

DOMESTIC JET RE-EQUIPMENT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies

The Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, announced today a programme of airport development throughout Australia which will allow the introduction of jet aircraft to Australia's internal air routes after July, 1964.

The airport programme involves construction of a new Melbourne airport at Tullamarine, a new international passenger terminal building and other major development works at Sydney airport in addition to runway extensions already approved, and important airport works elsewhere throughout Australia requiring a total expenditure of about £30 million in the next five years.

Mr. Menzies said the Government had approved the purchase of two heavy jet airliners each by Trans-Australia Airlines and Ansett/A.N.A. and expected to be advised of the airlines' positive aircraft selections after November 18th.

Both airlines had indicated to the Government that they preferred to introduce heavy rather than light jet airliners.

The airport programme will bring the all-time total Commonwealth airport expenditure at Sydney to about £20 million and at Melbourne to about £17 million.

Mr. Menzies said the new Melbourne airport at Tullamarine would be developed for international and domestic jet traffic by 1967 on the 5,000-acre site already acquired by the Government for approximately £2.3 million.

The new airport would have two runways, 8,000 feet and 7,000 feet long, with high-speed turnouts from runways to increase traffic capacity, taxiways, aprons and a modern terminal building to accommodate both international and domestic traffic. The project would include the usual engineering and other services and the airport would be equipped with the most modern air navigational facilities, including high intensity lighting and instrument landing systems.

Runways and aprons would be designed to handle the heaviest aircraft types contemplated for civil airline operations throughout the world.

Mr. Menzies said that the Government had acquired a large area of land at Tullamarine and overseas airport experts who had seen the site were unanimous that it was ideal to serve a developing city.

The runways planned for the airport could be adapted if necessary to meet future traffic demands. While Essendon Airport remained in operation, the new runways could be used in co-ordination with the existing runways at Essendon and the Tullamarine-Essendon Airport complex would in fact provide a multiple runway system which would be operated under a single Air Traffic Control unit.

Mr. Menzies said the Government had approved the use of Essendon by domestic jet aircraft as an interim measure until Tullamarine was completed. Jet aircraft operations would have to meet any necessary restrictions at the airport.

He said that with the £5 million already spent at Essendon and the acquisition of the Tullamarine site for more than £2 million, the works now approved would bring Commonwealth expenditure on Melbourne's airport facilities to more than £17 million.

Mr. Menzies said the new international terminal area at Sydney Airport would be designed to handle not only the existing large international jet airliners, but also more advanced airliners which might be expected to use the airport later.

The new terminal area required the construction of a new international terminal with the necessary aprons, taxiways, and other facilities. It was planned to be in operation by 1968.

The new Sydney terminal area would cost about £4 million, and this was additional to the cost of extending the airport's north-south runway into Botany Bay which would bring the Commonwealth expenditure on Sydney airport to approximately £20 million.

Mr. Menzies said the major domestic operators had recently modernised their Sydney Airport terminal buildings. These would remain in operation for some years.

He said the new international building would have every modern amenity and be a world-class international air terminal. Sydney was served by nine international airlines and the new terminal would be designed to meet the foreseeable demands of air traffic growth.

The Sydney Airport programme meant that Sydney would have runways of 8,300 feet and 7,500 feet.

Mr. Menzies said that the benefits of the introduction of heavy jet airliners by the domestic airlines would not be confined to air travellers on the trans-continental and other blue-ribbon trunk routes. As the jets went into service on major air routes some Electra and Viscount airliners would be available for introduction on other domestic services and this would result in a general improvement in airline services throughout the entire domestic network. This would involve considerable airport works that would be carried out over the next three years.

These included runway and apron developments at Adelaide, Hobart, Mount Isa, Kalgoorlie, Townsville, Lae and Coolangatta, as well as at Launceston where the Government had already approved an airport runway and building development programme which would cost more than £1 million. These works would be in addition to the normal airport development programme which cost the Commonwealth between £1.5 million and £2 million a year, and included a very substantial amount granted to Local Authorities under the Aerodrome Local Ownership Plan.

This plan, introduced by the Government in 1957 and already accepted by more than one hundred Local Authorities throughout Australia, provided for grants by the Commonwealth of 50 per cent. towards the cost of the development and maintenance of airports owned and operated by local authorities.

Mr. Menzies said the introduction of jet aircraft to Australian internal air routes would be the most important post-war advance in Australian domestic air services.

After November 18, both airlines would be free to apply to the Minister for Civil Aviation, Senator Shane Paltridge, for permission to order the heavy jet aircraft of their individual choice.

The Government, as yet, had no positive indication from either airline of preference for any one of the three available aircraft in this class.

The aircraft were the British-built de Havilland Trident, the American Boeing 737 and the French Caravelle 10A.

It was recognised that regardless of the type, or types, selected, the new jets would be introduced by two experienced airlines each with a fine record for the efficient introduction to service of new airliners.

Mr. Menzies said both airlines had indicated that they would wish to purchase smaller jet airliners at a later stage of their re-equipment programmes. These jets would be a Viscount replacement and, on present indications, both airlines showed a preference for the British twin-jet airliner, the BAC One-Eleven. However, they had made it clear that they would also consider the French Caravelle 6R, the Dutch F28 and the American Douglas 2086.

Mr. Menzies said the Government decision on domestic jet re-equipment and the major airport programme it made necessary were an indication of the important role of efficient air transport in a developing continent. Aviation has made an essential contribution to Australian life and the introduction of modern jet aircraft to our domestic, as well as international, air routes was in character with Australia's role as one of the major aviation countries of the world.

CANBERRA,

15th November, 1962.