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AFL and Virgin Australia take Indigenous All-Stars to new heights ^[2]

The AFL and Virgin Australia are proud to create history together when the Indigenous All Stars fly to Ireland to represent Australia for the first time in the International Rules Series.

The All Stars will be only the second all-Indigenous team to represent an Australian sporting code at a senior level overseas since an all-Indigenous cricket team toured England in 1868, more than 150 years ago.

The Indigenous Australian International Rules team departed Sydney today at 4:15pm on Virgin Australia flight VA29 to Abu Dhabi, connecting through to Dublin. The flight was operated by one of the airline's Indigenous pilots, First Officer Rob Simms.

Virgin Australia and its alliance partner Etihad Airways are flying the team to Ireland for the two week campaign in the hopes of securing the coveted Cormac McAnallen Trophy.

Virgin Australia Chief Commercial Officer Judith Crompton said: "After recently announcing a five year extension of our partnership with the AFL, today is a prime example of how we can work together to support the game and promote Australia around the globe. The International Rules Series offers the team an excellent opportunity to play a variant of Australia's game on the world stage and we are delighted to be a part of it."

AFL Deputy Chief Executive Officer Gillon McLachlan paid tribute to the strong partnership between the AFL and Virgin Australia.

"The AFL would like to thank Virgin Australia for its support of the 2013 International Rules Series which is a significant occasion and a fantastic opportunity to showcase our game's Indigenous talent internationally."

Virgin Australia has been the official airline of the AFL since January 2011 and recently announced a five year extension of the partnership through to 2018. The airline carries the 18 AFL teams, including the standard travelling party of 60 players, staff and officials, across Australia and overseas.

Virgin Australia and its global network of partners offer services to over 440 international destinations including Ireland. The team departed on VA29 to Abu Dhabi connecting to partner airline Etihad Airways flight EY45 to Dublin, Ireland.

Supported by Coles and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the Indigenous Australian Rules team will play two Test matches against Ireland. The First

Test will be played at Breffni Park in Cavan on October 19, followed by the Second Test in Dublin at Croke Park on October 26.

For more information on the International Rules Series please visit www.afl.com.au [3]. For more information on Virgin Australia please visit www.virginaustralia.com [4].

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