CWT

CWT AIRPORT INDEX:

BEST AIRPORTS ACROSS THE WORLD

FOR AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS TRAVELLERS

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Rated and ranked: top airports for comfort and productivity for business travellers.

Every year, more than 2.3 million Australians travel by air for business trips to destinations across the country, as well as far-flung locations around the world.

While crucially important for the companies they represent – and the health of the wider Australian economy – such travel is not without its pain points.

It stands to reason that a business traveller is looking for different things in terms of their airport experience than the average holidaymaker.

When a business traveller flies in or out of an airport, the breadth and quality of the facilities available to them, alongside other practical considerations, ranging from links to the CBD or punctuality of flights, can have a significant impact, not only on their travel experience but also on the success of their trip.

Research by leading travel management company CWT has found that domestic and international airports are responding to the needs of business travellers. Many are updating their facilities on a regular basis to ensure that these specific requirements are catered for.

Using insight from CWT's business travel experts, we have identified the key criteria to enable the best business travel experience at an airport. Factoring in these priorities, we have analysed 15 of the world's airports that are most visited by CWT's Australian customer base.

We have ranked and rated these airports based on seven criteria including amenities, transport links and on-time flights, to determine which airports provide the best experience for business travellers.

So which tops the table, and how can your travellers optimise their productivity and efficiency while on the move?

WHAT DO BUSINESS TRAVELLERS NEED IN THEIR AIRPORTS?

The business travel experience is very different to travelling for a holiday. Business travellers need to be able to work on the go, be ready and refreshed for a meeting straight off the plane and stick to often-tight schedules.

Travel experts at CWT identified the availability of airport lounges and associated amenities as a top priority when it comes to the needs of business travellers. Having somewhere to work while waiting for a flight is key to staying productive on the move.

Next on the list is technology. Great Wi-Fi means business travellers can open their laptop or tablet and get to work wherever they are and however long they've got in transit. Whether they're in a lounge or around the wider airport building, accessible and reliable Wi-Fi with no pay walls is a must.

Technology also enables a smooth transit through an airport – another key consideration for business travellers. Self-service check-ins and bag drops shorten check-in times by up to three minutes per passenger.

Transport links play an important part in ensuring an easy and stress-free journey. The availability of transport and travel time from the airport to the CBD are key factors – particularly when it comes to taxis and trains – which our CWT experts determined were the most used modes of transport for corporate travellers.

With all these factors in mind, we have rated and ranked the top 15 airports for comfort, convenience, technology and on-time flights in order to identify the world's leading airport for Australian business travellers.

THE ULTIMATE IN CONVENIENCE

Comfort is king when it comes to keeping business travellers happy. Someone who gets to his or her destination feeling refreshed and relaxed is likely to put in a better performance at that all-important client meeting than someone who is stressed and anxious from a difficult transit.

Across the four passenger terminals of London's Heathrow Airport there are 44 different lounges and areas with premium benefits for those holding elite memberships and passes – that's 13 more than its closest rival, Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport, and 25 more than the average number of lounges across our list of the most-visited airports. Depending on the airline and class in which you're travelling, there's a wealth of choice available when it comes to refreshments and relaxation.

BEST FOR COMFORT

		Number of lounges
1	London Heathrow UK	44
2	Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Thailand	31
3	Tokyo Narita Japan	29

As part of its plethora of lounges, Heathrow Airport offers business travellers the opportunity to live the high life before take-off. The luxurious Plaza Premium Lounge at Terminal 2 is the first of its kind in the European airport space, with a large brand presence in Asia and the Middle East. This lounge offers all the benefits you come to expect with luxury, including complimentary food and drinks, champagne and tapas bars and a spa, as well as private spaces for relaxation. Heathrow has a multitude of options for corporate travellers who need to unwind between flights – with day beds, bedrooms, and massage spots across four terminals, there are plenty of opportunities to refresh before a flight.

But when it comes to providing the best experience for business travellers, other airports are stepping up their game in the areas of convenience and comfort.

Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport has 31 lounges, including many pay-per-use lounges that can be accessed by travellers who are not flying business class and who don't have a high status with a particular airline's loyalty program. Members of the Priority Pass program can gain entry to 11 lounges across the airport, offering a range of amenities including complimentary food and drink, showers, Wi-Fi and massage chairs.

