

3 April 2016

Open Day Entertains at Canberra Airport

Anticipation about the countdown to direct international flights to Singapore and New Zealand combined with an aerobatic show from the RAAF Roulettes and beautiful Canberra autumn weather had visitors flocking to the 2016 Airport Open Day today.

“We are delighted to be able to share our airport with Canberrans in a way that isn’t done anywhere else in Australia. The support from the community is just amazing,” Managing Director Stephen Byron said.

“This has become a major attraction for families in Canberra and the surrounding region and we even had people come from Sydney today.”

Crowd numbers were up 25 percent on the 2014 Open Day with around 30,000 people visiting the site on the airfield just south of the terminal and in the adjacent Brindabella Business Park.

The highlight of the day for many aviation enthusiasts was the 17 minute spectacular by the RAAF Roulettes.

“There’s no doubt the Roulettes are a star attraction, judging by the number of people queueing for their autographs afterwards!” Mr Byron said.

There were several other flying displays throughout the day including the Red Baron bi-plane. Roving buskers kept families entertained whilst they waited for their turn to step inside the many aircraft on display. There were also smaller planes visitors could inspect closely.

While the focus was on aviation, Open Day also included many free family activities such as a petting zoo, face painting, and jumping castles. Australian Border Force put on several shows with its canine team and Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting were a hit with their fire truck.

“People often ask me why we don’t have it more often and why it doesn’t go for longer. The simply answer is, it is a huge logistical exercise putting on a major event like this. We are a working airport and the disruption to regular operations is significant. We need to restore normal operations by the time the late afternoon flights start arriving and departing.

“Moreover, many of the aircraft on display have to return to their home ports across Australia, and the working aircraft generously brought in by Virgin Australia and Qantas need to be reinstated to their normal schedules.

“Sure, it would be easier not to do it, but the attendance today shows the community loves it and seeing so many smiling faces and happy families makes the effort and inconvenience worthwhile. We say to everyone who came: thank you for your patience and good humour during the natural delays that occur in and around a major event like this; we are sincerely grateful for your support,” Mr Byron said.

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