

Cape Town Air Access proves a phenomenal success

2017 saw an exceptional growth of 20% in international passengers to Cape Town despite South Africa's economy facing a technical recession. This according to Mayor Patricia de Lille in her speech at the annual Air Access meeting, held recently to take stock of the success achieved through the partnership. "I am proud to say that Air Access shows how we can deliver on our goals to increase economic activity if all three spheres of government and the private sector work together."



Andres de Wet via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

De Lille's speech in full:

Each year the City of Cape Town contributes more than R1m to Cape Town Air Access.

Since the official launch of Air Access in February 2016 we have seen the addition of 10 new routes and 12 route expansions for Cape Town International Airport.

During 2017 the number of arrivals of international terminal passengers increased to 2,4 million, which meant growth of 20% year-on-year.

International airline seating capacity has almost doubled during the past year with over 1,5 million seats being added to the network.

International cargo volumes have also grown significantly, increasing by 52% during 2017 accompanied by a 17% increase in domestic cargo volumes.

In an environment where South Africa is experiencing slow economic growth, these double-digit figures move us in the opposite direction and contribute to job creation.

Air connectivity is undoubtedly a key enabler of our economy.

The recent Grant Thornton study commissioned by Air Access in 2017 conservatively estimated that the socio-economic impact of obtaining three new routes from North America, South America and Asia would contribute R700m to the province's Gross Geographic Product and add over 2,200 jobs. The same Grant Thornton study estimated that a modest increase of 70,000 extra tourists to the city and the province from these three destinations will lead to an increase in tourist expenditure of over R700 million.

The current Air Access efforts have given rise to an estimated 800,000 extra seats on routes flying directly to Cape Town.

I am looking forward to seeing how Cape Town Air Access will take advantage of the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market initiative being spearheaded by the African Union. It is especially encouraging to see how our Air Access success is attracting more flights and seating capacity between African cities such as Angola, Kenya, Rwanda and Mauritius this year.

This is in addition to French airline Joon flying directly to Cape Town and Cathay Pacific introducing a direct flight from Hong Kong.

While we are welcoming more visitors and making it easier for businesses and investors to travel to Cape Town, the City is proactively working to create an opportunity city that attracts investment, enables inclusive growth and job creation.

As the drivers of change, cities are at the coalface of dealing with challenges that include unemployment, inequality and climate change.

Based on these encouraging results thus far, I am confident that the Air Access team has internalised the premise that in Cape Town we understand that the world owes us nothing. We are competing in a global village and, in line with the city's goals to be a globally competitive businesses destination, we have to constantly work harder to let the world know that we are open for business.

We must innovate and be ready to adapt to our ever-changing world so that we stand out as a serious player in the global economy. In this way, more people will make Cape Town their destination of choice for business or leisure.

In Cape Town, we believe that in order to truly achieve economic inclusion and equality, investment must coincide with our social responsibility and commitment to help those who need it most and build an inclusive city. Therefore, we are introducing policies that aim to stimulate growth sectors like business support and ICT – while we encourage innovation, especially in the new shared economy.

In closing, I want to thank the Air Access team and our partners such as the Cape Town International Airport for all the hard work and commitment to making the Air Access goals a reality.

We look forward to working with you all for another record-setting year.

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