Meanwhile Tokyo Narita Airport's lounges offer internet, TV and refreshments – everything you need for a productive and comfortable business travel experience. A capsule hotel also opened at Terminal 2 in 2014 for passengers with early morning flights or those needing to stop over for shorter periods in between flights.

TRANSPORT LINKS AND ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

Business travellers are used to tight turnarounds, so on-time performance is essential when it comes to keeping to schedules.

Canberra, Perth and Brisbane airports flew the flag for Australian efficiency. We found that Australia's Perth Airport stood out from the crowd in terms of its on-time performance. Data compiled by FlightGlobal shows that 87.3% of flights were on schedule from the airport from the year to April 2018 – higher than the average of around 80% for the 15 airports reviewed in the study.

Canberra and Brisbane airports made up the rest of the top three, with 86.5% and 85.4% of on-time flights respectively. Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport and Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport ranked 6th and 8th with on-time performance scores of 81.8% and 80.6% respectively.

ON TIME FLIGHTS

		Flights on time
1	Perth Airport Australia	87.3%
2	Canberra Airport Australia	86.5%
3	Brisbane Airport Australia	85.4%

Business travellers the world over know that a hassle-free journey to and from the airport is hugely important to ensure a trip is productive and relaxing – as well as making sure they're in time for their flight or meeting. We looked at the time it takes from the airport to the closest CBD at each of the 15 airports, looking at both taxis and trains as a mode of transport at peak times.

Singapore's Changi Airport emerged as one of three clear winners, taking into account both trains and taxis – the preferred method of transport for business travellers according to experts at CWT. It takes an average of 30 minutes to get into inner city Singapore from the airport by taxi, and 53 minutes on the train.

Mass Rapid Transit subway system trains in Singapore run every two to three minutes at peak times, and every five to seven minutes in off peak times . Taxis from the Singaporean capital cost around AU$20-30 to the airport, making it a cost effective option if business travellers need to get to that important meeting on time.

Getting transport from the International Airport San Francisco means it will only take you around 42.5 minutes to the CBD by taxi, and just 27 minutes by train.

With even better time to the airport via train links, Sydney's Kingsford Smith airport also made it into the top three list – it takes just 19 minutes by train from the airport to the centre of Sydney.

BEST FOR TRANSPORT

1	Singapore Changi Airport, Singapore
2	San Francisco International Airport USA
3	Sydney Kingsford Smith Australia

TECHNOLOGY ENABLED TRAVEL

Our research found that airports across the world are proving themselves to be proactive when it comes to security and convenience technologies that benefit business travellers.

The majority of the airports identified as key hubs for Australian business travellers had free, easily accessible Wi-Fi outside their lounges, alongside self-service check-in or bag drop options.

The latter ensures a smooth transfer by cutting down waiting times and airports across the world are investing in these self-service technologies.

Singapore's Changi airport has invested in electronic tagging and automated baggage drops, a 3D CT scanner for faster processing of electronics. Security checks also take place at the departure gate, saving precious time before the flight.

Its closest rival Hong Kong International Airport is undertaking a AU$1.2bn investment in self-service check-in and bag drop facilities ahead of its launch of a third runway in 2024. London Heathrow topped a year of investment in facilities with awards for Terminals 2 and 5 (both named in the top five "Best Terminals in the World" list in the 2018 Skytrax World Airport Awards). It has been trialling autonomous airfield vehicles and is constantly updating its self-check-in offering.

BEST FOR TECHNOLOGY

1	Singapore Changi Airport, Singapore
2	Hong Kong International Airport Hong Kong
3	London Heathrow Airport UK

Meanwhile, Australian border authorities announced in 2017 a plan to roll out biometric identification across the country's major airports, collecting facial images and fingerprints to enable them to install innovative systems over the next few years. The plan is to allow 90% of travellers to pass through passport control in a fully automated process by 2020 .

What we have found is that some of the most efficient and convenient airports listed are those that are investing in forward-thinking technologies, and innovations are being made in airports across the world.

SO WHAT NEXT FOR BUSINESS TRAVEL?

As one of the biggest areas of hassle and concern for frequent fliers, many business travellers will opt to make their check-ins as smooth as possible by using a self-service check-in and quicker security measures. These innovations are just the beginning of the journey towards more streamlined travel processes within the world's airports.

