



Australian Aviation Network Overview

July 2026

Contents



We acknowledge and embrace a culture that celebrates diversity, inclusion, and equality for all. In making this statement we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the country on which we operate, now called Australia.

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Executive Summary

Service interruptions in July and early August are front of mind as this report is issued. We acknowledge that we still have work to do to strengthen service resilience, particularly in Sydney. We are committed to improving the consistency of our performance while maintaining the pace of improvement across the national network. It is likewise critical to assure our partners and the travelling public that safety is not compromised when issues with staffing levels occur, and safety remains our overriding priority.

Notwithstanding these challenges the Australian aviation industry has entered Financial Year 2026-2027 with resilient demand and steady economic conditions despite ongoing global uncertainty.

Passenger flights across all industry segments reached a three-month high recovering from the initial contraction in response to the Middle East conflict, supported primarily by July school holiday travel demand across domestic coastal destinations and international services to Southeast Asia and New Zealand. Network activity peaked at more than 2,600 daily passenger flights, matching the highest operating levels recorded last July.

While these developments are welcome, it should be noted that the inherent fragility of the geostrategic environment means that factors such as commodity price shocks, inflationary pressures, and cost of living concerns can manifest quickly, dampening consumer confidence and limiting discretionary spending.

It was nonetheless pleasing to see significant milestones achieved this month for Australian aviation including the successful integration of Western Sydney International Airport's airspace and introduction of controlled airspace at Ballina Byron Gateway Airport. Delivered on schedule and with stable operational outcomes, these programs underpin the ongoing growth of the Australian aviation network.

Similarly, industry operational reliability continued to improve, with June delivering the strongest on-time performance results in recent years and the lowest cancellation rate since 2017.

We are committed to working collaboratively with industry on strengthening the resilience of the aviation sector, investing in new and innovative technologies to enhance service efficiency and reliability, and building the foundations for future passenger, freight and aviation growth.



Economic and social trends



Economic factors

The global and Australian economies have proven more resilient than expected amid ongoing geostrategic uncertainty, supporting steady demand, aviation capacity and airfares. However, elevated fuel costs, persistent inflationary pressures and subdued productivity growth continue to weigh on operating conditions and forecast outlook for our sector.

Figure 1. Global manufacturing index.



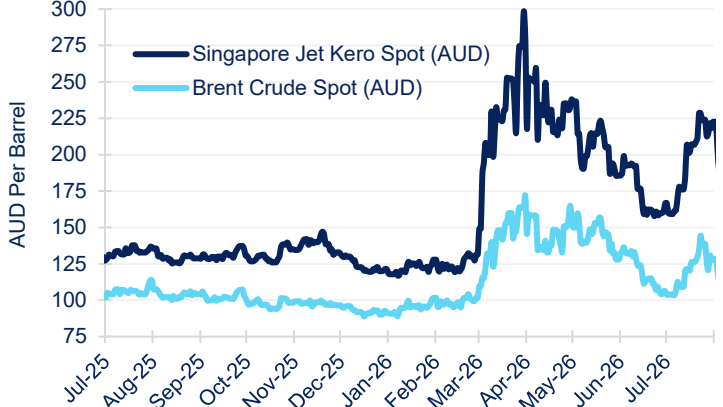
Source: S&P Global ([website](#)) – latest data as at 3/8/2026.

Figure 2. Consumer sentiment index.



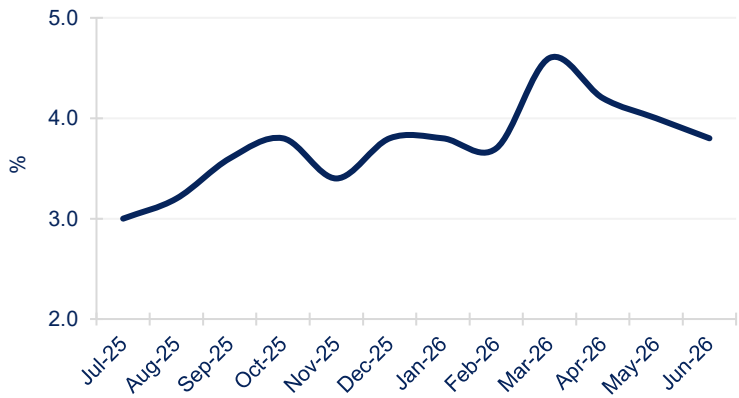
Source: Westpac IQ ([website](#)) – latest data as at 3/8/2026.

Figure 3. Jet fuel and Brent crude oil prices daily.



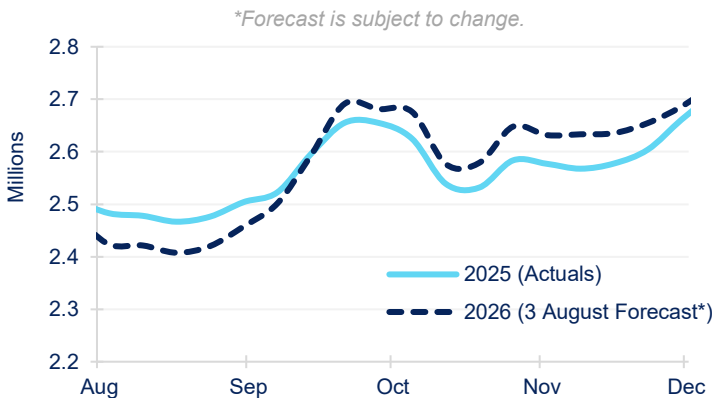
Source: Bloomberg – latest data as at 7/8/2026.

Figure 4. Consumer Price Index (CPI) Australia.



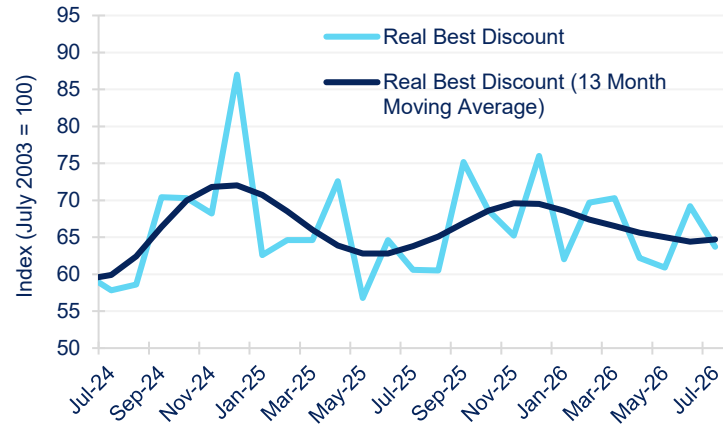
Source: ABS ([website](#)) – latest data as at 29/7/2026.

Figure 5. Australia weekly seat capacity (2026 outlook from August 2026 compared to 2025).



Source: CAPA ([website](#)) – latest data as at 3/8/2026.

Figure 6. Domestic airfares (real best discount).

