



Aviation industry

OVERVIEW

The Townsville aviation industry includes the Townsville Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base and the Townsville airport. The industry provides aviation services to individuals and a broad range of industry sectors including defence, tourism and mining.

The Townsville airport is the major aviation hub for North Queensland. The airport's catchment area extends as far north as Tully, south to Bowen and west to Charters Towers, servicing a population of approximately 250,000 people.

The Townsville airport also acts as a fly in – fly out hub, servicing the North East and North West Mineral Provinces.

Townsville airport facilitated around 1.6 million passengers over 2013/14. The airport services over 15 destinations directly, ranging from capital cities to regional centres.

Townsville airport has approximately 400 flights weekly, with seat capacity of over 50,000.

The airport hosts a range of major Australian operators, including QANTAS, Jetstar, Virgin Australia, AirNorth, Regional Express and Alliance.

Townsville airport also provides maintenance services to the operating airlines, and facilitates considerable freight transport, with Toll Group operating from the airport site. The airport facilitates significant recreational and tourist services, including sky diving operations.

The Townsville RAAF base is the major centre for defence aviation in Northern Australia, providing service to a range of aircraft and helicopters.

INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION

Townsville airport employed 35 people directly in 2012/13, with an estimated 700 people employed additionally through airport operations (QAL, 2010 and 2013). This estimate does not include defence personnel.

Further to its direct contribution, the aviation industry enables economic activity for a range of industries including tourism, retail, business and professional services, and mining through the facilitation of personnel movement and business operations.

OUTLOOK

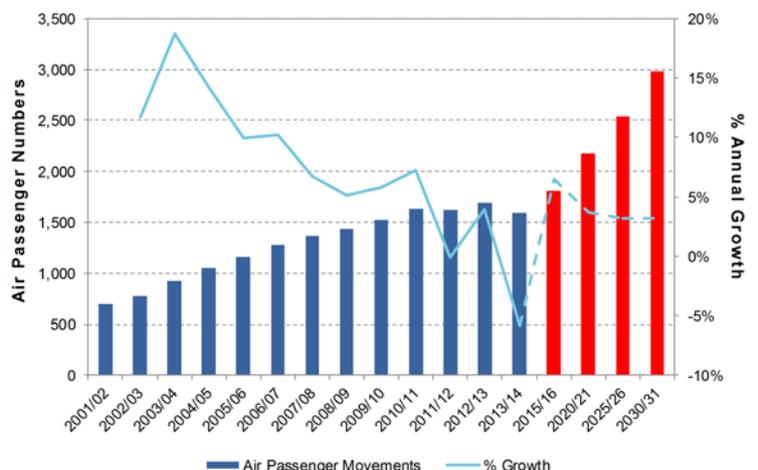
With Townsville's population forecast to reach nearly 300,000 people by 2031, the continued growth of the region will drive increased activity in the aviation sector.

Passenger growth since 2001/02 has averaged over 7% per annum. Growth is forecast to continue at an average rate of around 4% per annum to 2030/31 (see Figure 1).

A direct route between Townsville and Bali is currently being finalised, reopening Townsville airport to international flights.

Due to the strong outlook, Townsville airport is expanding and upgrading facilities and operations. A major terminal upgrade is planned to begin in 2015 in order to facilitate future growth.

Figure 1: Historical and projected passenger movements



Source: BITRE (2012), Townsville Airport (2015)



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Townsville airport is also in the process of developing the Northern Australian Aerospace Centre of Excellence – a large scale business park and general aviation precinct which will support a cluster of aviation and support industries servicing the Australian and South East Asian markets.

There is considerable scope for Townsville airport to further increase commercial air routes over the coming years. The state government has identified the airport as a location for significant investment within the next two decades.

The Australian Defence Force has also identified Townsville as a critical airport for future operations in the defence of Australia.

MORE INFORMATION

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