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Virgin Australia re-opens new-look Melbourne Lounge and launches new menu ^[2]



- Virgin Australia has re-opened its refurbished Melbourne Lounge today as border restrictions between Victoria-New South Wales ease in time for the summer holidays.
- The re-opening of the Melbourne Lounge completes the Virgin Australia national Lounge network.
- Booking demand for Virgin Australia Melbourne-Sydney services has increased almost five-fold since the Victorian Government roadmap was announced.
- Bookings for Melbourne-Bali services have increased by 143 per cent in the past week.
- Virgin Australia plans to expand frequency of Melbourne services leading into the summer holidays, in line with booking demand.
- New Lounge menu unveiled for Virgin Australia lounges, nationally.

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On the day the Victoria-New South Wales border has re-opened to travellers, Virgin Australia has lifted the curtain on its refurbished Melbourne Lounge and unveiled a new and fresh Lounge menu, as the airline looks to the future.

First closed in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic, the new-look Lounge takes on a more contemporary and relaxed look and feel within the lounge's existing structure and layout. 500 guests can be seated in the venue in line with COVID-19 capacity requirements, making it the largest in the airline's network of 10 lounges.

In keeping with the Virgin Australia signature 'flair', fun new signage adorns the walls, entry and exit points. Plus, there's brand new bathrooms and shower facilities, ambient lighting, bright greenery and a selection of modern and refreshed furniture, forming a more relaxed and modern space for frequent flyers to enjoy when they travel.

Virgin Australia has been thoughtful in its layout of the Lounge with spaces to sit back, relax and unwind, enjoy a delicious meal, connect with others or work on the fly – there's something for everyone. Signature features of the Lounge will also return, including a coffee and wine bar offering an exciting range of beverages, including barista-made coffee, and Australian wines, craft beers and ciders. There's also a delicious new menu offering all day dining freshly prepared on site.

The Melbourne Lounge re-opening completes Virgin Australia's national Lounge network, with the airline's other lounges in Sydney, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Adelaide, Canberra and Perth. Virgin Australia has also committed to re-opening its premium lounges (formerly The Club) in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane by 31 March 2022.

Commentary

Virgin Australia Group Chief Customer and Digital Officer, Paul Jones said the re-opening of the Melbourne Lounge signifies Virgin Australia's positive outlook for the future.

'We're thrilled to welcome Victorian and New South Wales guests back to our lounges and on board our services as they make the most of their new-found freedom,' said Mr Jones.

'Capital city lounges are a big part of the Virgin Australia guest offering and we thank our loyal customers who have waited patiently for many months to see this incredible Lounge re-open in time for interstate travel to resume for Victorian and New South Wales residents.

'As part of our commitment to investing in great experiences for our guests, it was important that we elevated the standard of the Melbourne Lounge, which first opened over eight years ago, in line with our new and fresh Lounge design thinking.

'Frequent flyers can expect to see more 'Virgin Flair' through signage, seating areas, bathrooms and the general aesthetics. It's a truly wonderful space that's been given a new lease on life.

'We are starting to see the easing of restrictions while Australia opens up and vaccination rates climb, and it's great to have the Melbourne Lounge once again firing on all cylinders as booking demand returns to the market.

'Since the government announced the easing of state border restrictions, we have seen a surge in bookings for the holiday season which is great news and demonstrates the pent-up demand we'll experience from now and throughout the summer holiday period.

'Our plan is to continue to invest and evolve Virgin Australia's fantastic Lounge spaces as part of our focus on creating great guest experiences. This is at the core of the Virgin Australia customer offering, and the reason why our loyal frequent flyers continue to travel with us,' he said.

Melbourne Lounge features

- **Expansive food and beverage offering:** All day-dining and barista service;
- **Brand- new bathroom facilities:** Bathroom and shower facilities* offering a place to freshen up prior to travel.
- **A selection of new and refreshed furniture:** including couches, single seats, high bars and work benches
- **The ?Wake Up? Coffee Bar:** A central café with professional baristas serving tea, coffee and other hot beverages;
- **The ?Wind Down? Wine Bar:** A central bar offering a premium selection of local beer, ciders and Australian wine; and
- **The ?Get Down to Business? Centre:** Meeting rooms for hire, including complimentary Wi-Fi, power, PCs and printing facilities * (temporarily closed due to COVID-safe requirements)
- **New Lounge seating areas:**
 - **The Gallery Lounge:** The perfect place to take in the stunning views of the tarmac, The Gallery Lounge features comfy chairs and ottomans.
 - **The Sunroom:** A mixture of cosy seating arrangements, it?s the perfect space to sit with a loved one, friend or colleague in comfort.
 - **The Long Stay:** A chill-out zone adjacent to the Wine Down Bar with a focus on single seating for the solo traveller to catch up or unwind prior to their flight.
 - **Workbenches:** offering power and data as well as a comfortable place to stay connected on the fly.

