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Virgin Australia Newsroom

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- VA313 departed Melbourne at 8:10am (AEDT) and arrives in Brisbane at 9:20am (AEST).
- Every role on the ground and in the air in relation to this flight is being managed by women.
- The initiative is a collaboration between Virgin Australia, Melbourne Airport, Brisbane Airport Corporation, and Airservices Australia and follows last year's inaugural flight.
- More than 50 female aviation students will network with the operating crew upon arrival.

Friday, 8 March 2024: Australia's first female pilot of a major airline, Deborah Lawrie AM, has taken the helm of a special Virgin Australia flight dispatched, operated, and managed by an all-female team in celebration of International Women's Day (IWD).

For the second consecutive year, Virgin Australia took to the skies with VA313 from Melbourne to Brisbane which saw more than 30 women come together including female pilots, cabin crew, ground crew, baggage handlers, air traffic controllers, and a female pushback driver and refueller, in an industry collaboration between Virgin Australia,

Melbourne Airport, Brisbane Airport Corporation, and Airservices Australia.

Ms Lawrie operated the service almost 45 years after winning a landmark High Court discrimination case that paved the way for women to enter the profession. She was joined by training captain, Paley Williams, who has contributed to the training of countless pilots on Boeing 737 aircraft in her 21 years with the airline.

The flight took off from Melbourne at 8:10am and touches down in Brisbane at 9:20am local time, with members of the operating crew going on to connect with more than 50 female aviation students at an IWD networking event to share their advice on kickstarting careers in aviation.

Virgin Australia Chief Executive Officer, Jayne Hrdlicka said the day was an opportunity to reflect on the progress that had been made and look towards the future.

"It was less than 45 years ago that we had no female pilots flying commercial jets in Australia, so to see this come to life with wonderful female role models at every touchpoint makes me tremendously proud of the achievements of women in aviation and how far we have come," Ms Hrdlicka said.

"Today is about inspiring the next generation of women and showcasing the diverse jobs aviation can offer so that we can continue to push for progress in our sector and drive greater gender equality, which is really at the heart of International Women's Day."

Virgin Australia First Officer, Deborah Lawrie said she was delighted to see more women pursue careers in aviation.

"To be in the company of so many remarkable women today celebrating together is a full circle moment, and it is one I hope serves as inspiration for people from all walks of life to pursue the many diverse and rewarding careers aviation can offer," she said.

Melbourne Airport CEO, Lorie Argus said the aviation industry is an exciting one that offers many opportunities to women.

"Women have come a long way in aviation. That's been thanks to pioneers like Deborah Lawrie who have forged a path for women to build successful careers in this industry beyond the more traditional roles – as we're showing with flight VA313 today," Ms Argus said.

Brisbane Airport Executive General Manager of Human Resources, Jane Dionysius said BNE was looking forward to inspiring female aviation students who will gather to view a live stream of the all-female flight and meet those who've participated in the service.

"Deborah Lawrie is a trailblazer in Australia, not just for women in aviation. This flight is a great demonstration of the diversity of roles available to women in aviation, and the incredible lifelong careers that the industry offers."

Airservices Australia Chief Executive Officer, Jason Harfield said the organisation was proud to support a second all-women crewed commercial flight, reminding us all of the breadth and scope of career options for women across the aviation industry.

"From our air traffic management services, to our Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting Service, our engineering roles, or to working with industry, there's a broad range of dynamic and flexible

opportunities for women at Airservices,” Mr Harfield said.

“For us, International Women's Day isn't just about celebrating diversity; it's about ensuring a safer and more inclusive sky, where all voices are heard and valued, enhancing the efficiency and safety of aviation for all.”

For current career opportunities with Virgin Australia, visit virginaustralia.com/careers.

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