

60
years

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION

60
years

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Newcastle
Airport

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION

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CELEBRATING 80 YEARS
OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION



TAA DC-3 AIRCRAFT. IMAGE COURTESY OF STEVEN JAMIESON



TAA POSTCARD CIRCA 1950

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CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION



NEWCASTLE AIRPORT IN 2003

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AN AIRBUS A320 ENGINE THAT IS SERVICED AT THE JETSTAR HEAVY MAINTENANCE HANGAR

welcome from the Chairman

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION



JOHN KINDLER

2008 marks the 60th anniversary of civil aviation from Williamtown, at what has become known as Newcastle Airport.

The federal government first agreed to the RAAF Base, Williamtown being used for civilian flights in 1947. But it wasn't until 20 February 1948 that the first scheduled commercial flight, a Trans Australia Airlines (TAA) flight, touched down at the Airport.

Now, 60 years on, Newcastle Airport is Australia's fastest growing regional airport. The Airport and its personnel are regarded as regional aviation leaders and are working continuously with other airports and all levels of government to create a premium airport and travel hub.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those within the Department of Defence and the Royal Australian Air Force for their continued support of Newcastle Airport's activities and plans. It is this cooperation that has enabled Newcastle Airport to successfully operate for the past 60 years,

and we look forward to many more years together, providing economic growth to the region.

I would also like to thank those airlines that have served Newcastle Airport over the years. I am proud to recognise and acknowledge the airlines, past and present, in leading us on to bigger and better things.

In closing, I would like to thank the Board and staff of Newcastle Airport who work tirelessly to ensure that Newcastle Airport continues to grow and prosper for the benefit of the region.

John Kindler
Chairman



welcome from the Ceo

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION



PAUL HUGHES

I am delighted to present to you this commemorative book recognising and celebrating 60 years of commercial aviation at Newcastle Airport.

As you will read in the following pages, Newcastle Airport has continued to grow and prosper since the first civilian flight in 1948. Originally just a transit stop between Sydney and Brisbane, the community around Newcastle and the Hunter gradually began to see air services that provided vital links to regional New South Wales, closely followed by services such as the affectionately known 'BHP Shuttle' transporting workers from Newcastle to Sydney and connecting them interstate.

In the last decade, particularly since the introduction of low cost airlines, Newcastle Airport has cemented its position as a leading aviation hub and significant economic driver in the region.

Tourism has significantly benefited from the increase in services, bringing visitors from south-east Queensland and Victoria to the region. An economic impact assessment, commissioned by Newcastle Airport in 2008, concluded

that the Airport supports more than 3,200 jobs and injects \$465.5 million into the local economy, of which \$151 million directly supports local tourism.

In the Airport's 60th anniversary year, we have witnessed yet another significant milestone - the official opening of the \$9 million aircraft parking apron expansion. This expansion, which has doubled the capacity for simultaneous jet aircraft movements, provides airlines with opportunities for growth and expanded operations at Newcastle Airport.

We invite you to read and reflect on how far the Airport has come in the past 60 years and look forward to the future.

Paul Hughes
CEO

how it all began



TAA DC-3. IMAGE COURTESY OF STEVEN JAMIESON

1948 - 1967

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION



TAA AIRCRAFT CIRCA 1960. IMAGE COURTESY OF PHILIP SKETCHLEY

In 1944, the federal government assured Newcastle that it would not be overlooked during the post-war plans for civilian aviation. In the three years that followed, many sites for a commercial airport were considered, including District Park, Beresfield, Hexham and Sandgate. However, it was at the suggestion of the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Ald R. Norris, that Williamtown, 'could be placed in the same category' as other RAAF airfields that were expanding into civil aviation.

Newcastle Airport was originally opened as Williamtown Civilian Airport in 1947 after a charter flight landed at the RAAF Base, Williamtown. But it wasn't until 1948 that scheduled commercial operations commenced at the airport.

On 20 February 1948, with clearance from the federal government, and with RAAF approval, the first commercial flight landed at Williamtown. The airline was Trans Australia Airlines (TAA) with a Douglas DC-3 aircraft on the scheduled Sydney-Williamtown-Brisbane route. Carrying 18 passengers, the aircraft made a stopover at the terminal, which affectionately became known as the 'tin shed'.

After the Airport was opened to commercial flights, the federal government continued to oversee operations at Williamtown Civilian Airport. From these beginnings, the services and destinations, mostly operated by TAA, gradually began to grow.

