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Virgin Australia outlines opportunities to improve Australia's aviation industry ^[2]



18 December 2023: Virgin Australia has today released its response to the Government's Aviation Green Paper. In it, the airline highlights a number of policy and regulatory recommendations aimed at driving competition and creating a sustainable aviation sector for the benefit of Australians now and into the future.

Key recommendations include:

- Support for the aviation industry's contribution to net zero. Prioritising policy development and initiatives, like Sustainable Aviation Fuel Accounting ('Book and Claim') to allow airlines (and customers) to procure the environmental benefits of SAF without current geographical constraints, in parallel with the development of a domestic SAF industry.
- Increasing airline competition through strong regulatory oversight and enforcement where anti-competitive behaviour is identified, along with more equitable government procurement.
- A fit-for-purpose framework for negotiations between monopoly airports and airlines of all sizes to support an even playing field, including an enforceable 'negotiate/arbitrate' model.
- Assisting airline operational reliability by addressing challenges at Australia's main

gateway airport, Sydney Airport, in particular the crosswind limit on the main parallel runway.

- Greater transparency, consultation and certainty with respect to bilateral air rights agreements, and recognising the connection between international competition and domestic operations.

In its detailed submission, Virgin Australia also makes recommendations on a broad range of topics including improving the customer experience as well as slot allocation and compliance.

Commentary from Virgin Australia Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer, Christian Bennett:

“Aviation is a major economic and social contributor, responsible for keeping communities connected across Australia and beyond. Virgin Australia welcomes the important opportunity to contribute to improving regulatory and policy settings to support a safe, sustainable and competitive aviation industry for decades to come.

“Our submission highlights the importance of vibrant competition in our industry, both among airlines and in our engagement with airports, and the critical need to address market power imbalances to ensure Australians can access great value and choice when they travel.

“We also recognise the industry’s future success will increasingly depend on its ability to decarbonise. From a policy perspective, this must be done in a way that maintains a level playing field, and ensures air travel remains affordable for consumers.

“While Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) will play a critical longer-term role, domestic production is currently years away, at best. We believe there are viable solutions to bridge this physical gap in the short-term, including through a ‘Book and Claim’ system.

“This system should be explored as a priority – in parallel with efforts to support domestic production - to bridge the supply gap and deliver the environmental benefits of SAF to the Australian aviation industry in the short-term,” he said.

Virgin Australia’s submission is available to read [here](#) [3].

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