flights out of Melbourne, boosting local tourism across our state creating jobs and supporting small businesses."

Quote attributable to Melbourne Airport Chief Executive Officer Lorie Argus

"We are thrilled Turkish Airlines has chosen Melbourne Airport to launch its Australian operations, providing travellers and Victorian exporters with more choice and improved access to Europe, Africa and the Middle East."

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 glad to add Australia to our flight network. Hosting the largest Turkish community in Australia, Melbourne has been on our radar for a long time and I believe our flights will be beneficial to everybody."

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