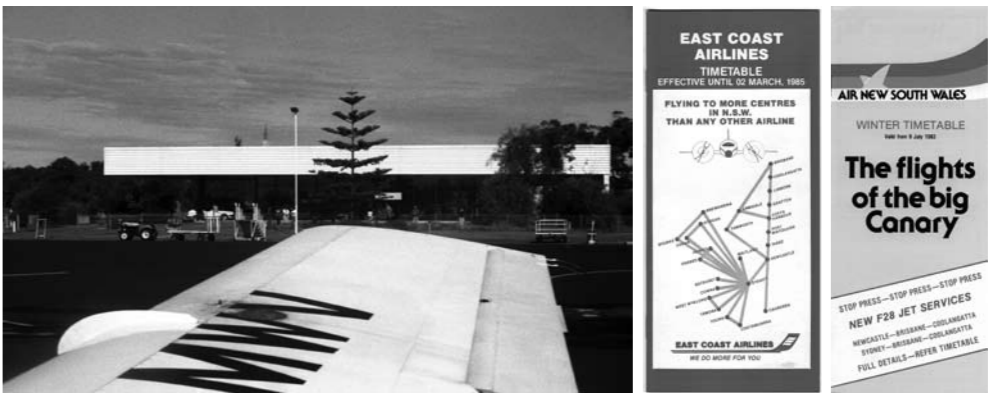
*regional
expansion*



ANSETT HOLDING FOR MILITARY AIRCRAFT IN 1983. IMAGE COURTESY OF IAN PRIMMER

1968 - 1987

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION



NEWCASTLE AIRPORT IN 1982. IMAGE COURTESY OF CAROL BOYLE. EAST COAST AIRLINES & AIR NEW SOUTH WALES TIMETABLES. IMAGES COURTESY OF IAN PRIMMER

During the 1970s, demand for air travel began to grow, and a number of new airlines were ready to meet the challenge of regional aviation.

An early pioneer of regional commuter services in NSW was Jack Masling, who operated Masling Airlines. The airline operated Cessna 402s and Beech Queenaires on the Newcastle and Sydney service in the early 70s. By 1980 the airline had progressively expanded its fleet, operating an Embraer Bandairante to Canberra from Newcastle. This route is still serviced more than 25 years later by Brindabella Airlines.

Air New South Wales was another commuter carrier that became well-known for operating the 'big canary' F27s and F28s on the Newcastle-Brisbane and Newcastle-Coolangatta routes in the early 80s. It was during this time that East Coast Airlines was also exploring the previously hidden delights of regional New South Wales. This, combined with services to Newcastle by East West Airlines, TAA, and Eastern Airlines, resulted in Newcastle Airport taking its first steps to becoming a significant regional aviation hub.

*flying is
'impulsive'*



NEWCASTLE AIRPORT IN 1994

1988 - 1997

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OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION



THE NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL & PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL OWNERSHIP PLAQUE.
IMPULSE AIRCRAFT. IMAGE COURTESY OF ALAN MCKNIGHT

The 1990s was an era of fast-tracked aviation growth in Australia. The federal government deregulated the aviation industry and sold-off the major airports to private enterprise.

The federal government continued to manage Newcastle Airport until 1990, when Newcastle City Council and Port Stephens Council accepted an invitation to jointly operate the civil facilities, taking full responsibility for operating, maintaining and developing the Airport. In 1993 the two councils formed the company, limited by guarantee, Newcastle Airport Limited.

In the 1990s a new entry into the Australian aviation market was Impulse Airlines. The airline commenced regional services from Newcastle Airport in March 1994, and proudly based itself at Newcastle. The airline initially serviced routes such as Armidale, Brisbane, Canberra, Gold Coast, Melbourne and Sydney with the Beechcraft 1900 aircraft.

In August 1994, Impulse Airlines expanded its fleet and became the first Australian operator of the BAe Jetstream 41 (J41), acquiring five of the aircraft in 1994 and five more in 1996. Impulse Airlines used the J41 to

pioneer non-stop services between Newcastle and Melbourne but was met with stiff competition; Eastern Australian Airlines (a Qantas subsidiary) ran the much larger BAe 146 on the same route and Impulse subsequently discontinued the service.

1996 saw Newcastle Airport undergo its first phase of terminal expansion to improve facilities and accommodate the growth resulting from Impulse Airlines.

