

Brisbane Airport experiences strong international passenger growth

By **Elena Owyong** on August, 2 2019 | Airlines & Airports



Gert-Jan de Graaff, Brisbane Airport Corporation's Chief Executive Officer said that the efforts taken to promote Brisbane as a gateway to Queensland and Australia has paid off with the growth of 13 of Brisbane Airport's 15 international markets in FY19

Brisbane Airport's (BNE) passenger numbers increased by 1.5 per cent year-on-year to nearly 23.8 million travelers for the financial year. The airport also experienced strong international passenger growth, with total international passenger numbers rising by 4.5 per cent to 6.2 million. Malaysia, India and the USA were the airport's top three growth markets.

Gert-Jan de Graaff, Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) Chief Executive Officer attributed BNE's strong international passenger growth to its successful partnerships.

"The partnership between BAC and Brisbane Marketing was a significant turning point in the ability of Brisbane to market itself internationally and, with Brisbane undergoing an unprecedented period of growth, the time is right to further enhance its position as a gateway to Australia.

"This partnership enhances the important support provided by the Queensland Government through its aviation attraction programs and in-market support that not only assist the Brisbane gateway, but helps to maximise the international visitor spend within Queensland."

At the same time, de Graaff also noted that BNE operates in a very competitive market, hence it is

important for the airport to tap on the collective strength and commitment of the government, tourism and industry partners to promote Brisbane and Queensland's offerings to the world.

"While Brisbane's domestic growth is modest, growth is growth and it is pleasing to see it despite less capacity and a market that is slow across the country," Mr de Graaff said.

In a press release, the airport stated that it expects strong international passenger growth to continue in FY20, with the addition of the following new services.

- Thai AirAsia X BNE-Bangkok services (Jun 19)
- Singapore Airlines aircraft up-gauging to A350 on its four daily services
- Royal Brunei Airlines Brunei-BNE service launch (Jul 19)
- EVA Air aircraft up-gauging to B787-10 (Oct 19); seasonal daily Taipei-BNE flights between Dec 19 and Jan 20; frequency increase from four to five weekly services (Feb 20)
- China Southern seasonal additional Guangzhou-BNE flights (+3 to 10 weekly) between Dec 19 and Feb 20
- Qantas BNE-San Francisco and BNE-Chicago service launches in Feb 20 and Apr 20 respectively

de Graaff is also optimistic about BNE's continued potential for growth. He said: "With around 12 months until Brisbane's new runway becomes operational and with untapped markets set to come online during that time, the potential for growth at BNE is exponential.

"The introduction of direct flights into Chicago, the mid-west USA, and San Francisco the cultural, commercial, and financial centre of Northern California, is a game-changer for Brisbane, opening the city and state up to a large underserved US market.

"There is no doubt construction of Brisbane's new runway has helped draw these services to Brisbane and they are the first of many new airlines, routes and destinations that will grow from this investment, boosting inbound visitation to not only Brisbane, but to Queensland's regions as well. However, the value of our existing airline partners cannot be understated. We place the same time, energy and support in helping our existing airline partners grow their business in Brisbane as we do to new business.

"It's a very exciting time for our city and state as we capitalise on the tourism, trade, business and education opportunities headed our way," Mr de Graaff said.

International passenger growth



Brisbane Airport's international passenger numbers grew by 266,000 or 4.5 per cent, to a total of 6.2 million in FY19

According to BNE, the top growth markets in FY19 were Malaysia (+48.9 per cent), India (+12.1 per cent) and USA (+10.5 per cent).

Malaysia

The Malaysian visitor market grew by an additional 17,800 passengers year-on-year due to the relaunch of Malaysia Airlines in June 2018. The number of Malaysian passengers grew to 12.7 per cent from FY15 when Malaysia Airlines operated daily Kuala Lumpur-BNE flights.

India

The Indian visitor market achieved double-digit growth this year, as a result of new capacity by Singapore Airlines and Malaysia Airlines. This follows its record +14.7 per cent growth in FY18. BNE noted that this indicates an opportunity for further hub carrier growth and the opportunity for a direct service to or from India.

USA

Following a soft FY18 where BNE saw passenger numbers fall by 7.5 per cent, the USA visitor market's performance improved with a 2.2 per cent growth from FY17's figures, despite overall capacity reduction.

New Zealand

More than 920,000 passengers from New Zealand visited BNE per annum, for the first time, when Air New Zealand launched its services to Wellington and Queenstown in December 2018.

BNE said the busiest day at the International Terminal was on 22 December 2018 with a record 22,689 arrivals and departures. The greatest monthly passenger growth was experienced in August 2018, with 40,239 additional international travellers.

Domestic performance

The number of domestic destinations offered at BNE rose from 48 to 51, with Fly Corporate reinstating services to Wollongong and Dubbo and Jetstar commencing services to Uluru. As of FY19, BNE is served by eight domestic airlines.

BNE said that a record number of passengers flew on interstate routes in FY19, with growth largely driven by increased capacity across services to Melbourne, Uluru, Canberra and Tasmania. Although capacity for Melbourne remained unchanged, Melbourne was the best performing route, with an additional 83,000 passengers contributing to the airport growing 1.0 per cent faster than the Sydney route over the past six years.

The busiest day at the Domestic Terminal was during Queensland school holidays on 28 September 2018, with 61,991 arrivals and departures. The month with the greatest passenger growth was April, with an additional 65,034 passengers compared to April 2018.

Good growth was recorded on some intrastate routes including Mackay with a 5.5 per cent increase in passengers, and Townsville with a 2.4 per cent increase resulting in passenger numbers on the route exceeding 1 million for the first time.

Brisbane Airport Traffic Performance – FY19

	FY18	FY19	Year-on-year growth
International arrivals and departures	5,890,685	6,193,332	+5.1%
Domestic-on-carriage	39,405	2,746	-93.0%
Total international passengers *	5,930,090	6,196,078	+4.5%
Domestic arrivals and departures	17,505,162	17,586,545	+0.5%
Total passengers	23,435,252	23,782,623	+1.5%

****Excludes transits and transfers***