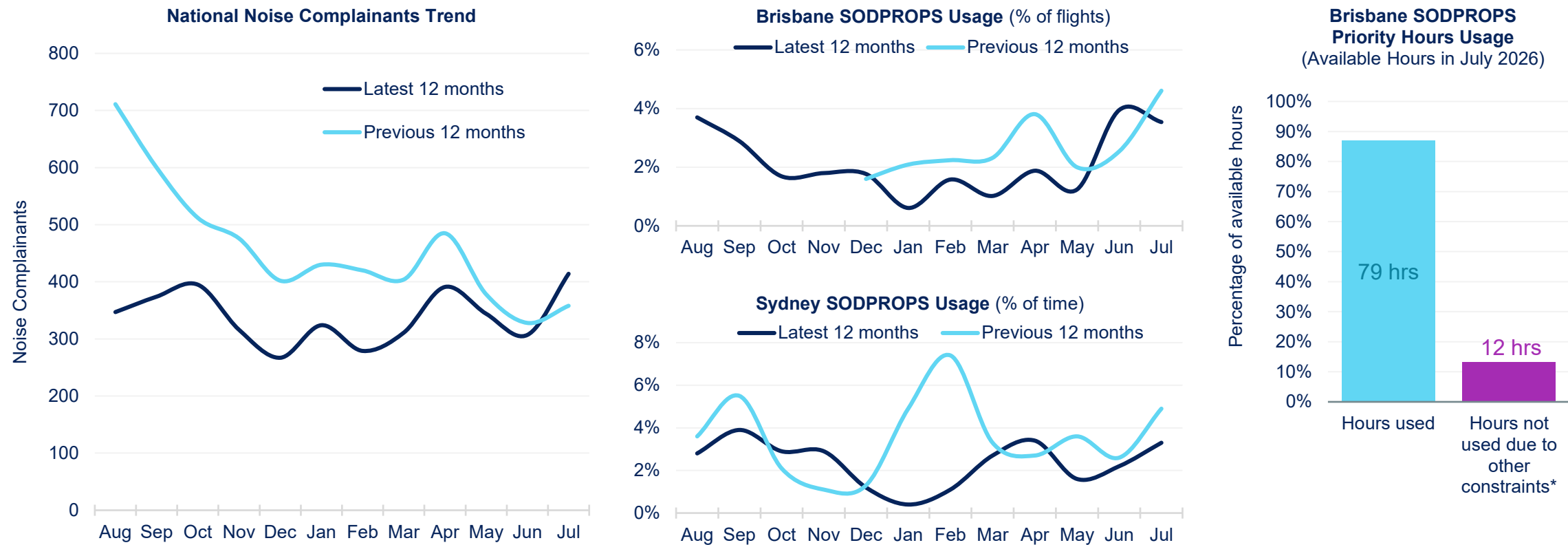


Source: BITRE ([website](#)) – latest data as at 11/8/2026.

Social factors: aircraft noise

The number of aircraft noise complainants increased in July, reflecting the introduction of new airspace and flight procedures in locations such as Bankstown, Western Sydney and Brisbane. The increase highlights the importance of balancing aviation growth with community outcomes. In Brisbane, Airservices delivered use of Simultaneous Opposite Direction Runway Operations (SODPROPS) 87% of available hours, supporting over-water operations and reducing noise impacts where safe and operationally feasible.

Figure 7. Aircraft noise complainants trend (left), SODPROPS usage trend at Brisbane and Sydney (middle) and SODPROPS available hours usage at Brisbane (right).



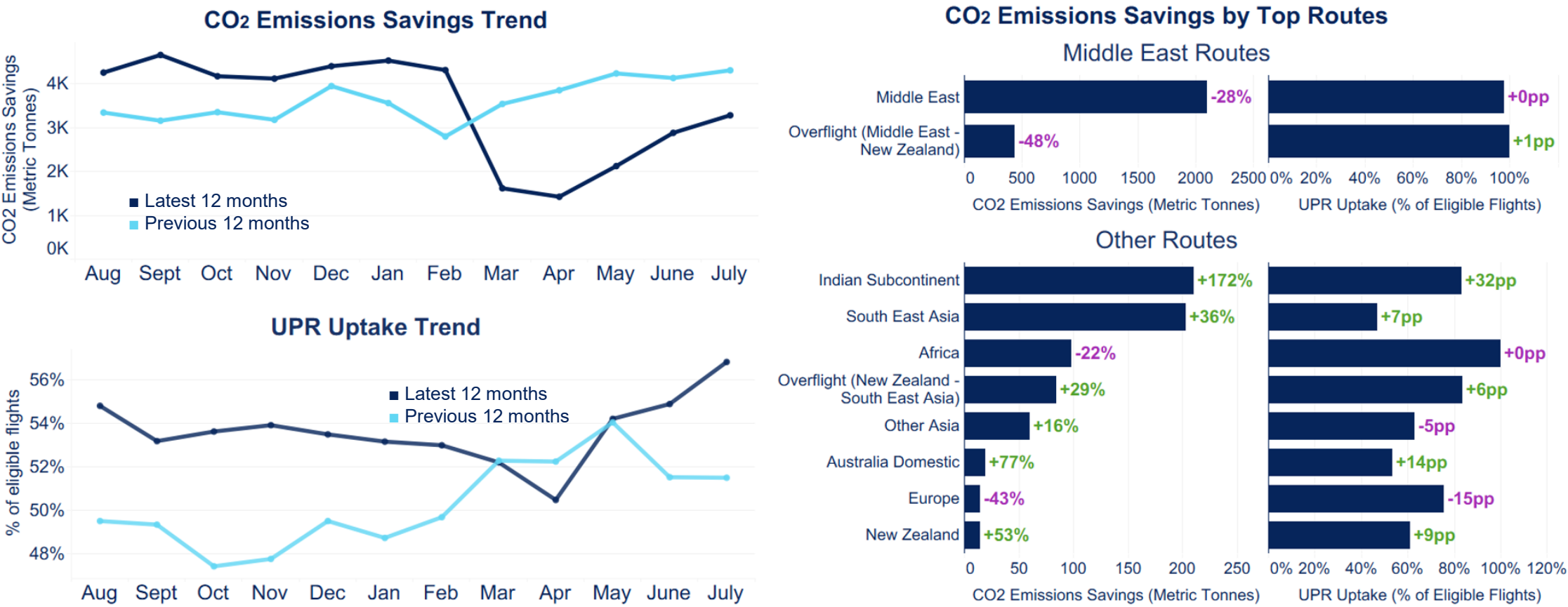
Source: Airservices' Noise Complaints and Information Service (NCIS) and Airservices' Aircraft in Your Neighbourhood tool ([website](#)).

* All non weather-related constraints include airport maintenance, military operations, Airservices staffing, conflicting airfield operations, operational reasons, and periods with no aircraft movements. These exclude any operational constraints that are attributable to weather-related factors (e.g. unstable conditions).

Social factors: aircraft emissions

User Preferred Routes (UPR) uptake reached the highest level since the trial was expanded in mid-2025. This was supported by increased adoption on services to India, Southeast Asia and New Zealand. While shifting Middle East traffic reduced overall emissions savings relative to last year, UPR still provided approximately 3,270 tonnes of CO₂ savings in July, supporting operational efficiency and sustainability outcomes.

Figure 8. Monthly CO₂ emissions savings from User Preferred Routes and uptake among eligible flights (left), with July 2026 savings and uptake by selected route (right).



Source: Eligible flights include all jet operations over oceanic and cross-continental airspace. Eligibility is independent of technology, training, or other operational constraints.
CO₂ emissions savings are measured across the entire flight segment within Australian airspace.

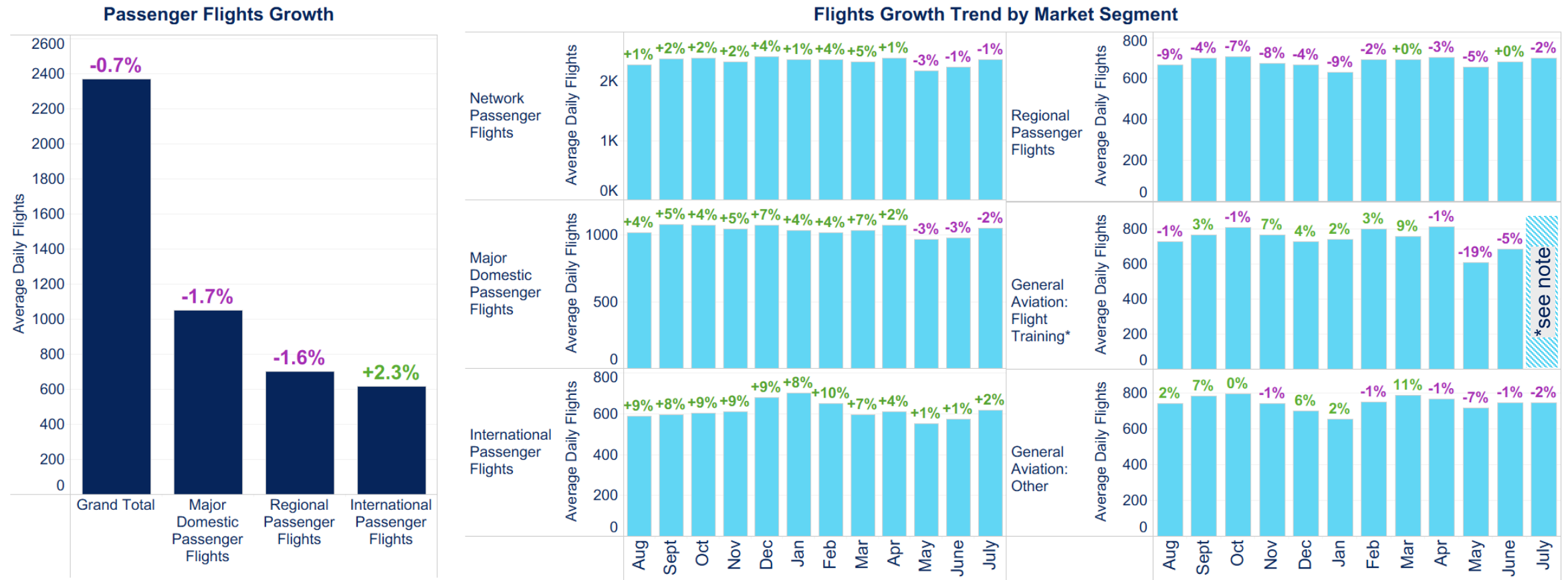
Australian aviation: domestic and international markets



