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## China Eastern announces seasonal services to Cairns

China Eastern Airlines will operate seasonal services from Shanghai to Cairns bringing Chinese visitors directly into the region for the Chinese New Year celebrations in 2024 and injecting up to \$3 million into the local economy.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) Chief Executive Officer Mark Olsen welcomed the 10 China Eastern flights from February 1 to 18 which will be supported with the Federal Government's \$15 million International Tourism Recovery Program funding.

"The return of direct flights from China to Cairns is the missing aviation puzzle piece needed for international visitation to rebound bigger and better than it was prior to the pandemic," he said.

"This will be Tropical North Queensland's opportunity to demonstrate to China that our destination is ready to welcome their visitors and has the demand to turn the Cairns route into a year-round service."

The Federal Minister for Trade and Tourism Senator Don Farrell said he was thrilled to see the return of flights between China and Cairns.

"Tropical North Queensland is one of the jewels in Australia's tourism crown and international visitors are vitally important to the region," he said.

"That is why the Australian Government is delivering \$15 million in funding to Tourism Tropical North Queensland, which is supporting marketing and promotional activities to ensure the success of these flights.

"This is just one of the ways we are delivering on our commitment to support Australia's tourism industry to deliver world class experiences for visitors, along with jobs and economic benefits in regions like Queensland's spectacular tropical north."

Mr Olsen and Cairns Airport Chief Executive Officer Richard Barker were members of the senior delegation that travelled to China with Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk earlier this month attending meetings with Chinese industry leaders, including senior executives from China Eastern Airlines.

Mr Barker said the flights would be the first Chinese New Year service since the pandemic and the key seasonal services would hopefully accelerate the return of visitors from China, which was Tropical North Queensland's largest inbound tourism market prior to the pandemic.

"We are already seeing Chinese tourists return to Tropical North Queensland after the resumption of direct services between China and Brisbane Airport," he said.

"We continue to work collaboratively with our airport and tourism partners to enable easy access to our region and encourage Chinese visitation."

Mr Olsen said the TTNQ team had connected with the tourism trade in China three times in the past year, which was well received.

"We can now make the connections with the customers via direct flights and that will make the critical difference in our international recovery," he said.

# MEDIA RELEASE



"Tropical North Queensland was making great traction with the shift in the China market prior to the pandemic away from large groups to higher spending smaller tailor-made groups and independent travellers.

"The Federal Government's \$15 million International Tourism Recovery Program funding will ensure TTNQ undertakes the campaign activity necessary to make the flights a success."

China Eastern will operate the Airbus A330 aircraft to Cairns, which has 29 business and 203 economy seats injecting 2320 inbound seats into Cairns on from February 1 to 18.

**TTNQ's international campaign activity received grant funding from the Australian Government, under the International Tourism Recovery Program administered by Austrade.**

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TTNQ Contact: Liz Inglis | [liz.inglis@ttnq.org.au](mailto:liz.inglis@ttnq.org.au) | 0419 643 494