

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



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VISITOR ECONOMY TAKES OFF WITH SHENZHEN AIRLINES

Victoria's tourism is set for another major boost, with the Allan Labor Government announcing a deal with Melbourne Airport to bring Shenzhen Airlines to Melbourne.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos today announced that from December, three new direct flights per week will fly to Melbourne providing an extra 95,000 seats every year between China and Melbourne – further boosting Victoria's visitor economy.

Shenzhen Airlines is China's fifth-largest carrier and boasts a fleet of more than 230 aircraft, flying nearly 40 million passengers a year. The direct flights will open up onward connections for travellers to more than 90 destinations across Asia and Europe.

China remains Victoria's largest international visitor market, with 411,000 travellers spending \$2.9 billion in the year ending March 2025 – up 23.3 per cent year on year. By 2029, travellers from China to Victoria are forecast to reach 798,000.

The deal is the latest agreement funded through the Labor Government's \$7 million Visit Victoria Industry Partnerships Program (VVIIPP), an initiative from the Economic Growth Statement which sees industry partners match government investment dollar-for-dollar.

Since the inception of the program, a suite of new partnerships have been secured with partners such as Accor and Alpine Resorts Victoria as well major airlines including Delta Airlines and Air New Zealand, with agreements through the program collectively adding almost 300,000 seats per year to capacity in and out of Melbourne.

The deal comes as Melbourne Airport announced it had welcomed a record 11.9 million international passengers in the 2024/25 financial year – a jump of more than 8.3 per cent on the previous financial year.

Victoria's visitor economy is continuing to break records, with new hotel data from STR showing Melbourne hotels recorded their busiest night ever recently – with a record 25,089 hotel rooms sold in the CBD on Saturday, 26 July as fans flooded the city to watch the British & Irish Lions play the Wallabies at the MCG.

The city also recorded its busiest ever June for hotels, with 870,755 room nights booked across Greater Melbourne.

These hotel stays are supporting Victoria's tourism workforce of more than 288,000 workers – including 183,800 direct tourism jobs – with nearly three quarters of all direct jobs in the hospitality, accommodation and retail industries.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos

"These extra flights are a huge boost to our economy – it means more visitors at hotels, restaurants, and small businesses, as well as a boost to air freight capacity for Victorian exporters."

"This partnership highlights Victoria's global appeal and the strength of our \$40 billion visitor economy, which supports 288,000 jobs across the state."

Quote attributable to Visit Victoria CEO Brendan McClements

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“As Victoria’s largest international market, this new route connecting with China will ensure even more visitors can discover what makes Victoria ‘Every bit different’.”

Quote attributable to Shenzhen Airlines Vice President Na Na

“We will work closely with Melbourne Airport and Visit Victoria to efficiently facilitate two-way flows of trade, education, and cultural resources, delivering a more convenient and comfortable direct service for tens of thousands of passengers.”

Quote attributable to Melbourne Airport Chief of Aviation Jim Parashos

“Shenzhen is a vibrant, cosmopolitan city for travellers to explore, but it’s also a global hub for tech, electronics, and manufacturing that Victorian producers will now have direct access to.