Previous pilot schemes have demonstrated the power of technology to make the airport experience a more pleasurable one, including an ID microchip which one Swedish engineer had implanted under his skin to get through security more quickly at Stockholm Arlanda Airport in Sweden.

An augmented reality (AR) app has been developed at London's Gatwick Airport and San Jose International Airport in the United States, which will allow passengers to use their mobiles to get around more easily, providing real-time updates to enable them to find out if there's been a change of departure time.

In time, we will see technology such as this becoming a pivotal part of the airport experience, which will aid business travellers in ensuring that they can transit quickly and efficiently, and work productively while on the move.

CWT Airport Index:

SINGAPORE CHANGI

is the **best airport** for business travellers

AIRLINES	102
LOUNGES	24
FLIGHTS ON TIME	81%

Amenities

Transit hotels – with power showers and a swimming pool

Pay-per-use lounges

Wellness spas

Quiet places to work

Technology

T4 has fully automated check-in system including facial scanning and computerised baggage drops

Free unlimited WiFi with speeds up to 4Mbps

New 3D CT scanning means laptops don't need to be removed at security

After scoring all 15 airports on the seven criteria relating to comfort and convenience, connectivity, transport links and on-time performance, Singapore's Changi Airport emerged as the ultimate transport hub for Australian business travellers.

The airport opened for business in July 1981 and has adapted with the times over the course of the subsequent decades, growing with the addition of new terminals, facilities and airlines.

TOP 5 AIRPORTS
for Australian business travellers

1	Singapore Changi Airport Singapore
2	Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport Thailand
3	London Heathrow UK
4	Sydney Airport Australia
5	Tokyo Narita Airport Japan

Terminal 2 opened in 1991, followed by Terminal 3 in 2008 and Terminal 4 in 2017. In line with the rapid growth of Southeast Asian infrastructure, plans are already under way to add a fifth terminal, due for completion in the 2020s. In 2017, Changi welcomed its one-billionth passenger and although it couldn't compete with other airports for on-time flights, it still saw 80.8% of flights depart on time in the year to April 2018.

For business travellers, Changi caters for those who value their working time while travelling – we've previously found that up to 32% of this perceived 'lost time' during business trips spent wandering through airports and waiting for connections can be gained back by some slight adjustments to the journey.

The newly opened Terminal 4 leads the way in these efficiency-driving technologies. It has adopted a fully automated check-in system, and using this new system, passengers can whizz through the transit process right up to the time of departure, with electronic tagging for baggage, facial recognition systems at security and a 3D CT scanner for faster processing of electronics. Although there are not direct flights from Changi's T4 to Australia currently, this may change in time. Technology being trialled there is set to be rolled out to the other terminals, which means that Australian business travellers will be able to benefit from the innovations heralded at Terminal 4.

Changi offers access to free, fast Wi-Fi for three hours, or 24 hours if you download the Changi airport app – more than enough for a stopover or while waiting for a flight – along with 400 internet stations across its terminals.

It also boasts business centres in three of its terminals, with 24-hour typing, mailing and faxing services. Terminal 2 and Terminal 3 also have all the major news channels and stock and equities information provided by Bridge Information Systems and Reuters, so travellers can stay on top of vital business news while abroad.

With 26 lounges, Singapore Changi also topped the charts for the availability of rest areas. A total of 12 of its lounges are open 24 hours, and many are open to walk-ins as well as passengers using specific airlines, such as Terminal 2's The Haven which includes 18 nap rooms as well as two meeting rooms available for booking.

If you're keen on relaxing in between flights and staying refreshed before you head back or on to your next meeting, Changi has free-to-use rest areas, as well as a butterfly garden in Terminal 3, and a swimming pool in Terminal 1.

With all these features and facilities, it's little wonder that Changi emerged as the best of the best. The fact that it's been voted World's Best Airport by Skytrax for six years in a row – and nine times since 2000 – underlines its commitment to staying in touch with the needs of corporate travellers.

Airports in Australia and across the world are playing their part in ensuring that business travellers can spend their time as effectively as possible – but we found that Changi is clearly a cut above the rest.

