

Perth Airport

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S AIRGATE





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Perth Airport is the hub for Western Australia's domestic traffic, its channel to Asia, Europe and beyond, and definitely the entrepôt for all of its trade: it is expanding to meet these challenges and to cope with future population growth

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Terminal 1 landside
food beverage area

When in 2012 we last visited Perth Airport in these pages Brad Geatches, Perth Airport's CEO, had already overseen a period of unprecedented growth as Perth became established as the capital of Australia's fastest growing state. Currently with a population of around two million souls, based on current trends, Perth's population will grow the fastest of any Australian city and overtake Brisbane in about 15 years' time when they both reach three million people. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' mid-range

growth projection, 5.5 million people will live in Perth by 2061, compared with Melbourne (8.6 million people), Sydney (8.5 million) and Brisbane (4.8 million). The city's infrastructure needs to prepare to meet these predictions, according to Committee for Perth CEO Marion Fulker: "This is a game changer. It means that we potentially have less than 40 years to more than double the number of houses, roads, public transport, hospitals, schools and services than have been built in the region over the past 185 years."

The airport will be crucial in supporting this level of expansion. In the 2012/13 financial year, Perth Airport recorded 9.9 million domestic passengers and 3.7 million international travellers through its terminals, an overall increase of 8.2 percent on the previous year. Traditionally the European routes have been a mainstay of traffic into Perth and there has been growth here with UK inbound traffic up by 6.7 percent and strong growth in Italian, French and German visitors. All in all, international traffic is still growing,

and immigration data to March 2014 indicates growth of 10.9 percent in Australian outbound travel in the last financial year.

Ultimately, Perth Airport's vision is to consolidate all commercial air services to one precinct, near the current International Terminal (T1), which will ensure greater convenience for customers. Competition to Europe will intensify further when the rapidly growing Middle Eastern carrier Etihad Airways begins daily flights to Perth in July 2014. However a big advantage Perth has



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International expansion

“The entry of SCOOT into the Perth market in December 2013 has boosted competition in the market”

lies in its close proximity to South-east Asia, with destinations such as Indonesia and Singapore popular with Perth residents. “The entry of SCOOT, the Singapore-based low-cost long-haul airline, into the Perth market in December 2013 has boosted competition in the market,” says Geatches. “Low cost carriers now account for over 30 percent of international seats and passengers now have the choice of up to ten different carriers for access into South-east Asia.” However, he adds, growth in the domestic market driven by the mining sector has slowed considerably since we last spoke, as many projects have moved from the construction to the production phase and consequently

for the time being fewer personnel are being shuttled inland to the mines.

Perth Airport is much more than just a runway and some terminals though. Covering more than 2,100 hectares, approximately 53 percent of the land is used for aviation. A third is used for non-aeronautical property development as it is a critical commercial land supply for the city of Perth and a natural home for transport/logistics companies and many of the service companies that work in the resource sector; and the remainder is set aside for permanent conservation of fauna and heritage sites. Additionally, it is well connected by road with the port of Fremantle, and is close to the main rail freight hub. Nevertheless in

Proud to deliver for Perth Airport



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2011 Perth Airport commenced an extensive, privately funded \$750 million redevelopment programme. “Our programme has gained significant momentum, with construction well advanced in and around all of the terminal buildings – and indeed right across the airfield,” Geatches says.

The first component of the redevelopment – the new Domestic Terminal 2 (T2) – was completed in less than 18 months and opened to the public on 2 March 2013. The design and construction of T2 was driven largely by the resource sector’s fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) workforce deployment model, and represents a major step forward in meeting the requirements of the resource sector, which remains a major customer. “We have a significant departure peak in the morning,” says Geatches. “We are just one element of a very substantial logistics chain for the mining companies,” he stresses. The location of T2 next to the current International Terminal (T1) has improved the travel experience for these workers, and other passengers from regional Western Australia, as they are now able to connect through to international services in one convenient location. T2 includes some innovative environmental features such as rainwater harvesting and re-use for toilets and gardens, with 2000 cubic metres of underground storage capacity; underground ducting of ventilation for air-conditioning to reduce energy use; and a sophisticated building management system to reduce energy consumption during operations. There is also a co-generation plant that uses its heat to power the air-conditioning for both terminals, which is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 55 percent.

The second major project is the \$80 million expansion of the international arrivals area and includes extending T1 by 60 metres to the east, effectively doubling the size of the existing arrivals area. The first phase was completed in November 2013 when the new immigration arrivals area was relocated into an

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Pier airside
looking at T1

“We were acknowledged as one of the top 10 best performing companies in Western Australia for Corporate Wellness”

extensive area, more than double the size of the previous immigration area, next to a new inbound walk-through JR/Duty Free store. This first phase also included the completion of new offices on level 1 for Customs and Border Protection and the Department of Immigration and, on the ground floor, new toilets, car rental booths and a quiet/prayer room. Work is now well underway on the ground floor to double the size of the baggage reclaim and quarantine areas, with the first of three double loop baggage belts now in operation. The international departures area is changing too. With 16 additional check-in counters, four aerobridges, a new split level departures lounge and two A380-capable aircraft gates, the first of which became operational in December 2013, the departures experience will be transformed.

The third major project – the \$190 million Domestic Pier and \$145 million expansion of the international departures area – is also going well. This work represents the largest and most complex project in this current phase of redevelopment. When completed, the contemporary designed pier will become home to Virgin Australia’s domestic services and offer 12 aerobridge gates, 14 check-in counters, new check-in and bag-drop technology, a large domestic passenger security screening zone, a premium guest lounge for Virgin Australia, a central retail and dining area with an impressive range of outlets, a large baggage reclaim area and additional retail outlets near the front of the terminal. Energy-saving aspects of this project include external shading panels and skylights,

energy efficient lighting, temperature control measures in intermittently occupied spaces, travelators and escalators activated by motion sensors, and automatic water efficient fixtures in all restrooms.

This work represents a unique partnership of private and public sector organisations working together to a common vision. That is why, says Brad Geatches, Perth Airport invests heavily in the health and well-being of its staff. “This was recently recognised when we were acknowledged as one of the top 10 best performing companies in Western Australia for Corporate Wellness by HBF (a leading private health fund). We implemented a Wellness Program offering a range of opportunities that promote a healthy lifestyle including on-site therapeutic massages, reflexology, skin checks, nutrition and fitness sessions. The results have been very positive with less absenteeism, better productivity and greater retention of staff.” Of course professional training is a high priority too. Team members are encouraged to undertake tertiary studies through the Study Assistance Program, and in partnership with the Central Institute of Technology, they are also offered a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program to help them achieve formal qualifications. **BE**

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