State of Australian aviation growth

Passenger flights across all industry segments reached a three-month high recovering from the initial contraction in response to the Middle East conflict. While growth has moderated compared to the previous year, the network has proven resilient. However, the outlook remains uncertain given the inherent fragility of the geopolitical environment. Factors such as commodity price shocks, inflationary pressures, and cost of living concerns can manifest quickly, dampening consumer confidence and limiting discretionary spending.

Figure 9. Average daily passenger flights in July 2026 with year-on-year change (left) and year-on-year average daily flight growth by market segments* monthly (right).

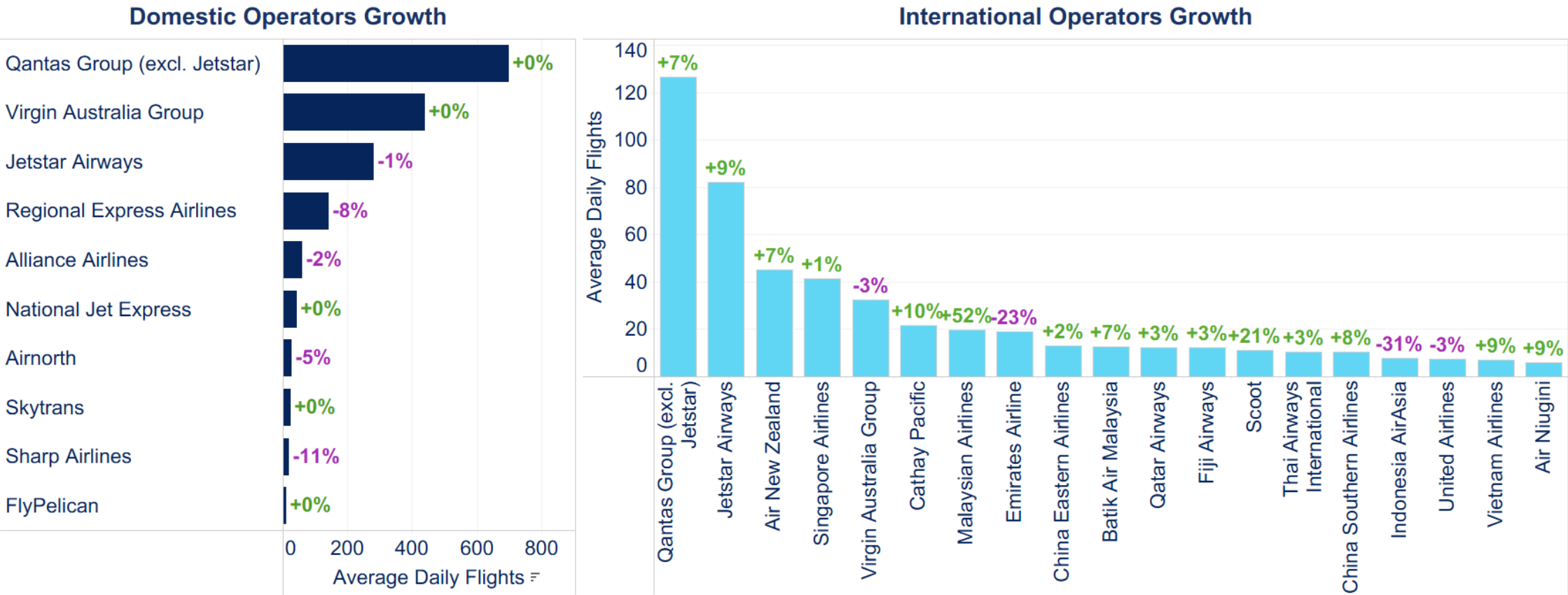


Source: Airservices ODAS (includes airline flights only, excludes overflights).
* Flight training data is one month in arrears.

Top aircraft operators

Growth by operators is concentrated amongst major network carriers that are well-positioned to capture demand as global traffic patterns adjust to ongoing Middle East uncertainty. Domestically, activity remained broadly stable among operators. These trends highlight both the resilience of demand across Australia’s neighbouring markets and the adaptability of Australia’s aviation network to evolving global operating conditions.

Figure 10. Average daily flights growth for top airlines in the domestic segment (left) and international segment (right) in July 2026, with year-on-year percentage change.

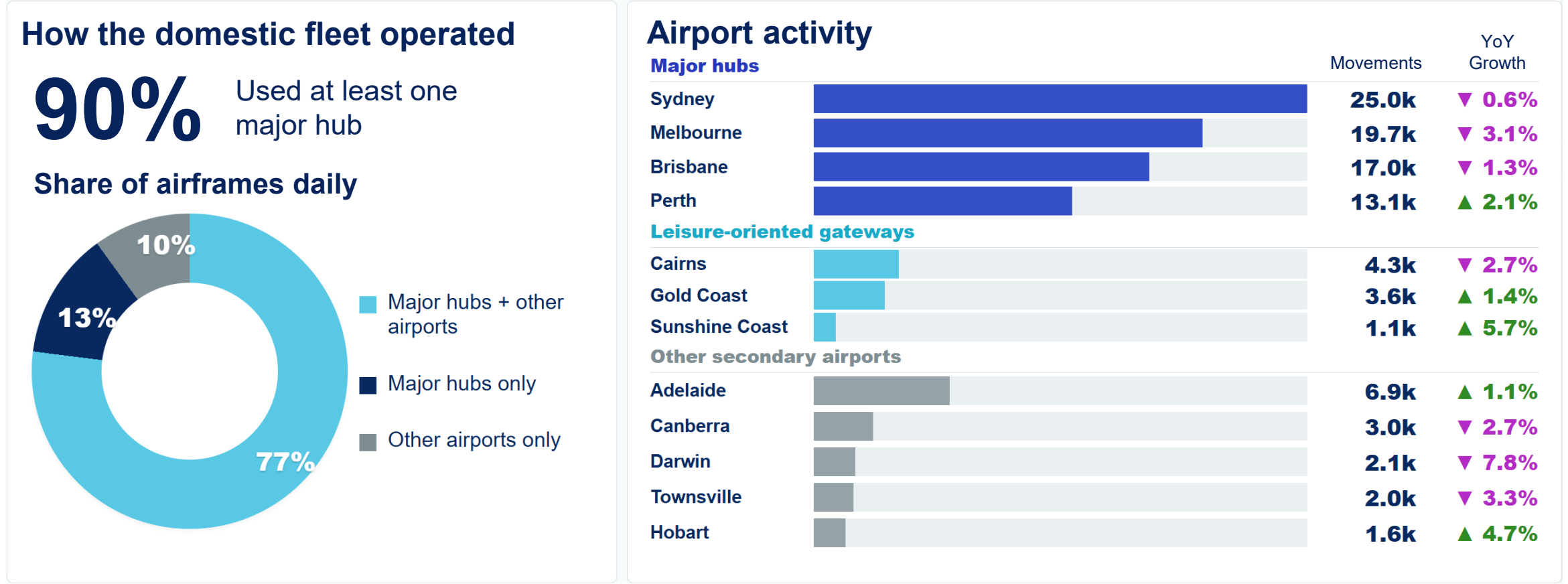


Source: Aircservices ODAS (includes airline flights only). Flights operated on wet-lease arrangements are counted towards the operators with the assigned callsigns.

