

# Media Release

**The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP**  
Minister for Jobs and Industry  
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples  
Minister for Women



Friday, 7 June 2024

## NEW FLIGHTS TO CHINA BOOSTING TRADE AND TOURISM

Victoria's international tourism and aviation sectors are set to grow with extra non-stop flights from Shanghai and new flights from Nanjing landing soon at Melbourne Airport, thanks to support from the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Jobs and Industry Natalie Hutchins today announced that China Eastern Airlines will increase flights to Melbourne Airport from Shanghai Pudong International Airport and introduce new flights out of Nanjing Lukou International Airport from July this year.

Backed by the Labor Government and Melbourne Airport, these flights will strengthen connections with China's biggest city and financial hub Shanghai as well as Nanjing, the capital of our sister-state Jiangsu Province.

The flights are set to create more than 1,180 new Victorian jobs and generate \$205 million annually for the state's economy.

Victoria's sister-state relationship with Jiangsu is our most enduring and has been the cornerstone of our cultural and economic ties to China for more than 40 years.

These new flights will boost tourism to Victoria by providing 100,000 extra seats for visitors from China each year – helping to bring tourist numbers from the world's second largest economy back to pre-pandemic levels.

China Eastern Airlines' new flights will also boost trade between Victoria and China, providing nearly 3,650 tonnes of extra air freight export capacity each year to strengthen China's status as Victoria's largest trading partner with two-way merchandise trade in 2023 worth \$39 billion.

Victoria's visitor economy continues to thrive with Melbourne becoming Australia's first capital city airport to exceed pre-pandemic international capacity in December 2023 and global travelers generating \$6.4 billion in tourism expenditure across the state last year.

From new Air India flights from Mumbai to Turkish Airlines flights from Türkiye, the Government continues to support international airlines to add new routes to our Victorian airports to attract more visitors, create more jobs and bolster our economy.

### Quote attributable to Minister for Jobs and Industry Natalie Hutchins

*"By supporting China Eastern Airlines to deliver extra flights to Victoria, we're strengthening trade and tourism ties with our biggest trading partner and creating more jobs in our aviation and tourism industries."*

### Quote attributable to Melbourne Airport Chief Executive Officer Lorie Argus

*"Melbourne Airport's first direct connection to Nanjing will help cement Victoria's decades-long relationship with its Jiangsu Province sister-state, while also delivering more opportunities for our tourism and export industries."*

### Quote attributable to China Eastern Airlines General Manager Marketing & Sales Oceania Jim Young

*"We anticipate that the upcoming expansion of flights from Shanghai to Melbourne, coupled with the launch of Melbourne-Nanjing services, will significantly contribute to China Eastern Airlines' continued growth and stability within the Australian, particularly Victorian, aviation market. This represents a significant moment for us."*

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