

DARWIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



Darwin International Airport is strategically located in Darwin, often described as Australia's Asian Gateway because of its central location four hours from Sydney, Perth, Singapore or Jakarta.

The airport is about 13 kilometres from Darwin's central business district and linked by good arterial road networks to the key population centres in the northern suburbs, Palmerston and the rural area.

Like most other Australian airports, it is curfew free, providing valuable potential for full service and low-cost airlines to operate out of Darwin.

Darwin International Airport is a joint user airport, with a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base on the south side of the main runway and civil facilities to the north. Air Traffic Control is provided by the RAAF.

FACILITIES

Facilities at Darwin International Airport include:

- A two runway system capable of handling all existing and planned aircraft types, including the A380 Airbus;
- 12 aircraft parking stands on the main apron, four of which are serviced by aerobridges;
- A general aviation area consisting of an apron with parking for about 100 aircraft;
- Refuelling and other aeronautical services; and
- Comprehensive air navigation systems and aviation fire fighting services.

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The airport is owned by the Airport Development Group, which purchased a 50-year lease with a 49-year option in 1998 as part of the privatisation of Australia's airports.

The Airport Development Group is owned by major superannuation funds, with profits shared by thousands



Aerial shot of Darwin International Airport Terminal

of Australians. Territorians hold more than 60,000 accounts with Airport Development Group shareholders.

The 311 hectare site includes aviation facilities as well as 127 hectares of prime land in the centre of Darwin that is available for commercial development.

GROWTH OF AIRPORT TRAFFIC

Darwin International Airport serves a range of full service and low-cost domestic and international airlines, air freight operators, tourism, business and holiday traffic as well as medical and general flights to the Territory's isolated regions.

Darwin has seen an average growth in passenger numbers of about 3 per cent a year since 1995, rising to an annual 12 per cent increase over the past three years. While recent airline industry adjustments due to the rising costs of fuel has created some uncertainty, growth is expected to continue. The Territory's economy is the fastest growing after Western Australia, with 6 per cent growth predicted for 2009.

It is expected that Darwin International Airport will cater for 3.1 million passenger movements by 2015.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Darwin International Airport has a large amount of property not required for aeronautical purposes. This land is centrally located with excellent access to the arterial road network and provides Darwin residents with a new commercial offering. The airport intends to develop its commercial precinct in line with its Master Plan.

AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS

It is interesting to reflect on how quickly Darwin International Airport has transformed airport services since it became the airport operator in 1998.

Recent developments have seen:

- 2002** • Refurbishment of domestic departure lounge retail concessions with new food and beverage outlets
- 2004** • Two aircraft parking spots for larger aircraft and completion of ground service equipment area
- 2005** • \$1.4 million project to expand parking positions and upgrade apron flood lighting to increase the airport's peak capacity
 - Covered walkway to parking positions not serviced by aerobridges
 - \$11 million checked bag screening system, the first airport in Australia to screen all domestic and international bags
- 2006** • Refurbishment of terminal building with locally inspired carpet designs to create a 'Top End experience'
 - \$2.4 million stage two of the public carpark expansion, and entrance roads
 - Refurbished exterior, including separate private and public transport approaches
 - \$1.2 million smoke spill system
- 2007** • \$4 million expansion of Bay 1 aircraft parking, including accommodation for the Airbus A380 which started services to Australia in October 2007, the first new aerobridge since 1991
 - \$12 million resurfacing of the main runway in a joint venture with the Department of Defence to extend the runway life by 15 years
 - Opening of new administration building
- 2008** • \$1.3 million work on new toilets on the ground and first floors
 - New duty free store and refurbished ground floor café
 - \$2 million on new generators to provide back-up power to the airport in the event of a mains supply failure.



Terminal retheming

HISTORY OF DARWIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Darwin's first aerodrome was on the Parap Police Paddock, which was selected in 1919 as the Australia port of entry for the England to Australia air race.

The existing site was commissioned by the Royal Australian Air Force in 1940, with a joint user policy allowing civil aviation to share the defence facilities.

The airport was hit by more than 50 Japanese bombing raids during World War Two.

After the war, civil aviation continued to operate from a corner of a Defence hangar. Intermittent plans to build separate civil aviation facilities were side-tracked by the city's economic fortunes, the devastation of Cyclone Tracy in 1974 and the cost of building new facilities.

In 1989, the Federal Airports Corporation took responsibility for the civil facilities. In 1991 the new airport terminal finally opened on the northern side of the main runway, replacing the old tin shed that used to provide a real 'frontier' welcome to visitors landing in Darwin.

Operation of Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Darwin International airports passed to the Airport Development Group in 1998. However, Darwin International Airport still shares facilities with Defence. A new air traffic control tower and fire station were built in 1998 by the Department of Defence.

PLANNING ON AIRPORT LAND

The *1996 Airports Act* requires the airport to prepare a Master Plan to guide development of airport land and facilities. The Master Plan has to be approved by the Federal Minister every five years. The Airports (Environmental Protection) Regulations 1997 require five-yearly environmental strategies. The current Master Plan and Environment Strategy were approved by the Minister in 2004.