Domestic network

The domestic network is anchored by Australia’s four busiest airports, where 90% of the passenger transport fleet rotate through a major hub each day. At the same time, sustained leisure travel demand, especially during school holiday, supported growth at secondary airports, such as Hobart and Sunshine Coast recording around 5% year-on-year growth in monthly total passenger flights outpacing the major hubs.

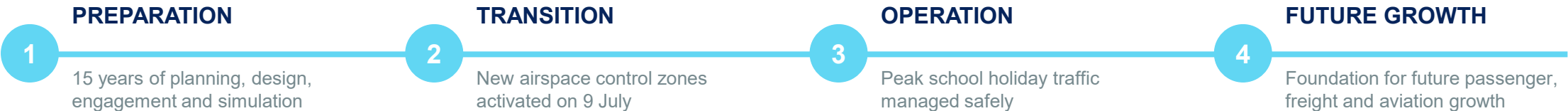
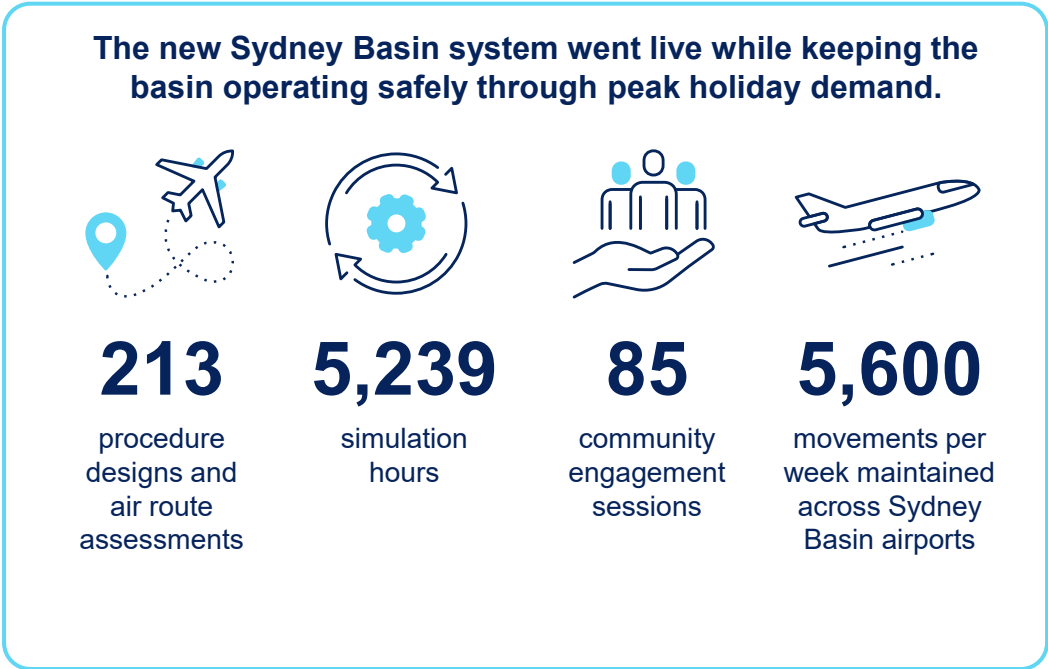
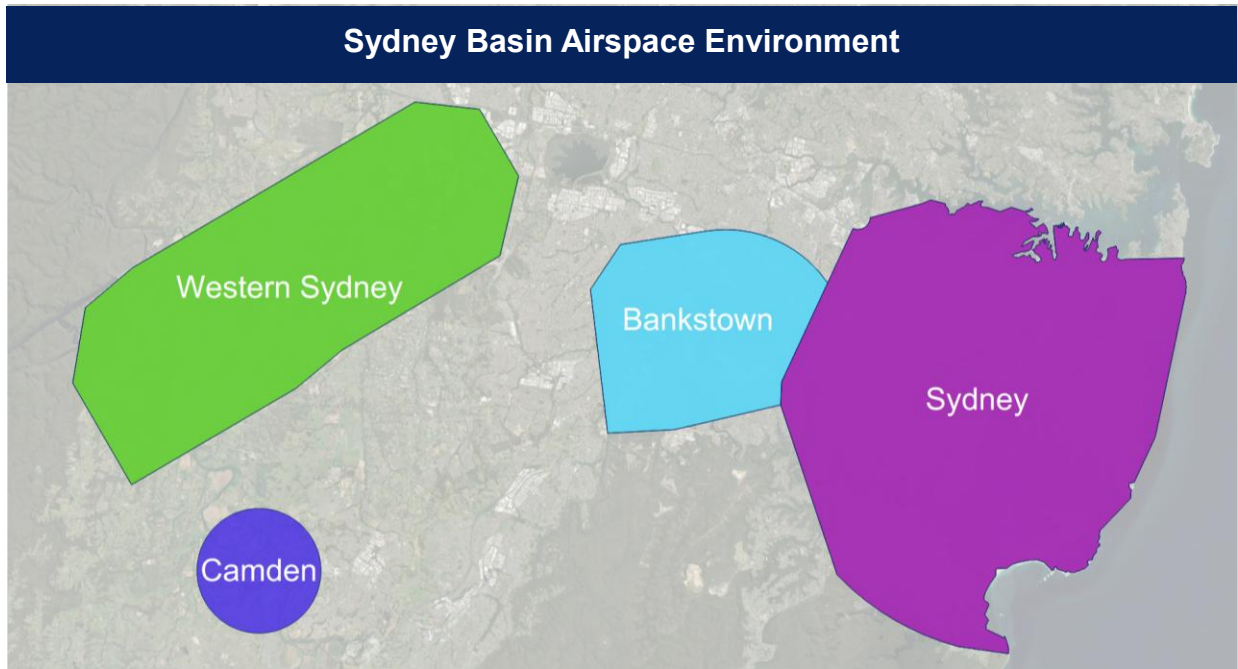
Figure 11. Domestic fleet rotations through the network on average daily in July 2026 (left) and movements across key airports in July 2026, with year-on-year change (right).



Source: Airservices ODAS (includes airline flights only).

Evolving Australian airspace

The integration of Western Sydney International Airport’s airspace marked the most significant change in Sydney Basin operations in decades. Following extensive consultation with stakeholders and considerable preparation, new airspace arrangements and flight procedures commenced on 9 July. These changes integrated Australia’s newest airport into a coordinated multi-airport network and enabled safe operations through the busy July school holiday period.