In 1997, Impulse Airlines re-commenced Newcastle-Melbourne services, flying a Beech 1900 aircraft, after Eastern Australian Airlines discontinued their service of the same route.

Newcastle Airport's increase in passenger throughput in the 1990s can be attributed to Impulse Airline's development. Passenger numbers were 152,335 in the 1998 calendar year, double the passenger number throughput of 1993; before the introduction of Impulse Airlines.

*low cost
revolution*



1998 - 2007

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TERMINAL

SOME OF THE AIRLINES THAT SERVICED NEWCASTLE AIRPORT DURING THE PERIOD

In June 2000 Impulse Airlines acquired Boeing 717 jet aircraft and commenced operations as a low cost carrier in direct competition with Qantas and Ansett. In 2001, the airline was fully absorbed into the QantasLink operation. In the same year, Newcastle Airport's foray into trans-Tasman flights began with Freedom Air who operated twice weekly flights to Auckland. At the same time, Virgin Blue commenced operations within Australia, adding the Newcastle-Melbourne route to its network in November 2003.

In 2003 Brindabella Airlines commenced direct services to Canberra and quickly established strong patronage from the business market, spurring increased capacity and frequency from the airline.

Recognising the demand for low cost travel, Qantas established its own low cost subsidiary, Jetstar. The airline was launched on 25 May 2004 when the airline's first flight, JQ371, departed Newcastle Airport bound for Melbourne.

Following the closure of Belmont Airport in 2005, Aeropelican moved its base to Newcastle Airport and continued to operate its popular shuttle to-and-from Sydney.

Meanwhile Newcastle Airport completed an \$8.25 million terminal development and infrastructure expansion, which doubled the size of

the terminal and car parks. The new terminal building was officially commissioned by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Trade and Leader of the Nationals, Mark Vaile, in December 2005. The terminal redevelopment earned Newcastle Airport the prestigious Australian Airports Association 'Regional Airport of the Year' award.

2006 was a year of airline growth, with both Jetstar and Virgin Blue servicing Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Melbourne. This was also the year that Jetstar chose Newcastle as the location of its A320 heavy maintenance hangar; providing an employment and economic development opportunity for the Hunter region.

Newcastle Airport saw the re-introduction of international services when Norfolk Air launched a weekly flight to Norfolk Island on 7 May 2007. Shortly after, in June 2007, Jetstar announced its expansion plans for 2008 with increased capacity to-and-from Newcastle.

2007 also saw the completion and launch of a 20-year Master Plan which provided a vision for development at the Airport for the next 20 years.

The year ended with a record 1 million passengers passing through the Airport in a calendar year; a truly remarkable milestone considering the Airport had welcomed 127,113 passengers just 10 years earlier.

*onwards and
upwards*



2008

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION



AIRBUS A330 AND BOEING 787 DREAMLINER AIRCRAFT

2008 has been a year of consolidation and completing capacity expanding projects. In its 60th year, projects such as car parking, expansion of check-in and the introduction of checked bag screening and new baggage handling systems have been completed while planning has continued for the next growth phase.

Airlines have also begun expanding their fleets, with recent aircraft orders suggesting the Australian domestic aviation industry will continue to grow. Jetstar has commissioned more Airbus A320 and A321 aircraft and is preparing to use the Boeing 787 Dreamliner when the Qantas group takes delivery of the aircraft in 2009. Virgin Blue is continuing to receive more of the Embraer Jet, following an initial delivery in 2008.

The airline expansions signal the possibility for new domestic routes and destinations for Newcastle. The Newcastle Airport 20-year Master Plan envisages the Airport welcoming these new aircraft to potentially link the Hunter and Port Stephens tourism products with the trans-Tasman and Asian markets.

Not forgetting the smaller operators, Brindabella Airlines this year launched the new and improved Jetstream 41 aircraft and Aeropelican increased its fleet with three Jetstream 32 aircraft.

The terminal redevelopment of 2005 provided users of Newcastle Airport with premium facilities; however the exponential growth predicted for the coming years will inevitably increase pressure on infrastructure. This is currently being addressed with terminal, car park and associated development designs being reviewed to meet the next set of challenges.

Newcastle Airport commemorates the past 60 years of civil aviation and embraces a future of achievement and growth that benefits users of Newcastle Airport for generations to come.



60
years



**Newcastle™
Airport**

Connecting People.
Connecting Places.