SYDNEY AIRPORT TO WELCOME HAINAN AIRLINES IN DECEMBER

News / Airports / Routes

Sydney Airport is set to welcome its sixth new airline this year when Hainan Airlines commences services from Xi'an to Sydney in December.

Hainan Airlines' twice-weekly Xi'an-Sydney service will commence on December 24 until the end of the peak northern winter season in late March 2016, subject to government approval. The route will be operated by an A330-200 aircraft with 222 seats.

"We're excited to be welcoming Hainan Airlines to Sydney in December, which will bring more Chinese tourists to Sydney and provide Sydneysiders with a direct flight to the home of the Terracotta Warriors," Sydney Airport managing director and chief executive officer Kerrie Mather said.

"China is Sydney Airport's fastest growing inbound visitor market and this new airline will bring even more Chinese visitors to Sydney and NSW, with associated tourism and economic benefits."

"Hainan Airlines will be Sydney Airport's sixth Chinese mainland airline serving destinations across

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mainland China, making Sydney Airport the world's leading airport for long haul Chinese airlines."

"We continue to work to provide a positive visitor experience for our Chinese passengers, from Mandarin speaking Airport Ambassadors to our Chinese signage, website, apps and social media presence."

Ms Mather said the new Chinese airline was another positive outcome of Sydney Airport's work with government and industry to grow tourism, as well as the expanded China-Australia bilateral agreement in early 2015.

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events Stuart Ayres said the arrival of Hainan Airlines in Sydney next month is a huge coup for New South Wales.

"I'm delighted we can confirm another international airline will be flying to Sydney bringing even more visitors to our great state," Mr Ayres said.

"China is NSW's largest inbound tourism market with 526,000 Chinese visitors last financial year - an increase of 24 percent on the previous year. These visitors spent almost US$2 billion in NSW and we look forward to welcoming even more international visitors to our great city and the regions over the summer."

NSW is the number one destination for international visitors in Australia, with a record 3.3 million international visitors.

"Over the coming months, our visitors are also in for an impressive calendar of sporting, arts, cultural and lifestyle events and entertainment, including Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour: Turandot, Matilda the Musical, The Australian Open of Golf, the NSW Art Gallery's The Greats exhibition, and the Powerhouse Museum will showcase the incredible LEGO exhibition, The Art of the Brick: DC Comics," he said.

With a young and well-appointed aircraft fleet, Hainan Airlines has won four consecutive global SKYTRAX five-star airline ratings.

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