GOVERNMENT APPROVES GOLD COAST AIRPORT REDEVELOPMENT

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Gold Coast Airport has received the green light to begin construction on new aircraft stands and aerobridges as well as a terminal upgrade.

The federal government on Friday gave its approval for the airport to start work on the airport redevelopment, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2017 and will cater for the forecast increase in visitors to the Gold Coast in 2018, when the city hosts the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss said passenger numbers at Gold Coast Airport were expected to grow from six million passengers a year currently to 16.3 million in 2031.

“The major redevelopment of the airport will almost double the size of the terminal, expand the apron to accommodate five additional aircraft stands and incorporate four new aerobridges — a facility long awaited by travellers,” Truss said in a statement.

“The expansion will also include a consolidated ground transport facility incorporating: a relocated taxi staging area; covered boarding for coaches, mini-buses and limousines; covered pedestrian walkways; and circulation roads for all ground transport modes.”

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Stage one of the project involves upgrading the southern end of the airport, including a terminal development, building three new Code E aircraft parking stands (for the likes of Boeing 777s, 787s and Airbus A330s and A350s) and two aerobridges, Gold Coast Airport said in July 2015.

A consultation paper published in 2015 showed Gold Coast's current apron had capacity for 11 aircraft stands comprising three Code E and eight Code C (for Boeing 737s or Airbus A320s) aircraft. This was two short of forecast demand for 13 stands in 2015.

Moreover, the lack of available space was particularly felt during the morning peak periods, when the bulk of international flights from Asia arrived at the airport.

"By 2018, it is forecast that the apron capacity will be exceeded by two stands and by 2021, the apron capacity will be exceeded by four stands," the paper said.

"If action is not taken to further develop aviation facilities at the airport by 2018, it will significantly limit the airport's ability to service the future domestic and international passenger demand and address the current capacity issues."

Truss said about 117,000 visitors, 5,000 athletes, 2,000 officials and 2,700 media representatives were expected to travel to the Gold Coast for the once-every-four-years sporting event.

Further, he said about 230 full time jobs would be created during construction, while there would be 180 additional full-time jobs created once the terminal expansion is finished.

The Minister, who on Thursday announced he was retiring from politics and would not contest the next election, said the apron and taxiway expansion would be completed in two stages, with the second stage to be finished by early 2021.

In January, the government also approved Gold Coast Airport's proposal to install an instrument landing system (ILS) for flights landing from the north on Runway 14.

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