

More Japanese heading for Coast

Jake Dew

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THE Gold Coast has secured even more of budget air carrier Jetstar's Japanese audience with 600 seats added to the existing Tokyo service yesterday.

It is a further coup for the region's tourism sector and boosts the Jetstar service between the Gold Coast and Japan to twice daily.

The addition of the Tuesday and Wednesday flights will complement the existing five-times weekly service from Tokyo that commenced in October.

Jetstar already flies daily between the Coast and Osaka.

Gold Coast Tourism CEO Martin Winter said in an age when airlines were cutting services this showed the Japanese market was one of promise.

"This is further great news for the Gold Coast, when most destinations are losing service Jetstar has demonstrated its confidence in this region by adding two more services," he said.

"Although Japan continues to be a challenging market for us we are confident in time we can turn it around and once again deliver the numbers that we would all like to see."

Mr Winter said a lot of time and effort had been invested into luring more Japanese visitors to our shores.

"This takes us to more than 50 per cent of the airline's seats now coming into Coolangatta," he said. "This is testament to the joint marketing that has been done in both Osaka and Tokyo from Gold Coast Tourism, Tourism Queensland, Tourism Australia and the airline."

It was hoped the service would help deliver a new generation of Japanese travellers to the Coast, said Jetstar chief executive officer John Buchanan.

He said the Tokyo and Osaka services had both been operating at almost full capacity since they were launched less than six months ago.

"While the Gold Coast has always been a popular destination for Japanese visitors, our passenger data indicates that up to one in five of our passengers are first-time international flyers or infrequent travellers," he said.

"The value of the yen is also currently in the favour of Japanese holiday-makers to Australia, which is helping drive visitation."

Since Jetstar commenced services into Japan from Australia in 2007 more than one million people had flown Down Under, he said.

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