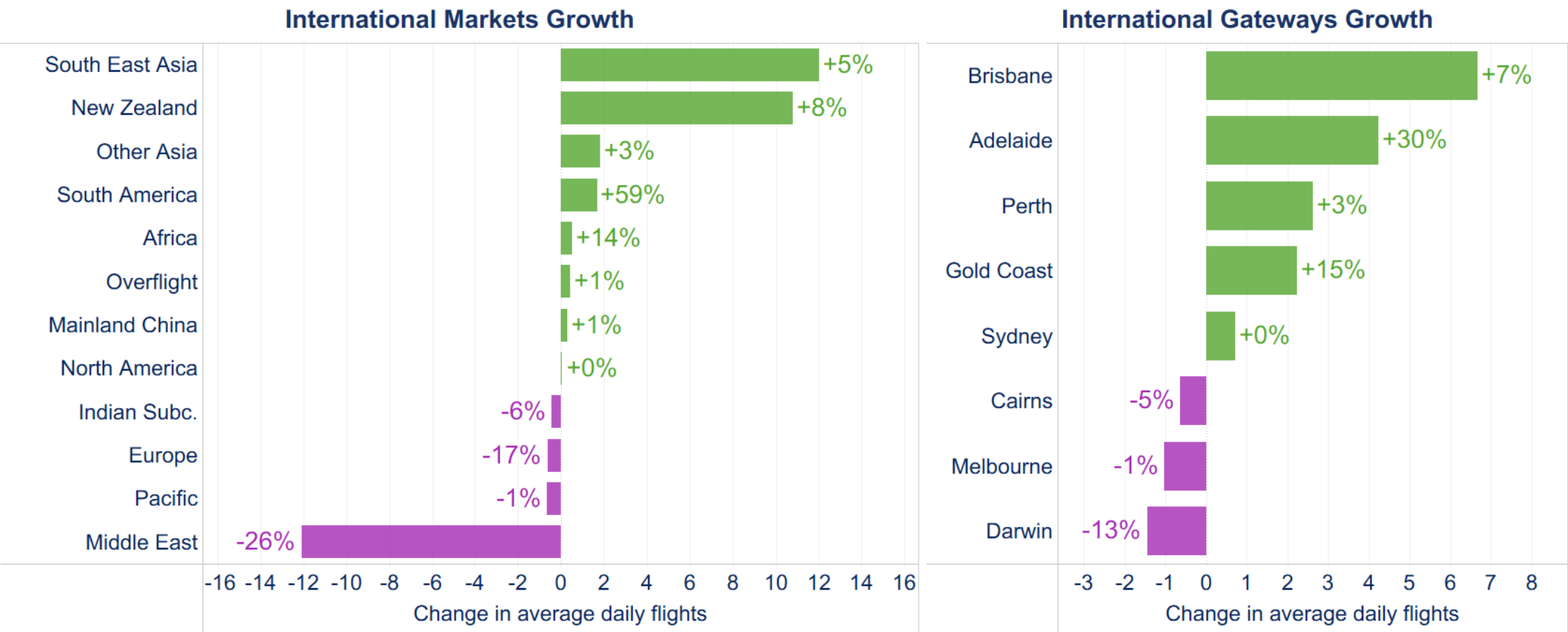


Source: Airservices ODAS (for movements, includes airline flights only).
* Basin changes also include procedures at Richmond, Westmead Hospital, and Lithgow Hospital airports.

International markets

International growth continues to be driven by strong demand in Southeast Asia and New Zealand alongside a shift in long-haul traffic through alternative Asian hubs and expansion of direct services (e.g. from Brisbane and Adelaide) to destinations such as the United States. The increasing use of newer-generation aircraft is supporting these trends by enabling more direct and efficient connectivity. In contrast, recovery in Middle East services remains at around 75% of last year’s levels constrained by ongoing regional uncertainty.

Figure 12. International markets growth (left) and international gateways growth (right) in average daily flights for July 2026 vs July 2025.

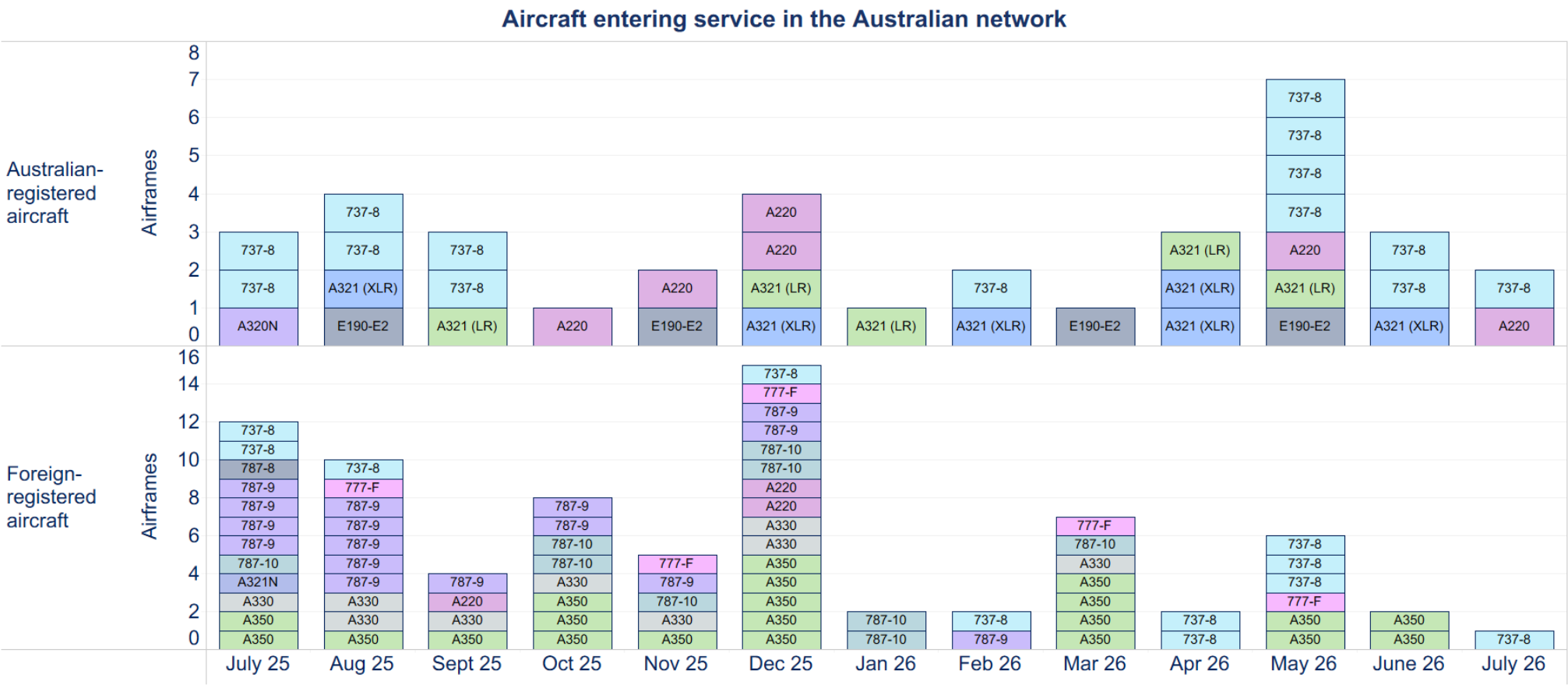


Source: Airservices ODAS (includes airline flights only).
Overflights are those transiting the airspace without landing. For multi-leg flights, legs that start and end outside Australian airspace are not included.

Network fleet

As fleet renewal continues, new-generation aircraft accounted for 12% of domestic passenger flights, up from 6% a year earlier, particularly across major domestic routes, while their international share rose from 39% to 46%, concentrated in Southeast Asia, New Zealand and across other Asian and Pacific markets. This shift suggests that fleet modernisation is becoming embedded in optimising industry’s resource utilisation, fuel efficiency and environmental performance outcomes.

Figure 13. Aircraft newly entering in the Australian network in the last 13 months



Source: CAPA (includes airline flights only). Only aircraft with at least 8 flights in a month are shown.
New generation aircraft include A220, A320neo-family, A330neo, A350, 737 MAX, 787 and E-Jet E2 aged 10 years or less.



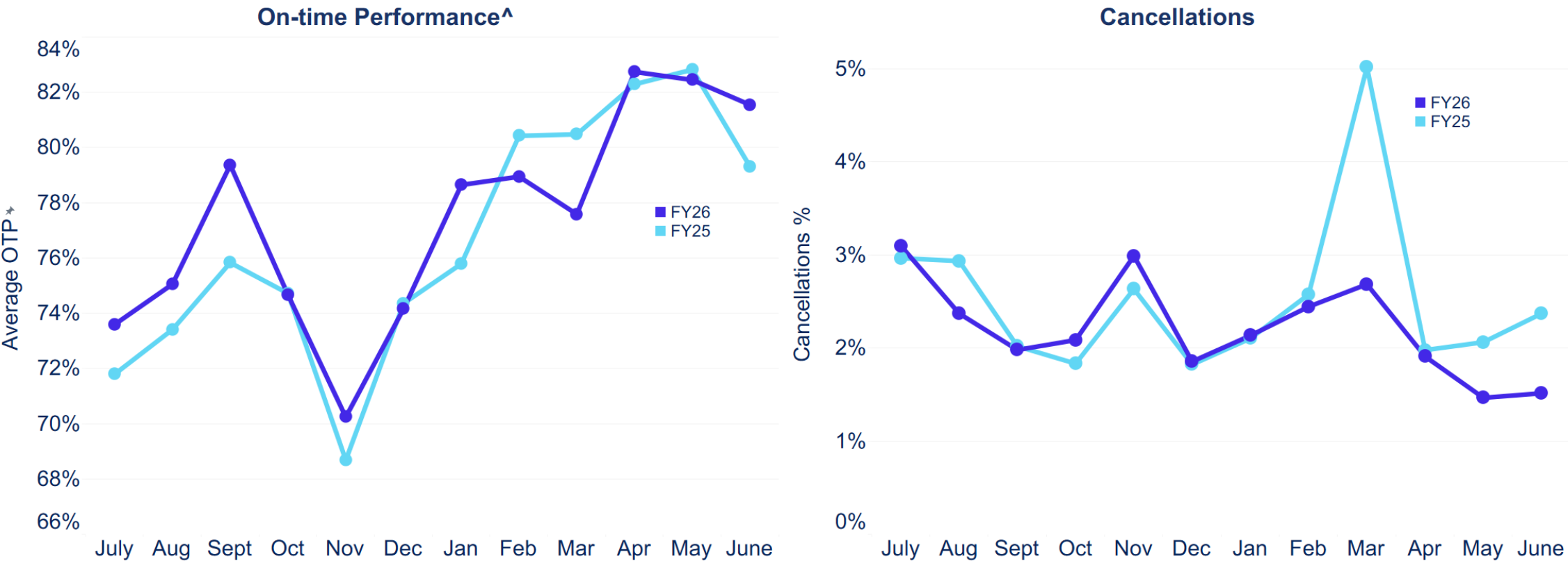
Australian aviation: network performance



