



DEVONPORT AIRPORT – A BRIEF HISTORY

Devonport Airport – A Brief History

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Devonport was one of the new airports approved to be developed by the Commonwealth in 1947, with construction work commencing in 1949. Situated approximately 10 kms from Devonport at Pardoe Downs, the initial construction included re-erection of a hangar measuring 115ft by 95ft, which was moved from Western Junction (ex-7EFTS Flying School), which is still standing at the airport, together with ancillary buildings to house staff and equipment.

The airport was officially opened in November 1950 by Mr T W White, (the Minister for Air), who said the airport terminal would be better than any terminal in Australia and would become an alternative to Hobart and Launceston's airports. Future work would include the laying down of a flare path and aerodrome lighting.

Whilst the airport was not yet officially opened, on the 5th of June 1950, the first freighter aircraft, an Australian National Airways (ANA) Bristol Freighter landed. On board was Captain Ivan Holyman, his wife, Mrs Hazel Holyman (the wife of the late Captain Victor Holyman) and Dame Enid Lyons M.H.A. The aircraft had diverted from its Melbourne to Launceston route to unload ramps, steps and two trucks for use at the airport.

Further value of the new airport to the local community occurred shortly after with the transfer by air of a young eleven-year-old patient, who had been in Devonport's Hospital for seven-months, to Melbourne for specialised treatment thus eliminating a fifty-mile drive to Launceston Airport.



Archive photo of ANA Bristol Freighter, similar to the one that landed at Devonport on 05 June 1950, unloading a [Percival Proctor VH-ARV](#).



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Devonport Control Tower and terminal Circa 1960. The tower was constructed in time for the official opening but has since been removed and modern terminal and facilities built.

Inaugural passenger aircraft flights by both TAA and ANA followed and a direct air mail service from Devonport to Launceston commenced shortly after.

Devonport Airport, or Pardoe as it was originally called, is now owned and operated by Tasports, and is one of the key regional airports in the north-west of the state.

As the largest security-controlled airport on Tasmania's North West Coast, Devonport Airport offers 24-hour access, 365 days a year with all-weather facilities.

Catering for passenger, air freight, flight training and general aviation, the airport also provides support for Air Ambulance, rescue helicopters, and the police air wing. During the bush fire-season the airport also provides critical resources for aerial fire spotters and bombers. Devonport also has the ability to cope with A320's and B737-800 in an emergency situation.

The airport has a sealed runway of 1838m x 45m with an elevation of 33 feet and is served by regular QantasLink Dash 8 aircraft.

During the financial year 2018/2019 the airport catered for 2,688 QantasLink flights, 90 Royal Flying Doctor Flights and 146,000 passengers