

11 March 2026



## Regional City Population and Aviation Service Comparison

### Purpose

This document provides comparative data to contextualise the service levels at Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport relative to other regional centres of comparable or smaller population.

The intent is to demonstrate the relationship between regional population size, proximity to a capital city, and average daily commercial flight services.

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### Population Comparison (Regional Catchment)

City / Region

Newcastle NSW: approximately 455,000

Toowoomba QLD: approximately 184,000

Tamworth NSW: approximately 66,000

Newcastle is approximately 150 percent larger than Toowoomba.

Toowoomba is approximately 180 percent larger than Tamworth.

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### Proximity to Capital Cities

Newcastle to Sydney: approximately 117 km

Toowoomba to Brisbane: approximately 125 km

Tamworth to Sydney: approximately 400 km

Newcastle and Toowoomba are located a broadly similar distance from their respective capital cities.

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### Average Daily Commercial Flight Services

Newcastle Airport (NTL): approximately 17 return commercial services per day

Tamworth Airport (TMW): approximately 4 to 5 return commercial services per day

Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport (WTB): approximately 0.6 return commercial services per day

Toowoomba currently operates one return Sydney service, four days per week. Averaged across a seven-day week, this equates to approximately 0.6 return services per day.

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## **Observations**

Tamworth, with a population approximately 65 percent smaller than Toowoomba, operates materially higher daily service frequency.

Newcastle, while larger in population, operates approximately 28 times more daily commercial services than Toowoomba.

The difference in service levels between Newcastle and Toowoomba is significantly greater than the difference in population alone.

Newcastle is located a comparable distance from Sydney as Toowoomba is from Brisbane, yet connectivity outcomes differ substantially.

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## **High Speed Rail Context**

There is currently a proposal estimated at approximately AUD 90 billion to construct a high-speed rail corridor between Newcastle and Sydney.

This reflects recognition that strong regional centres require reliable, high-capacity connectivity to capital cities, and that surface transport can supplement aviation where appropriate.

The existence of a proposed high-speed corridor between Newcastle and Sydney demonstrates recognition that strong regional centres require diversified, high-capacity connectivity to capital cities. Comparable long-term planning has not yet been realised for Toowoomba's connection to Brisbane Airport.

No equivalent rapid rail corridor exists between Toowoomba and Brisbane Airport.

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## **Relevance to the Inquiry**

The comparative data demonstrates that population size alone does not explain the disparity in aviation service levels.

Service frequency and route diversity at Toowoomba are materially constrained relative to comparable regional centres.

Where aviation competition or expansion cannot deliver adequate connectivity, surface transport solutions may warrant policy consideration.

This data is provided to support the primary submission regarding service frequency, route diversity and competitive discipline in regional aviation markets.