Industry performance

The latest available data demonstrated that the industry operational reliability continued to improve, delivering the strongest June on-time performance (OTP) results in recent years and the lowest cancellation rate since 2017.

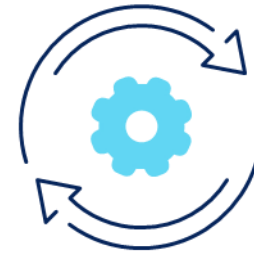
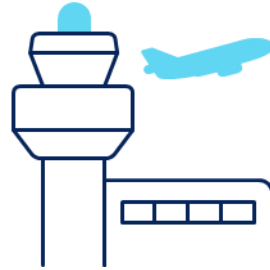
Figure 14. Total industry OTP^ and cancellations, up to June 2026* with year-on-year change.



Source: BITRE ([website](#)). March 2025 performance was impacted by ex-tropical cyclone Alfred.
* Data available up to June 2026 based on latest BITRE data release.
^ Average of departure and arrival OTP.

Network management process

Airservices collaborates closely with airlines and airports to balance scheduled demand with available runway capacity. The Ground Delay Program (GDP) is an agreed industry plan activated when required for Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane or Perth Airport, to optimise arrival demand management and minimise airborne holding. Additionally, the implementation of Airport Collaborative Decision Making (A-CDM) at these locations are providing data-driven real-time situational awareness across airports, airlines and air traffic control, particularly for departure operations.



Flight Schedules

Strategic slot allocation is managed by Airport Coordination Limited (ACL) for Sydney and Capacity Optimisation Group (COG) for Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth – upon which airline **flight schedules** are then based. Airlines send their final flight schedules to Airservices Network Operations Management Centre (NOMC) the day prior to operations.

Capacity

Airservices facilitates the **available airport capacity** through a collaborative process with airlines and the Bureau of Meteorology. Factors which impact available capacity include:

- adverse weather, including fog, thunderstorms, and strong/gusty winds;
- airport infrastructure and systems unserviceability, such as runway and taxiway pavement conditions, airport lighting systems and gate facilities;
- Airservices' services and enabling infrastructure and systems.

Balancing

Airservices publishes the agreed-industry plan as a **Ground Delay Program (GDP)** to balance the demand with the available capacity. The GDP instructs aircraft to wait on the ground for their turn to depart, aiming to reduce excessive airborne holding at the destination. This increases predictability of operations and reduces risks of disruptions and tactical holdings.

Operations

Throughout the day of operations, industry **stakeholders work collaboratively** to monitor the aviation network performance to respond to events which put the network plan at risk. These include unforeseen adverse weather events, system or infrastructure outages. In instances when these events impact the network performance to a sufficient degree to warrant action, an update to the GDP will be agreed-upon by industry. A-CDM is delivering on the ground efficiencies.

Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM)

Ground Delay Programs (GDPs) at Australia's four busiest airports remain the primary industry mechanism for balancing scheduled demand and runway capacity through collaborative Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM). ATFM GDP delays accounted for 2.1% of total network delays in July, with adverse weather driving nearly 60% of all ATFM GDP-related delays.

Figure 15. Key Ground Delay Program (GDP) metrics

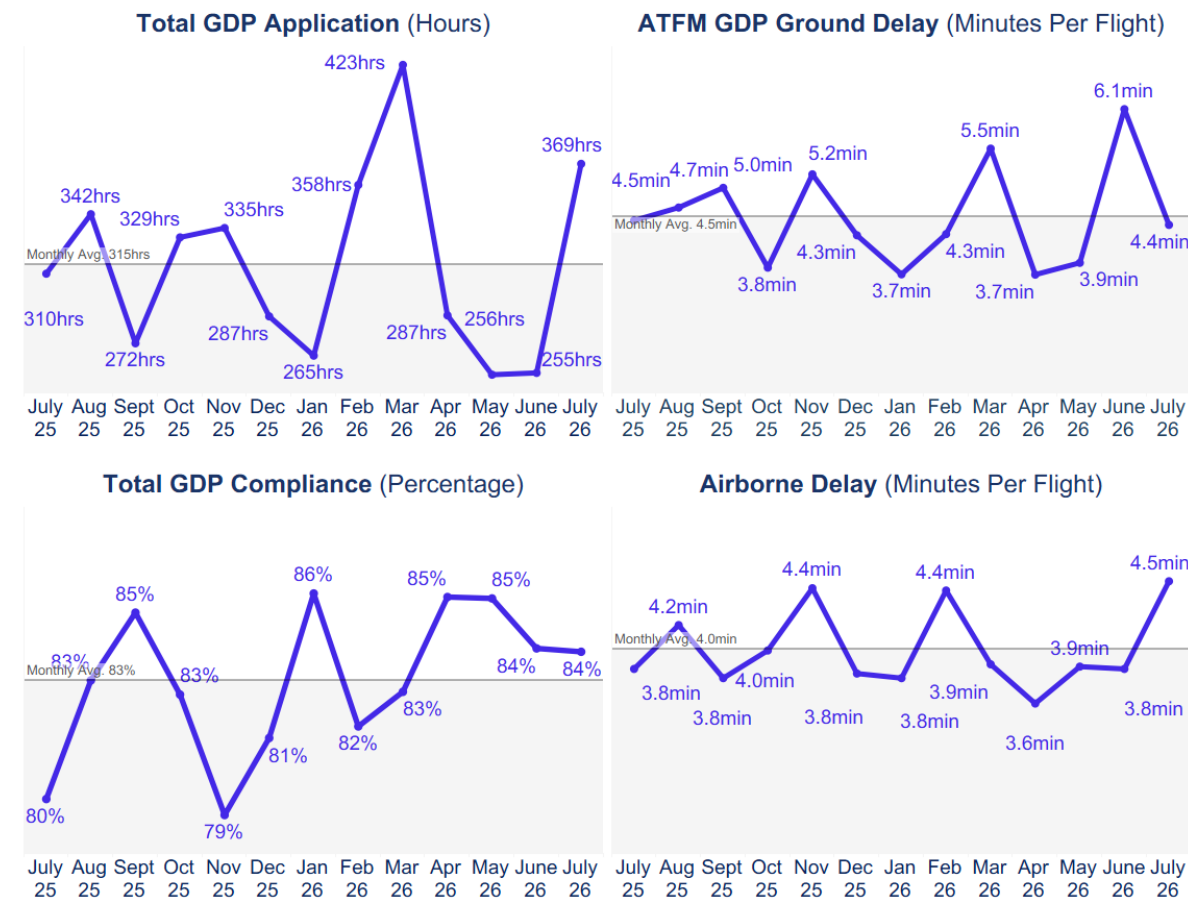
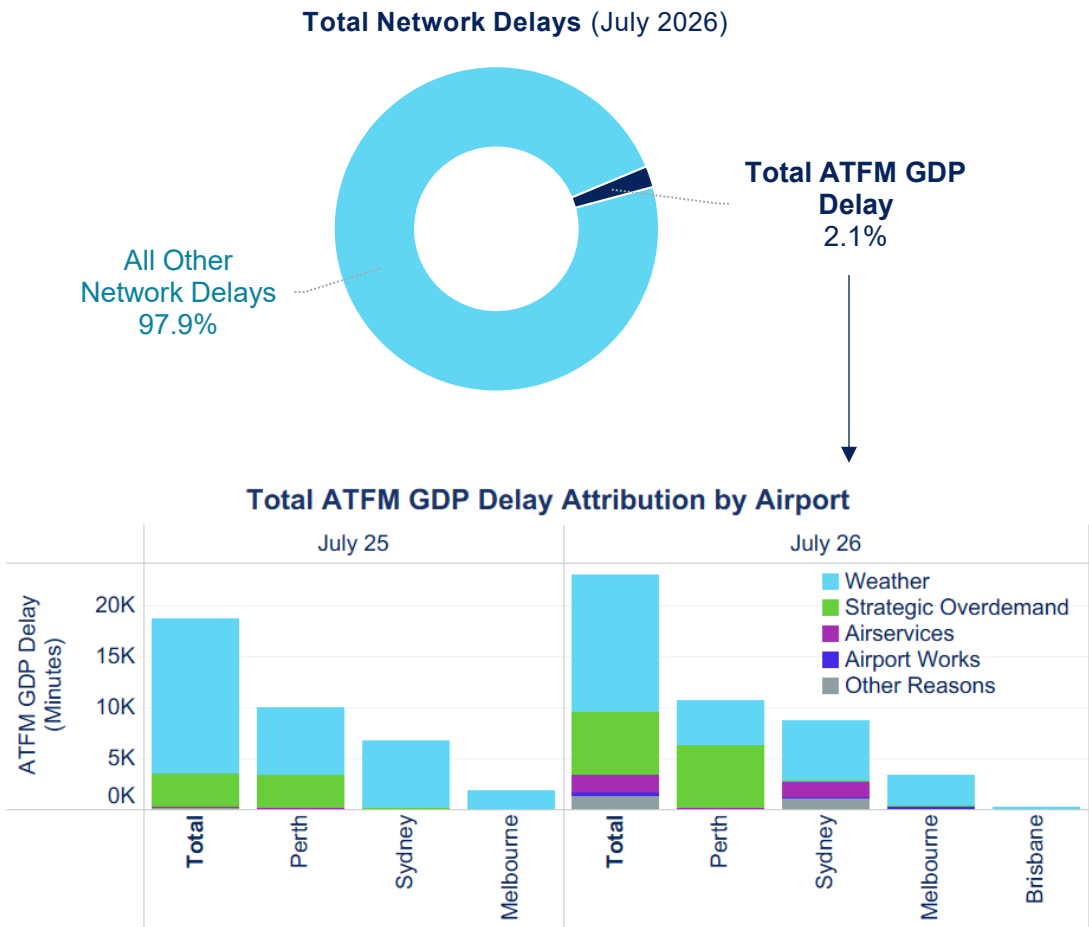


