

Not to be confused with London City Airport.

East London Airport (IATA: ELS, ICAO: FAEL) (officially renamed King Phalo Airport on 23 February 2021)[4] is an airport serving East London, a city in the Eastern Cape province on the southeast coast of South Africa.

The airport handles between 20 and 30 flights daily, which bring 946,000 people to East London each year. Of these, about 540,000 are holidaymakers, mostly local, and about 15% are foreign tourists. In 2013, the airport served 658,363 passengers. In 2016, East London Airport was voted the fastest growing airport in South Africa, having accomplished an almost 19% increase in traffic over a 12-month-period.[5] The airport welcomed over 806,000 passengers in 2016, beating the 679,000 that passed through East London in 2015. The second best performing airport for growth in 2014 was Kimberley, with its traffic growing by 11%. Overall the top airports of South Africa witnessed nearly 39.7 million passengers in 2016, up 5.3% on the year before.

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History[edit]

The airport had an inauspicious beginning in 1927, when Lieut Colonel Alistair Miller asked the East London town council to help establish a municipal aerodrome at Woodbrook, west of the city.

Passenger flights were undertaken by two de Havilland Moth planes on Saturday afternoons and all day on Sundays, weather permitting. Flights could also be booked for weekdays, but only by special arrangement. In 1931 it took 11 hours to fly from Windhoek in Namibia to East London Airport.

In 1944 a new airport was built at Collondale, about 2 km west of the present terminal building.

In 1965 the airport was again moved, this time to its present site, 9 km west of the city centre. Construction of the terminal buildings finished in 1966, and the airport was named after Ben Schoeman, the minister of transport at the time.

The airport was renamed in 1994. Since then, major alterations to the terminal building have been completed and a new first-floor office development for the airport management team has been added.

[Infrastructure](#)[\[edit\]](#)

[Runways](#)[\[edit\]](#)

King Phalo Airport has two asphalt runways: 11/29 is 1,939 by 46 meters and 06/24 is 1,585 by 46 meters.

[Number Length Width ILS Notes](#)

11/29 1,939 46m

06/24 1,585 46m

[Terminals](#)[\[edit\]](#)

[Facilities](#)[\[edit\]](#)

King Phalo Airport is at an elevation of 435 feet (133 m) above mean sea level. It has two asphalt paved runways: 11/29 is 1,939 by 46 metres (6,362 ft × 151 ft) and 06/24 is 1,585 by 46 metres (5,200 ft × 151 ft).[1]

[Airlines and destinations](#)[\[edit\]](#)

[Passenger](#)[\[edit\]](#)

[Airlines Destinations](#)

Airlink Johannesburg–O. R. Tambo

British Airways Cape Town, Johannesburg–O. R. Tambo[6]

FlySafair Cape Town, Durban,[7] Johannesburg–O. R. Tambo

Kulula.com Johannesburg–O. R. Tambo

[Cargo](#)[\[edit\]](#)

[Airlines Destinations](#)

BidAir Cargo[8] Johannesburg–O. R. Tambo

[Traffic statistics](#)[\[edit\]](#)

See source Wikidata query and sources.

[Annual passenger traffic](#)[\[9\]](#)

[Year Passengers % Change](#)

2006 664,824 19.2%

2007 744,949 12.1%

2008 715,206 4.0%

2009 675,980 5.5%

2010 671,895 0.6%

2011 681,741 1.5%

2012 663,115 2.7%

2013 658,363 0.7%

2014 642,085 2.5%

2015 678,989 5.7%

2016 806,437 18.8%

2017 804,741 0.2%

[Incidents](#)[\[edit\]](#)

On 13 March 1967, South African Airways Flight 406 crashed into the Indian Ocean while on approach to East London Airport. All 25 passengers and crew on board were killed.

[See also](#)[\[edit\]](#)

[List of airports in South Africa](#)

## List of South African airports by passenger movements

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a b "FAEL – EAST LONDON" (PDF). South African Civil Aviation Authority. 4 April 2013. Archived from the original (PDF) on 1 July 2018.

^ Airport information for FAEL from DAFIF (effective October 2006)

^ Airport information for ELS at Great Circle Mapper. Source: DAFIF (effective October 2006).

^ "Two SA airports – and Port Elizabeth – just got official new names". BusinessInsider. Retrieved 24 February 2021.

^ "East London is fastest growing airport in South Africa in 2016". anna.aero. 30 January 2017. Retrieved 24 August 2018.

^ "While UK route remains closed, British Airways starts flying to East London – at R595 one-way".

^ "Archived copy". Archived from the original on 5 June 2017. Retrieved 28 December 2018.

^ bidaircargo.com - Network retrieved 13 January 2021

^ "ACSA Passenger Statistics". Airports Company South Africa. Archived from the original on 29 October 2013. Retrieved 23 October 2013.

External links[edit]

East London Airport, official site

Aeronautical chart and airport information for FAEL at SkyVector

Current weather for FAEL at NOAA/NWS

Accident history for ELS at Aviation Safety Network

South Africa portalAviation portal

show

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Passenger airports of South Africa