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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Nine in ten Australian travellers plagued by stress ahead of international journeys**

*American Express and Plaza Premium Lounge open new American Express Lounge and new Plaza Premium Lounge at Melbourne Airport to help travellers relax and refresh before their travels*

**26 March 2018, Melbourne** – American Express and Plaza Premium Group announced today the opening of new airport lounges at Melbourne Airport offering visitors a space to escape and unwind before their flights.

The latest study commissioned by American Express shows that nine in ten Australian travellers (89%) find international travel stressful, with the worry beginning before they even arrive at the airport. While 59% arrive the recommended two to three hours before their flight, almost a quarter (23%) arrive over three hours in advance, with timely airport arrival the largest concern.

With so much waiting time, Australians cite overpriced dining options (49%), loud passengers and families (37%) and lack of quiet areas to relax (30%) as top stress points in their travels.

“Airport lounge access continues to be one of the most valued benefits for our card members and we know from the success of our airport lounge in Sydney that travellers appreciate the stress-free environment and complimentary dining that our American Express Lounges offer,” said Naysla Edwards, Vice President of Brand, Charge Cards and Experiences at American Express A/NZ.

“This new addition to our Global Lounge Collection builds on our ongoing commitment in providing our premium card members with premium travel benefits and experiences, and expanding our network of lounges in Australia,” Edwards added.

Located in Terminal 2 at Satellite Level Departures, the new lounge from American Express is operated by global premium airport service specialists Plaza Premium Group who also opens its own Plaza Premium Lounge today in an adjacent space. With a total space of more than 700 square metres, both lounges offer guests a full premium service with two elegant bar areas, guest services and comfortable seating.



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The design of Plaza Premium Lounge in Melbourne, conceptualised in Hong Kong and created by Australian Architects Mitchel Squires & Associates and Marsden Collectives, includes several unique and outstanding design elements featuring the Plaza Premium Lounge's abstract 'honeycomb' and 'cabin', set to parallel cabin seating inside an aircraft. As for the AMEX lounge, it represents amalgamation of centurion's DNA featured throughout the lounge design. Facilities and services include: complimentary food and beverage featuring Australian produce and barista service, Wi-Fi, copy facilities, flight information screens, and a selection of local and international magazines and newspapers.

"Thanks to the partnership with Melbourne Airport, we are glad to add Melbourne to our Plaza Premium Lounge network. Our new lounge will offer exceptional hospitality and best-in-class facilities to travellers. In addition to running our own lounge, after working with American Express to launch their airport lounge at Sydney and Hong Kong International Airports, we are thrilled to extend the offering to travellers out of Melbourne. With two distinct lounges side by side, every traveller will be able to experience a premium way to enjoy their time ahead of their journey," said Linda Song, Executive Director of Plaza Premium Group.

Lounges continue to be an appealing airport feature for most travellers, with 59% of overseas travellers having used a lounge in the last three years and more than a third (36%) of all business travellers favouring time in lounges before their flights.

Melbourne Airport Chief of Property Linc Horton said he is pleased to welcome both Plaza Premium Group and American Express to Melbourne Airport. "It's fantastic to expand our lounge offering for Melbourne's international travellers who continue to grow at record speed."

"In the 2016/17 financial year, we welcomed more than 35 million travellers overall and that number is forecast to reach almost 70 million by 2038. We're excited for the future and are focused on improving our infrastructure to enhance the traveller experience. Opening two new lounges that appeal to different market segments is a win for the airport and for our international travellers," said Horton.

Last year, Melbourne Airport saw a record breaking 1.02 million international travellers for December alone with over 10 million international travellers for the calendar year.

Plaza Premium Lounge at Melbourne Airport is now open daily from 6am to 11pm and 2-hour access is priced at \$60 per person. A special opening deal is available until the end of April 2018 – buy lounge access for one person and get a second one completely free.



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For more information visit [www.plaza-network.com](http://www.plaza-network.com) for the Plaza Premium Lounge network and visit [www.americanexpress.com.au/travel](http://www.americanexpress.com.au/travel) for everything travel-related, from booking holidays to destination guides.