Figure 16. ATFM (GDP) delay minutes as part of total network delays (top) and by airport and attribution (bottom).



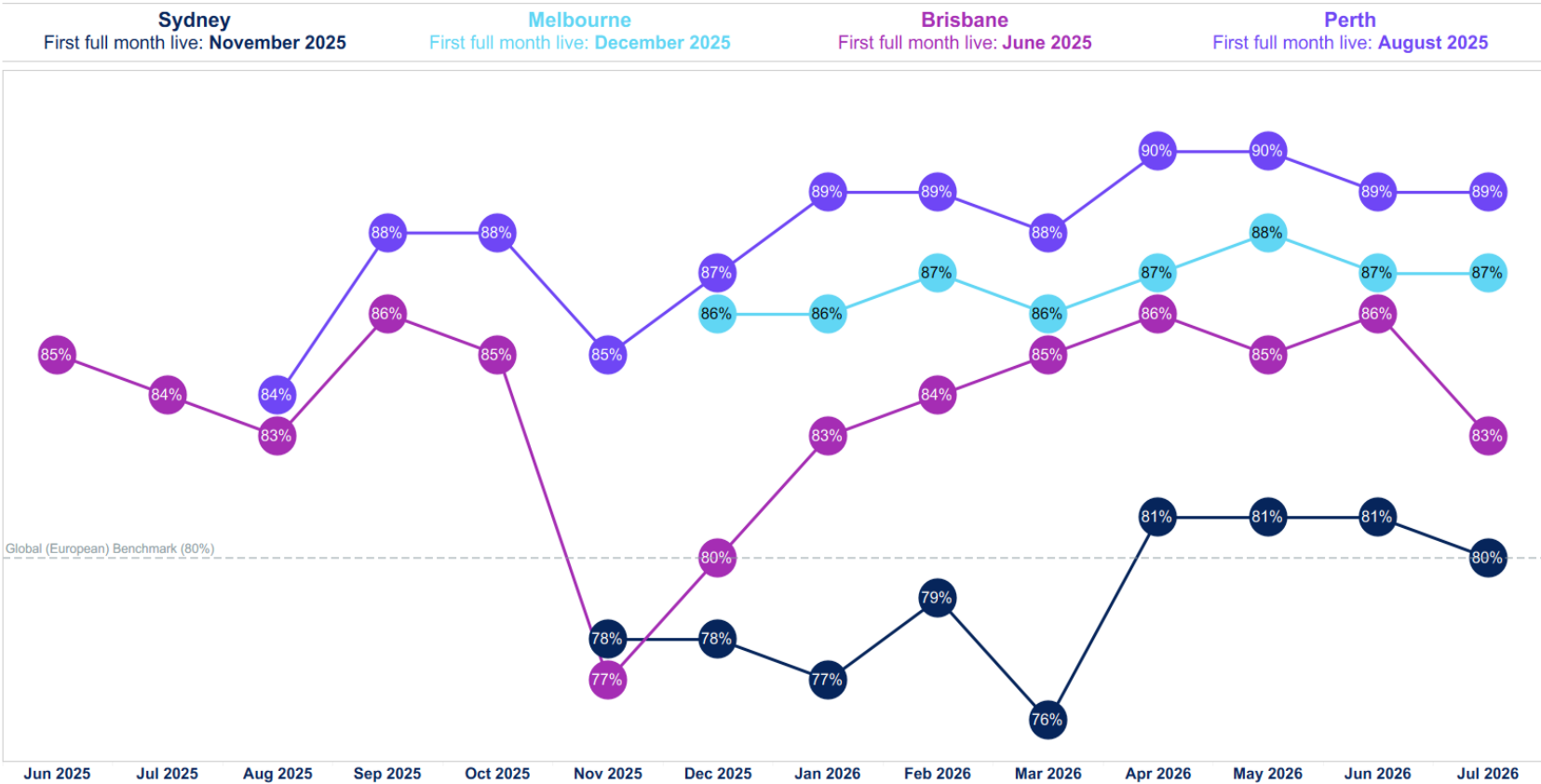
Source: Airservices UQAS.

GDP compliance represents the proportion of flights into an airport that departed compliant with their assigned GDP slot.

Airport Collaborative Decision Making (A-CDM)

Sustained A-CDM compliance above global benchmarks is translating into operational benefits. At Perth Airport, A-CDM replaced a legacy departure management process and has reduced average departure delays attributable to flow management from approximately four minutes to less than one minute per flight. This has the flow-on benefits to improve runway utilisation during peak demand and improved departure OTP that reached 86% in June, up from 79% a year earlier. Melbourne Airport has reported improvements in gate allocation efficiency. At Brisbane and Sydney, A-CDM is also providing real-time visibility into network performance drivers.

Figure 17. Monthly A-CDM compliance to Target Off Block Time (TOBT) across airports.



