

East Kimberley Regional Airport Quarter-By-Quarter Trend Analysis FY2020/21 to FY2025/26

Executive Summary

The six-year data show three distinct phases:

FY2020/21–FY2021/22 — recovery: passenger numbers increased sharply from 62,688 to 90,252.

FY2022/23–FY2024/25 — stabilisation: annual passenger numbers settled around 96,000–98,000, while aircraft movements fluctuated more significantly.

FY2025/26 — modest passenger growth but fewer aircraft movements: passengers increased to 97,578 (+1.5%), while aircraft movements declined to 9,532 (-8.8%).

The most significant finding is that passenger growth has outpaced aircraft activity over the six-year period. Passenger numbers increased approximately 55.7%, while aircraft movements increased approximately 21.0%.

Quarterly Passenger Numbers

EKRA passenger movements by quarter

Financial Year	Q1 Jul–Sep	Q2 Oct–Dec	Q3 Jan–Mar	Q4 Apr–Jun	Annual
FY20/21	14,381	12,099	11,558	24,650	62,688
FY21/22	28,719	19,864	12,697	28,972	90,252
FY22/23	31,779	18,905	18,411	28,580	97,675
FY23/24	30,345	20,983	17,826	27,099	96,253
FY24/25	28,917	20,209	17,076	29,907	96,109
FY25/26	32,003	20,892	17,512	27,171	97,578

Passenger Trend

FY2020/21 — COVID-affected base

The quarterly profile is highly depressed in the first three quarters, with only 14,381 passengers in Q1, 12,099 in Q2 and 11,558 in Q3. Q4 then rises sharply to 24,650.

This produces a very low annual base of 62,688 passengers.

FY2021/22 — major recovery

Passenger numbers almost doubled in Q1 to 28,719, an increase of approximately 99.7% against the corresponding quarter of FY2020/21.

The full year reached 90,252, an increase of approximately 44.0%.

FY2022/23 — growth continues

FY2022/23 reached 97,675 passengers, an 8.2% annual increase.

Q1 reached 31,779, the highest Q1 in the six-year series until FY2025/26.

FY2023/24–FY2024/25 — stabilisation

Passenger numbers then stabilised:

FY2023/24: 96,253

FY2024/25: 96,109

This is effectively a flat two-year period. It is also to be noted that the increase in aircraft movements during FY2024/25 associated with Nexus services did not produce an equivalent

increase in overall passenger numbers, as additional Nexus passengers were offset by reduced FIFO activity.

FY2025/26 — passenger growth resumed modestly

FY2025/26 reached 97,578, an increase of 1,469 passengers or 1.5% over FY2024/25.

The quarterly pattern is interesting:

Q1: 32,003 — +10.7% year-on-year

Q2: 20,892 — +3.4%

Q3: 17,512 — +2.6%

Q4: 27,171 — -9.1%

Therefore, the annual increase was achieved despite a significant Q4 reduction.

Quarterly Aircraft Movements

The latest dataset provides the following monthly aircraft movement series.

Financial Year	Q1 Jul–Sep	Q2 Oct–Dec	Q3 Jan–Mar	Q4 Apr–Jun	Annual
FY20/21	1,906	1,325	1,457	3,189	7,877
FY21/22	3,099	1,644	1,542	3,317	9,602
FY22/23	3,864	1,933	1,845	3,230	10,872
FY23/24	3,295	1,776	1,674	3,011	9,756
FY24/25	3,259	1,898	1,855	3,440	10,452
FY25/26	3,268	1,786	1,751	2,727	9,532

EKRA Aircraft Movements By Quarter

Aircraft movement trend, the aircraft data is more volatile than the passenger data.

The annual pattern is:

Financial Year	Aircraft movements	Annual change
FY20/21	7,877	—
FY21/22	9,602	+21.9%
FY22/23	10,872	+13.2%
FY23/24	9,756	-10.3%
FY24/25	10,452	+7.1%
FY25/26	9,532	-8.8%

The key feature of FY2025/26 is that aircraft movements fell by 920 movements, whilst passenger numbers actually increased by 1,469.

That is a significant operational change.

Passenger Numbers Versus Aircraft Movements

A useful indicator is the ratio of passengers to aircraft movements.

Financial Year	Passengers	Aircraft movements	Passengers per movement
FY20/21	62,688	7,877	7.96
FY21/22	90,252	9,602	9.40
FY22/23	97,675	10,872	8.98
FY23/24	96,253	9,756	9.87
FY24/25	96,109	10,452	9.20
FY25/26	97,578	9,532	10.24

The FY2025/26 result is therefore notable: 97,578 passengers were processed with 9,532 aircraft movements, producing the highest passenger-to-movement ratio in this six-year series.

This should not be interpreted as an aircraft load factor, because aircraft movements include different aircraft types and operational categories. It is nevertheless a useful high-level indicator of the relationship between airport passenger demand and aircraft activity.

Seasonality

One of the strongest findings from the quarterly analysis is the recurring seasonal pattern.

Over the six financial years, the average quarterly passenger volumes are approximately:

Quarter	Average passengers	Share of annual traffic
Q1 Jul–Sep	27,691	~28.4%
Q2 Oct–Dec	18,825	~19.3%
Q3 Jan–Mar	15,847	~16.2%
Q4 Apr–Jun	27,730	~28.4%

Therefore, Q1 and Q4 are consistently the strongest quarters, while Q3 is generally the weakest. Aircraft movements display essentially the same seasonal pattern:

Q1 average: 3,115

Q2 average: 1,727

Q3 average: 1,687

Q4 average: 3,152

This is important for airport planning because annual averages can conceal very substantial differences in quarterly demand. It is to be noted that there is an expected dry-season peak in aircraft activity, particularly around May–August, which is consistent with the quarterly pattern observed here.