New Lounge menu

To coincide with the re-opening of the Melbourne Lounge, Virgin Australia has unveiled a range of exciting new dishes across the airline?s domestic Lounge network as part of its ongoing program to enhance the guest experience and appeal to its heartland customer.

Dishes will be available from a range of menus that will rotate monthly, providing variety and choice to suit a range of taste buds at any time of the day.

Highlight dishes:

- Sourdough toast topped with avocado fetta served with chilli flakes and a lemon wedge
- Breakfast croissant (ham, scrambled eggs, cheese)
- Penne bolognese with parmesan cheese
- Potato rosti with crispy bacon and baked beans
- Avocado, baby spinach, grated, carrot, cucumber, Hummus, and falafel wrap
- Black rice, beetroot with walnut and fetta salad
- Karaage chicken served with slaw and mayonnaise
- Mediterranean plate with falafel, tabouli and hummus.
- Freshly baked cookies
- Chocolate coconut Macaroon
- Scones topped with fresh cream and Jam Gelato cups

A selection freshly prepared sandwiches, salads, wraps and healthy snacks will continue to be served to complement the new menu items.

The reopening of the renovated Melbourne Lounge follows a significant, months-long, transformation of Virgin Australia as the airline moves to focus on its heartland customer, making flying more accessible than ever before.

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MORE INFORMATION

LOUNGE FEATURES

The Melbourne Lounge is 2900sqm in size, welcoming up to 650 guests (COVID-19 capacity restrictions currently apply with a capacity of 500 guests) featuring:

- Luxury lounge seating in a contemporary interior design;
- Business services including meeting rooms for hire, complimentary Wi-Fi, power, PC and printing facilities (Business services temporarily unavailable due to COVID-19)*;
- High-definition televisions throughout, featuring Foxtel and free-to-air programming;
- Charging stations with USB compatibility throughout; and
- Shower facilities with floor-to-ceiling mirrors and bench seats (temporarily closed due to COVID-19)*

BOOKING DEMAND DATA

- In the past week, 50 per cent of Virgin Australia bookings were for flights operating in and out of either Melbourne or Sydney.
- Demand for Virgin Australia domestic services has increased by 125 per cent in the past four weeks.
- Booking demand for Virgin Australia Melbourne-Sydney services has increased almost five fold since the Victorian Government roadmap.
- Bookings for Melbourne-Bali services have increased by 143 per cent in the past week.
- Demand for Virgin Australia international services has increased by 280 per cent following various government announcements to re-open Australia to the world.
- In that time, flight searches for New Zealand services have increased by an average of almost 100 per cent and Bali by a whopping average of 217 per cent (289 per cent for services to/from Melbourne alone).
- The most booked destinations in the last week:
 - Melbourne-Sydney
 - Brisbane - Cairns
 - Brisbane - Perth
 - The most booked services for December/January travel are:
 - Melbourne-Sydney
 - Melbourne-Gold Coast
 - Brisbane-Melbourne
- Travelers are starting to show confidence to book ahead with 40 per cent of demand for travel in December 2021 and January 2022 (outside 60 days)

CUSTOMER IMPROVEMENTS

The re-opening of the Melbourne Lounge follows a long list of customer enhancements since Virgin Australia was relaunched in 2020, including, but not limited to:

- A simplified fare structure, providing customers with some of the best value airfares in the market;
- A long list of new destinations, with Virgin Australia alone launching 12 new return domestic services since last month;
- New and fresh Economy, Business Class and lounge menus;

- The re-opening of a network of Virgin Australia domestic lounges;
- A commitment to re-open premium lounges (formerly known as The Club) in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane by early 2022;
- New Velocity Frequent Flyer partnerships, making it easier for members to earn Points to get to their next dream reward faster; and
- A schedule of short-haul international services to Fiji, Bali and New Zealand.

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