



GLOBAL AIR TRAFFIC GROWS STRONGLY IN 2015: IATA

News / Airlines



Demand for air travel in 2015 grew at its strongest pace since the end of the global financial crisis, with more passengers taking to the skies amid lower airfares, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) says.

The latest passenger traffic numbers from IATA showed international revenue passenger kilometres (RPK) grew by 6.5 per cent in 2015, compared with the prior year.

It was the highest growth rate since 2010 and above the 10-year average growth rate of 5.5 per cent.

“Last year’s very strong performance, against a weaker economic backdrop, confirms the strong demand for aviation connectivity,” IATA chief executive Tony Tyler said in a statement on Thursday.

“But even as the appetite for air travel increased, consumers benefitted from lower fares compared to 2014.

“Aviation delivered strong results for the global economy in 2015, enabling connectivity and

helping to drive economic development.

“The value of aviation is well understood by friends and families whom aviation brings together, by business travellers meeting clients in distant cities, and particularly by those for whom aviation is a lifeline in times of crisis.”

And although there was some softness in passenger traffic towards the end of 2015, IATA said this was likely due to temporary factors such as airline strikes in Europe.

“All told, global business confidence surveys suggest that economic conditions will remain supportive of another strong year for passenger traffic in 2016,” IATA said in a statement.

“Indeed, the additional decline in oil prices in recent months is likely to provide further stimulus for air travel growth throughout the year too.

IATA said airlines from the Asia-Pacific grew RPKs 8.6 per cent in 2015, the second-fastest of all the regions behind Middle East-carrier, and contributed one-third of the overall increase in international traffic.

“A 7.3 per cent increase in the number of direct airport connections within the Asia region during 2015 helped to stimulate demand by translating into time savings for passengers, and helped to offset the negative impacts of slower growth in many of the region’s economies,” IATA said.

Middle East-based carriers recorded RPK growth of 10 per cent in 2015, while Latin America was up 6.7 per cent and European airlines grew passenger demand 5.1 per cent.

North American carriers expanded RPKs 3.2 per cent, while RPKs for African carriers were up three per cent in 2015.

In terms of the Australian domestic market, IATA figures showed local carriers grew passenger demand by just 0.4 per cent in 2015, with capacity measured by available seat kilometres (ASK) eased 0.2 per cent.

IATA said there were some positive signs ahead for Australia in 2016.

“The market trended sideways in Australia for much of 2015 too, as the economy continues to shift away from mining-led investment being the key driver of growth,” IATA said.

“The slight upward trend in recent months offers a positive base for 2016.”

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SOURCE: AUSTRALIAN AVIATION

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