

Media Release

The Hon Colin Brooks MP

Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing
Minister for Creative Industries



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VISITOR ECONOMY TAKES OFF AS SHENZHEN TOUCHES DOWN

The first Shenzhen Airlines flight into Melbourne has touched down, marking a major milestone for Victoria's visitor economy which will boost tourism, support local jobs and help Victorian businesses.

Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing Colin Brooks today joined Melbourne Airport Chief of Aviation Jim Parashos, Chinese Consul-General Fang Xinwen and Shenzhen Airlines Chair Li Shuxing to celebrate the inaugural flight, which will strengthen links between the two regions and boost Victoria's visitor economy.

The flights were secured by the Labor Government through the Industry Partnerships Program – an initiative from the Economic Growth Statement which sees industry partners match government investment dollar-for-dollar for destination marketing, creating demand amongst visitors to come to Victoria.

Direct services between Shenzhen and Melbourne will now operate three times a week, adding more than 95,000 seats each year and providing tourism operators with new opportunities to grow visitation, extend length of stay and support local jobs across the state.

The new route will also benefit Victorian travellers with more choice and connections, while creating freight opportunities that help local exporters and producers reach key markets in southern China.

Through the Industry Partnerships Program, the Labor Government has partnered with Melbourne Airport to attract major airlines – adding nearly 300,000 international seats annually into the state.

China is Victoria's largest international visitor market, with 453,000 Chinese visitors spending \$3.1 billion to the Victorian economy in the year ending September 2025 – an increase of 22.4 per cent on the previous year. The growth aligns with the Labor Government's China Strategy and 'Every bit different' marketing push in China.

Victoria's growth in visitors from China is almost double the national average, sitting at 32.7 per cent year-on-year growth, compared to an average of 16.5 per cent across Australia. By 2030, travellers from China to Victoria are forecast to reach 668,000.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing Colin Brooks

"Victorian businesses and workers are benefiting from a boom in tourists from China."

"These new flights will bring even more visitors to Victoria, increasing spending across tourism, hospitality and local businesses throughout the state."

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

"More direct flights mean more visitors choosing Victoria, exploring more of what our cities and regions have to offer – boosting our tourism economy which employs 288,000 Victorians."

"This strengthens one of our key visitor markets – bringing more tourists to Victoria and keeping hotels, restaurants, cafes and shops busy."

Quote attributable to Visit Victoria CEO Brendan McClements

“China is one of our most important international markets and direct flights like this play a critical role in converting interest into visitation and driving dispersal across the state.”

Quotes attributable to Melbourne Airport CEO Lorie Argus

“We know that every time the tyres of an international flight touch the tarmac at Melbourne Airport, Victoria is half a million dollars better off, so this new service will deliver benefits right across the state.”

“Shenzhen is one of China’s largest technology hubs and a fascinating gateway for Australians looking to explore the booming cities of the Pearl River Delta or beyond.”