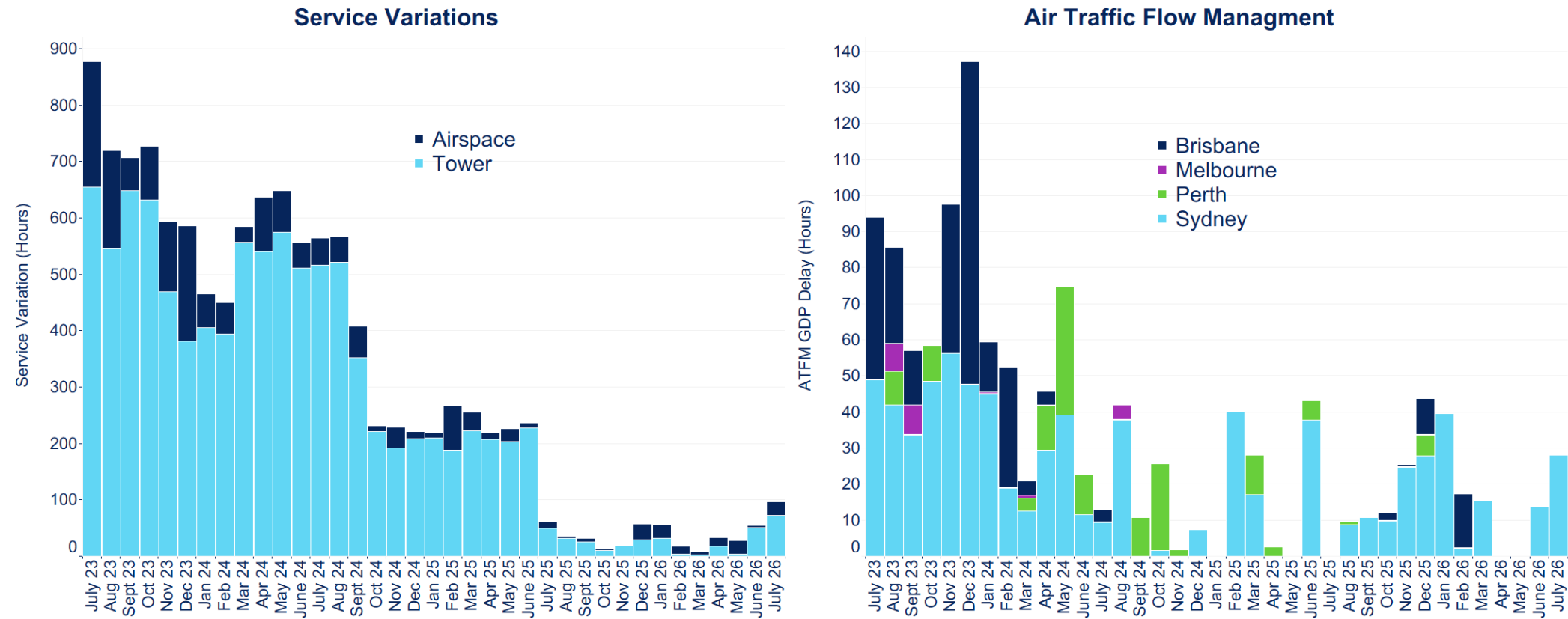
Source: A-CDM.

A-CDM go live dates: Brisbane 10 May 2025, Perth 18 July 2025, Sydney 11 October 2025, Melbourne 12 November 2025

Air traffic service provision

While air traffic service performance has improved year-on-year, July was a disappointing month with an increase in service variations and activation of GDP on three occasions due to Airservices constraints at Sydney Airport with flow-on network impact. Strengthening operational resilience and delivering improvements across the national network remains our priority, including continuing to expand workforce capacity through training and recruitment.

Figure 18. Hours of variation from published levels across Airspace Groups and Air Traffic Control Towers (left) and Airservices attributable ATFM GDP delay (right).

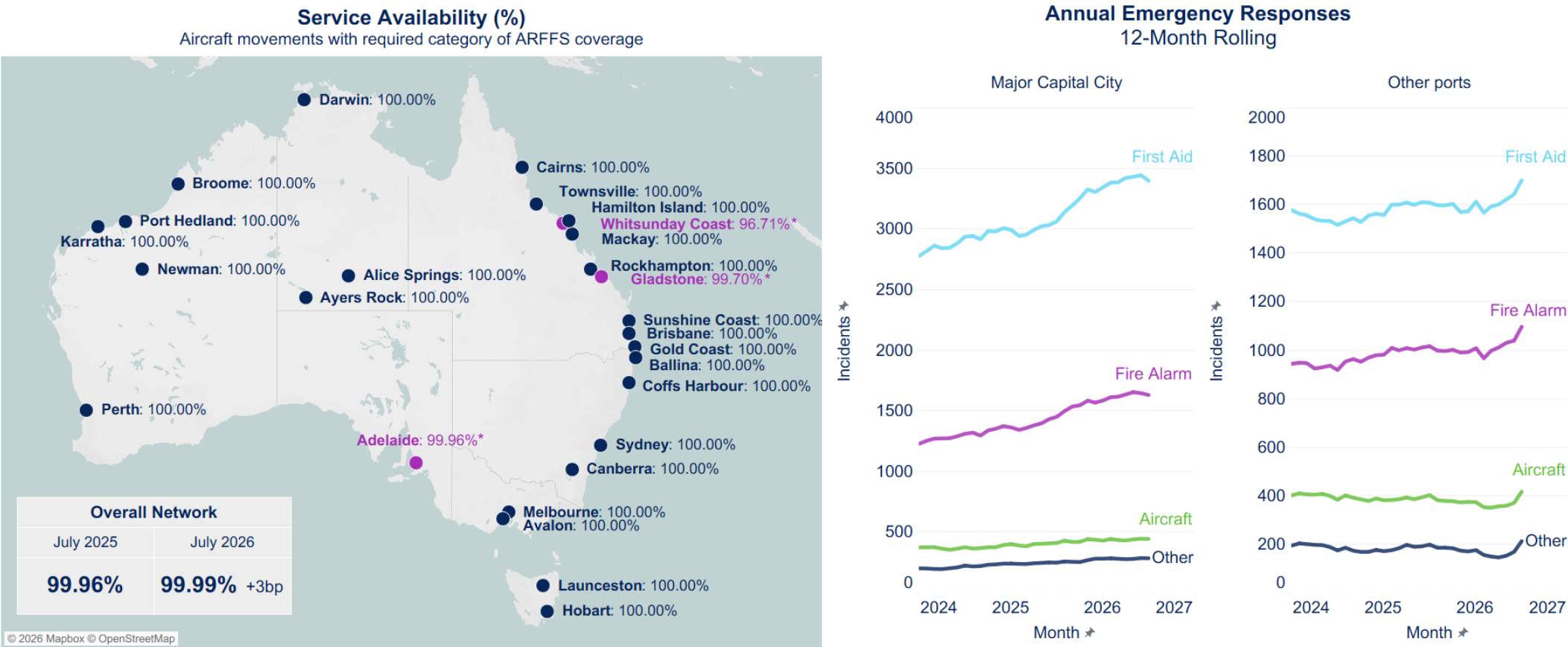


Source: Airservices ODAS. Variations to published services comprise of Temporary Restricted Areas and tower closure periods. During the periods of variations to published services at aerodromes, services in adjacent Class G airspace are generally unaffected (e.g. provision of flight, traffic information and safety alerting). Service variations are with respect to published services as per ERSA including any approvals by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) for temporary amendments.

Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting Service

Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) service maintained strong service reliability in July, delivering 99.99% availability nationally. Rising response call-outs, particularly outside capital cities, point to growing aviation activity and emergency service needs across the network.

Figure 19. ARFFS service availability by airport and overall network in July 2026 with year-on-year change (left) and rolling annual emergency responses (right).



Source: Airservices ODAS and ARFFS TRAX. Service availability is based on aircraft movements that received applicable category of ARFFS coverage during published ERSR hours. Airservices attributable causes in reduction of service include staffing and equipment (e.g. vehicles). Major capital city airports include Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Perth. In addition to aircraft-related incidents, fire alarms, and first aid, ARFF units also respond to a wide range of events - including hazardous materials, medical emergencies, security threats, non-aircraft fires, and mutual aid requests.

* The operational impact was limited to 15 flights across Adelaide, Whitsunday Coast, and Gladstone in July 2026.

For more information
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