



Victor Dominello MP

Minister for Citizenship and Communities
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MEDIA RELEASE

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SYDNEY WELCOMES NEW AIRLINE SERVICE FROM WESTERN CHINA

Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello today welcomed Sichuan Airlines' first Chengdu-Chongqing-Sydney service, saying the new route offered visitors from Western China direct access to NSW and Sydney, the gateway to Australia and the Asia-Pacific.

"Sichuan Airlines is a new service for NSW, which will provide two flights per week on its Airbus A330-200 aircraft and 50,000 seats annually. Sydney Airport estimates this will bring around \$36.5 million in visitor expenditure to the NSW economy each year," Mr Dominello said.

"I welcome this inaugural flight, an extra service on a key route which offers great benefits for passengers from Western China to get to Australia's most popular tourism destination, Sydney.

"This is another vote of confidence in Sydney as the tourist destination of choice for Chinese visitors.

The new Sichuan Airlines service supports recent findings from the International Visitor Survey, for the year to September 2013, which shows China remains the top source market of visitors to Sydney and NSW.

NSW is Australia's number one state for Chinese tourism, attracting 61.1 per cent of all Chinese tourists who visit the country. We also have strong cultural ties—there are over 156,000 Chinese-born people who call NSW home.

"China now ranks as the largest international contributor of visitor nights and expenditure in NSW. For the year ending September 2013, a 13.8 per cent increase saw 413,000 visitors to NSW from China, which contributed \$1.38 billion to the State's economy," Mr Dominello said.

Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Mr George Souris, said the new Sichuan Airlines service linking Chengdu, Chongqing and Sydney will generate new tourism and business opportunities for NSW.

"Western China is one of the most exciting growth markets in China for NSW tourism and Sichuan Airlines' decision to increase flights to Sydney will support this growth.

"Strong growth in Chinese visitors to NSW is proof the NSW Government's China Tourism Strategy to increase visitor numbers from China is working. The strategy has been funded by the NSW Government to the tune of \$15 million over the next four years," Mr Souris said.

Sydney Airport Chief Executive Officer, Kerrie Mather, said Chengdu is an important economic, transport and communication hub, and Chongqing is an industrial centre for manufacturing and transport, with a combined population of around 44 million people.

“China is a huge growth market for Sydney Airport and we’re very pleased that passengers will now be able to access Sydney directly from Western China,” Ms Mather said.