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\* The eligible cards listed below have unlimited complimentary access to The American Express Lounge for each American Express Card account. The card must be current and issued by American Express Australia Limited with the exception of internationally issued American Express® Centurion and American Express® Platinum Cards, which are also eligible to enter the American Express Lounge:

- American Express® Centurion Card
- American Express® Platinum Card
- American Express® Business Centurion Card
- American Express® Platinum Business Card

The eligible cards listed below are entitled to two (2) complimentary entries into The American Express Lounge per calendar year (1st January to 31st December) for each American Express Card account (inclusive of Supplementary Cards associated with the Basic Card Member). The entry allocation may be used by the Basic Card Member, Supplementary Card Member or a guest travelling with a Card Member. Additional Lounge visits are allowed but charges will apply. The card must be current and issued by either American Express Australia Limited or a licensed network bank partner:

- American Express® Corporate Platinum Card
- American Express® Qantas Corporate Platinum Card
- American Express® Explorer™ Credit Card
- American Express® Business Explorer™ Credit Card
- American Express® Platinum Reserve Credit Card
- David Jones American Express® Platinum Card
- Qantas American Express Ultimate Card
- American Express Velocity Platinum Card
- American Express Airpoints Platinum Card
- American Express® Westpac Altitude Black Card
- Commonwealth Bank Diamond Awards American Express Card
- Westpac Altitude Black American Express Card (until the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018)
- Westpac Earth Black American Express Card (until the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2018)

Complimentary access is available for the Card Member's children between the ages of 2-17. Children under 2 enter free of charge. At the discretion of American Express, other American Express Card Members may also enter the American Express Lounges or be issued with a one-day pass for entry into the American Express Lounges from time to time.

Plaza Premium Lounge at Melbourne International Airport will be open daily from 6am to 11pm and 2-hour access is normally priced at \$60 per person. A special opening deal is available until the end of April 2018 – buy lounge access for one person and get a second one completely free. American Express Platinum and Centurion Card Members are also able to visit Plaza Premium Lounges as part of the Global Lounge Collection. For more information, visit [here](#).



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**Notes to editors:**

Methodology of the American Express travel study

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Galaxy. Total sample size was 1238 international/ overseas travellers aged 18+ years. Fieldwork was undertaken between 19 – 24 February 2018. The survey was carried out online.

About YouGov Galaxy

YouGov Galaxy is an independent, publicly listed global consumer insight company. It is one of the most recognised and quoted names in research across UK, Europe and North America – and are expanding quickly throughout Asia Pacific.

**For more information or to organise an interview, please contact:**

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**About American Express**

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### **About Plaza Premium Group**

Headquartered in Hong Kong, Plaza Premium Group is the pioneer and industry leader in providing Premium Airport Services in over 160 locations of 37 international airports across the world, with a collective goal of 'enhancing your airport experience'. The Group comprises four core airport services, Airport Lounge, Airport Transit Hotel, Airport Meet & Greet Service, and Airport Dining.

The Group currently employs over 4,000 staff and serves over 12 million passengers around the world annually. The Group is dedicated to providing quality services and possesses proprietary knowledge in airport hospitality industry. By continuously surpassing travellers' expectation, the Group's network is rapidly growing across major international airports around the world.

### **About Plaza Premium Lounge**

Plaza Premium Lounge, the world's largest independent airport lounge network, gives travellers a haven away from the hustle and bustle of the airport, a home away from home, by providing a space with top-notch services and facilities for travellers departing, transiting and arriving at major international airports including Abu Dhabi, Brisbane, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, London Heathrow, New Delhi, Rio de Janeiro, Riyadh, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney, Taipei, Toronto and Vancouver.

Comfortable seating, enticing food and beverage selection, showers with amenities, private resting suites, VIP rooms, recharging stations, Wi-Fi, computer workstations are but a few of the services offered to enhance the airport experience.

As the first airport lounge network to achieve ISO 9001:2008 certification and the World's Best Independent Airport Lounge by Skytrax, we are committed to consistently providing quality services and continual improvement for valued customers. By putting into action, the best ideas and practices from across the network and around the world, we focus on innovative and quality products and services.

On top of the sublime and opulent independent airport lounges that are in operation, we also manage lounges for leading airlines and alliances including Cathay Pacific Airways, China Eastern Airlines, Lufthansa, Singapore Airlines, Thai Airways, SkyTeam, Star Alliance and American Express.