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Virgin Australia increases domestic flying as new safety and wellbeing measures are introduced ^[2]

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file:///var/www/html/newsroom.virginaustralia.com/sites/default/files/styles/article_header/public/SSW%20Render%201.jpg

? Expanded capital city connections and frequencies between Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth

? Resumption of services between Brisbane-Adelaide, Brisbane-Canberra, Brisbane-Perth and Sydney-Perth

? More flexibility to travel with increased frequencies on intrastate Queensland and Western Australia routes

? New set of safety and wellbeing measures to minimise risks associated with COVID-19

11 June 2020: The Virgin Australia Group will increase domestic flying and introduce new safety and wellbeing measures as state travel restrictions begin to ease and more travellers return to the skies.

The additional services will see Virgin Australia double current capacity by early July, adding approximately 30,000 seats across 320 flights per week to its domestic schedule.

The full domestic schedule can be viewed at: <https://travel.virginaustralia.com/au/minimal-network-schedule> [3]

Virgin Australia will also introduce a comprehensive new set of safety and wellbeing measures including pre-departure eligibility and health screening, contactless check-in, more frequent cleaning onboard and at the airport, and expanded social distancing measures.

The measures, which will be fully implemented by 12 June have been developed in close collaboration with airlines and airports across Australia as part of the Australian Aviation Recovery Coalition. The measures will continue to be reviewed in line with any changes to its schedule, the latest medical advice, government restrictions and guest feedback.

COMMENTARY

Virgin Australia Group Chief Commercial Officer John MacLeod said as state travel restrictions further ease, demand for air travel has started to return which is why more services and increased frequencies are being added.

By early July, we will have gradually added approximately 30,000 seats across 320 flights per week to our schedule - more than doubling our capacity and providing more flexibility for guests.

It's early days but these services will be a welcomed boost to Australia's tourism industry and help the nation's economy and aviation sector to rebuild. The services will also give us the opportunity to bring team members back to work, who I know have been looking forward to welcoming and sharing our award-winning customer service.

Importantly as travel begins to increase, the safety and wellbeing of guests remains crucial, which is why measures to minimise risks associated with COVID-19 are being introduced. We recommend that any guest who is feeling unwell or has flu-like symptoms, do not travel. Flights for travel up until 30 September can be changed without fees if needed.

Virgin Australia Group Medical Officer Dr Sara Souter said the new measures will ensure that we appropriately manage the latest advice from government and remain vigilant when it comes to hygiene and personal protection.

We will be adopting contactless check-in, a new sequenced boarding and disembarkation process and guests will see more frequent cleaning of high touch surfaces on the aircraft and within the airport. In addition, a new health questionnaire will be rolled out as part of the check-in process to ensure passengers are fit to fly and to assist with contact tracing, said Dr Souter.

It's important to remember that the inflight environment is very different to that of other modes of group transport, with a range of protective features including hospital-grade air filtration systems, directional airflow and high seat backs between travellers. The international evidence supports very low-risk of COVID-19 transmission inflight, which is also our experience to-date in Australia.

?Everyone has a role to play, which is why we are asking guests to be mindful of their own personal protection and others when moving around the cabin. Team members and guests are being encouraged to regularly wash their hands and avoid touching their face, and hand sanitiser and masks will be available to all guests on request.

?Wherever possible, we will try to do our best to keep an empty seat between guests travelling alone, however this may not always be available. Families and travelling companions will be able to sit together.?

Guests travelling are encouraged to download the Australian Government?s COVIDSafe tracing app. Guests should also ensure their details are updated via the My Bookings function at virginaustralia.com or with their travel agent prior to commencing travel.

The flights are will be available for booking at virginaustralia.com, and for more information regarding the new safety and hygiene measures please visit www.virginaustralia.com/healthandwellbeing [4]

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