



FIRST GOLD COAST-CHINA DIRECT COMMERCIAL FLIGHT TOUCHES DOWN AT COOLANGATTA

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The first direct commercial flight from China to the Gold Coast has landed at Coolangatta [airport](#).

The flight touched down about 8:00 a.m. (AEST) today.

The airport's chief operating officer, David Collins, said the 300 passengers were given a warm welcome.

"We are very excited, our first flight from Wuhan has arrived this morning in all its glory, to be greeted by water cannons, we had characters from Movie World and we have animals from the wildlife sanctuary at Currumbin," he said.

"It was a great morning and the plane was full which was even better."

He said it was not just tourist operators who would benefit.

"There is enormous opportunities from a business perspective which we have seen," he said.

"There is also enormous opportunities from an education perspective - we have three major universities here on the Gold Coast and the opportunities for those universities are enormous."

Mr Collins said it was an exciting milestone.

"What it means is that we now have direct access into the world's largest tourism market," he said.

"The Chinese market to the Gold Coast is incredibly important, 186,000 visitations last year and we are looking for that to grow."

Gold Coast Tourism CEO Martin Winter said the twice weekly flights offered important opportunities for the local industry.

"There'll be more than 100 million Chinese making outbound journeys by 2017," he said.

"There's nowhere better than the Gold Coast for them to get a Western beach experience, so we are expecting the numbers, which are currently about 210,000 visitors a year, to jump dramatically over the next few years."

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