STAYING PRODUCTIVE ON THE MOVE

As airports and airlines compete to provide the very best services, passengers are finding more things to take away from the hassle of a busy schedule.

If you want to ensure your travellers are enjoying a hassle-free trip while staying as productive as possible, the following advice from Mike Ryan, Managing Director for CWT Australia and New Zealand, may help:

Make sure your phones and laptops are always topped up, using the correct chargers and adapters for different countries.

Be ready to work offline by the time you board your flight – or if the Wi-Fi is down – by downloading the data you need straight to your devices.

Look after yourself. Get the rest you need, and stay hydrated. Try to stick to a schedule for meals and sleep – long-distance travelling can confuse your body clock, so listen to it.

Get organised. Avoid a rush upon arrival by making sure you know how to get from A to B. Look up the local transport links and have a schedule ready.

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

To determine the airport rankings we shortlisted the 15 most popular airports for Australian business travellers. This shortlist was determined by analysing CWT ticket sales data for 2017.

The list included 5 domestic and 10 international airports. These were:

- Auckland International Airport
- Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport
- Brisbane Airport
- Canberra Airport
- Hong Kong International Airport
- Kuala Lumpur International Airport
- London Heathrow Airport
- Melbourne Airport
- Newark Liberty Airport
- Perth Airport
- Tokyo Narita Airport
- San Francisco International Airport
- Singapore Changi Airport
- Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport
- Wellington Airport

The airports were then scored on the following criteria:

(1) Number of airlines flying to the airport (based on data direct from the airports and official website sources listed below). The airports received scores of 1-15. The airport with the most number of airlines received the highest score of 15 points, while the airport with the fewest airlines received the lowest score of 1 point.

(2) Percentage of on-time flights (based on data from flightstats.com). An average on-time performance percentage from April 2017 – April 2018 was calculated for each airport. The airports then received scores of 1-15. The airport with the highest average on-time performance score received 15 points, while the airport with the lowest average on-time performance score received 1 point.

(3) Number of lounges (based on data from loungebuddy.com). The airports received scores of 1-15. The airport with the most lounges received the highest score of 15 points, while the airport with the fewest lounges received the lowest score of 1 point.

(4) Time to CBD using taxi (based on data from Google Maps). Average driving time from the airport to the CBD at 8am on a Tuesday.

Travel Time (Taxi)	Points
30 mins or less	15
31-60 mins	10
61 mins or more	5

(5) Time to CBD using train (based on data from Google Maps). Average time from the airport to the CBD in a train at 8am on a Tuesday.

Travel Time (Train)	Points
30 mins or less	15
31-60 mins	10
61 mins or more	5
No train service	0

(6) Wi-Fi availability (based on data direct from the airports and official website sources listed below). Airports offering free Wi-Fi received 15 points; airports offering pay-per-use Wi-Fi received 10 points; airports not offering Wi-Fi received 0 points.

(7) Self-service check-in availability (based on data direct from the airports and official website sources listed below). Airports offering self-service check-in across all terminals received 15 points; airports offering service check-in in some (but not all) terminals received 10 points; airports not offering service check-in received 0 points.

Sources:

Airports were contacted directly for information. Where this was not provided or to verify answers, our researchers looked at several different website sources including:

Lounges:

Loungebuddy - https://www.loungebuddy.co.uk/

Airlines, Wi-Fi and Self-service Check ins:

https://www.narita-airport.jp
https://airports.malaysiaairports.com.my
https://www.wellingtonairport.co.nz
https://www.perthairport.com.au
http://www.changiairport.com
https://www.canberraairport.com.au
https://www.sydneyairport.com.au
https://www.hongkongairport.com
https://www.melbourneairport.com.au
https://www.airport-ewr.com
https://www.aucklandairport.co.nz
https://www.flysfo.com
https://www.heathrow.com
https://yourhelloworld.com
https://bne.com.au/
https://www.airnewzealand.co.uk
https://www.jetstar.com
https://www.ifly.com
https://www.klm.com
https://www.finnair.com
https://www.virginaustralia.com
https://www.thaiairways.com
http://www.bangkokair.com
http://www.passengerselfservice.com

On-time performance:

https://www.flightstats.com

Times to CBD by taxi and train were determined by using Google Maps at the peak time of 8am in each time zone.