



SYDNEY, MELBOURNE AIRPORTS REPORT HEALTHY PASSENGER GROWTH

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Australia's two largest airports posted strong passenger growth in March as more international travellers pour into the country.

At Melbourne Tullamarine, international passengers were up 7.3 per cent in March at 763,848, compared with the prior corresponding period.

The March figures represented seven straight years of international passenger growth at Melbourne.

Melbourne Airport chief executive Lyell Strambi said the seven years of month-on-month growth represented a remarkable achievement.

"This continued and consistent growth shows great faith and confidence from our airline partners who continue to increase their services to Melbourne.," Strambi said in a statement.

"Our third quarter results are also particularly pleasing, with growth achieved in all key international markets compared to the same period last year."

The largest increases in international travellers to Melbourne were from Hong Kong (39.3 per cent), Singapore (37.1 per cent) and Japan (27 per cent). The start of Etihad's second daily flight from Tullamarine to Abu Dhabi that kicked off in August 2015 has also boosted the number of

European visitors to the Victorian capital, Melbourne Airport said.

Meanwhile, Sydney Airport handled 1.211 million international passengers in March, up 7.9 per cent from the prior corresponding period.

Sydney Airport chief executive Kerrie Mather noted the recent arrival of new airlines such as Japan's ANA, Qatar Airways and China's Xiamen, while existing operators have added additional services or upgauged current routes.

"This exceptional growth continues to be driven by seat capacity from new and existing airline customers," Mather said in a statement.

"Growth in Japanese nationals was the largest international inbound contributor to passenger growth."

There was also healthy growth for domestic travellers, with Sydney reporting a rise of 4.4 per cent and Melbourne Tullamarine posting a 3.3 per cent improvement.

By contrast, Perth Airport handled 1.1 per cent fewer domestic passengers in March, amid a slowdown in mining activity in Western Australia.

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