FY2025/26 in context

The latest year is particularly interesting.

Passenger movements

FY2025/26:

97,578 passengers

This is:

+1.5% on FY2024/25

+1.4% on FY2022/23

+55.7% on FY2020/21

Therefore, the airport has effectively returned to and slightly exceeded its previous high passenger base.

Aircraft Movements

FY2025/26:

9,532 aircraft movements

This is:

-8.8% on FY2024/25

-12.3% on FY2022/23

+21.0% on FY2020/21

Consequently, FY2025/26 represents a divergence between the two measures:

- Passenger demand increased while aircraft activity declined.
- This is arguably the most important operational trend in the six-year dataset.

Quarter-By-Quarter Year-On-Year Assessment

Quarter	Passenger YoY	Aircraft movement YoY	Observation
FY21/22 Q1	+99.7%	+62.6%	Strong post-COVID recovery
FY21/22 Q2	+64.2%	+24.1%	Recovery continues
FY21/22 Q3	+9.9%	+5.8%	Growth moderates
FY21/22 Q4	+17.5%	+4.0%	Strong seasonal quarter
FY22/23 Q1	+10.7%	+24.7%	Strong passenger and aircraft growth
FY22/23 Q2	-4.8%	+17.6%	More aircraft activity without passenger growth
FY22/23 Q3	+45.0%	+19.6%	Significant passenger recovery
FY22/23 Q4	-1.4%	-2.6%	Broadly stable
FY23/24 Q1	-4.5%	-14.7%	Reduction in both
FY23/24 Q2	+11.0%	-8.1%	Passenger growth despite fewer movements
FY23/24 Q3	-3.2%	-9.3%	Softer period
FY23/24 Q4	-5.2%	-6.8%	Below previous year
FY24/25 Q1	-4.7%	-1.1%	Slightly softer
FY24/25 Q2	-3.7%	+6.9%	More aircraft, fewer passengers
FY24/25 Q3	-4.2%	+10.8%	Same pattern
FY24/25 Q4	+10.4%	+14.2%	Strong rebound
FY25/26 Q1	+10.7%	+0.3%	Passenger growth with flat movements
FY25/26 Q2	+3.4%	-5.9%	Passenger growth despite fewer movements
FY25/26 Q3	+2.6%	-5.6%	Same pattern
FY25/26 Q4	-9.1%	-20.7%	Significant late-year contraction

This table highlights an important change in the relationship between the two measures, during much of FY2025/26, passenger numbers were actually increasing even as aircraft movements were declining.

Overall Trend Assessment

Passenger Demand

The airport has moved from a COVID-disrupted low base into a relatively mature and stable passenger market.

The annual passenger trajectory is:

62,688 → 90,252 → 97,675 → 96,253 → 96,109 → 97,578

The growth phase essentially ended after FY2022/23, with the airport subsequently operating around the 96,000–98,000 passenger range.

FY2025/26 is therefore better characterised as a return to the established passenger base rather than a new period of rapid growth.

Aircraft Activity

Aircraft movements have been considerably more variable:

7,877 → 9,602 → 10,872 → 9,756 → 10,452 → 9,532

The peak was FY2022/23 at 10,872 movements, followed by a decline, recovery and then another decline in FY2025/26.

Utilisation

The passenger-to-aircraft relationship has generally improved over the period:

7.96 passengers/movement in FY2020/21 → 10.24 in FY2025/26.

That represents an increase of approximately 28.6%.

Key Findings for Airport Planning

1. The airport has recovered strongly from the FY2020/21 disruption. Passenger throughput is now more than 55% above FY2020/21.
2. Passenger demand has stabilised.
3. For the last four completed financial years, annual passenger numbers have remained between approximately 96,000 and 98,000.
4. The airport is highly seasonal.
5. Q1 and Q4 each account for approximately 28% of annual passenger traffic, while Q3 accounts for only approximately 16%.
6. Aircraft movements do not necessarily drive passenger growth.
7. FY2025/26 provides the clearest example: passenger numbers increased 1.5%, while aircraft movements declined 8.8%.
8. FY2025/26 achieved the highest passengers-per-aircraft-movement ratio in the series.
9. This indicates greater passenger throughput relative to aircraft activity, although it is not an aircraft load-factor calculation.
10. The Q4 FY2025/26 result warrants monitoring.

The final quarter recorded a 9.1% decline in passengers and a 20.7% decline in aircraft movements compared with Q4 FY2024/25. This is materially different from the positive results recorded in Q1–Q3.

Conclusion

East Kimberley Regional Airport passenger activity has demonstrated a strong recovery from FY2020/21 and has subsequently stabilised at approximately 96,000–98,000 passenger movements per annum. The FY2025/26 result of 97,578 passengers represents a 1.5% increase over FY2024/25 and a return to the airport's established higher passenger base. In contrast, aircraft movements declined by 8.8% to 9,532.

The divergence between passenger and aircraft movements indicates that recent passenger demand has been accommodated without a corresponding increase in aircraft activity. The quarterly data also demonstrate a pronounced seasonal pattern, with Q1 and Q4 consistently accounting for the largest share of annual activity and Q3 the lowest. The 9.1% decline in passenger movements and 20.7% decline in aircraft movements in Q4 FY2025/26 should be monitored to determine whether this represents normal seasonal variation or the beginning of a sustained change in demand.

Key Management Observation

The data points to a distinction between airport demand and flight activity:

- Passenger demand has stabilised at approximately 96,000–98,000 passengers per year, while aircraft movements have fluctuated more substantially.