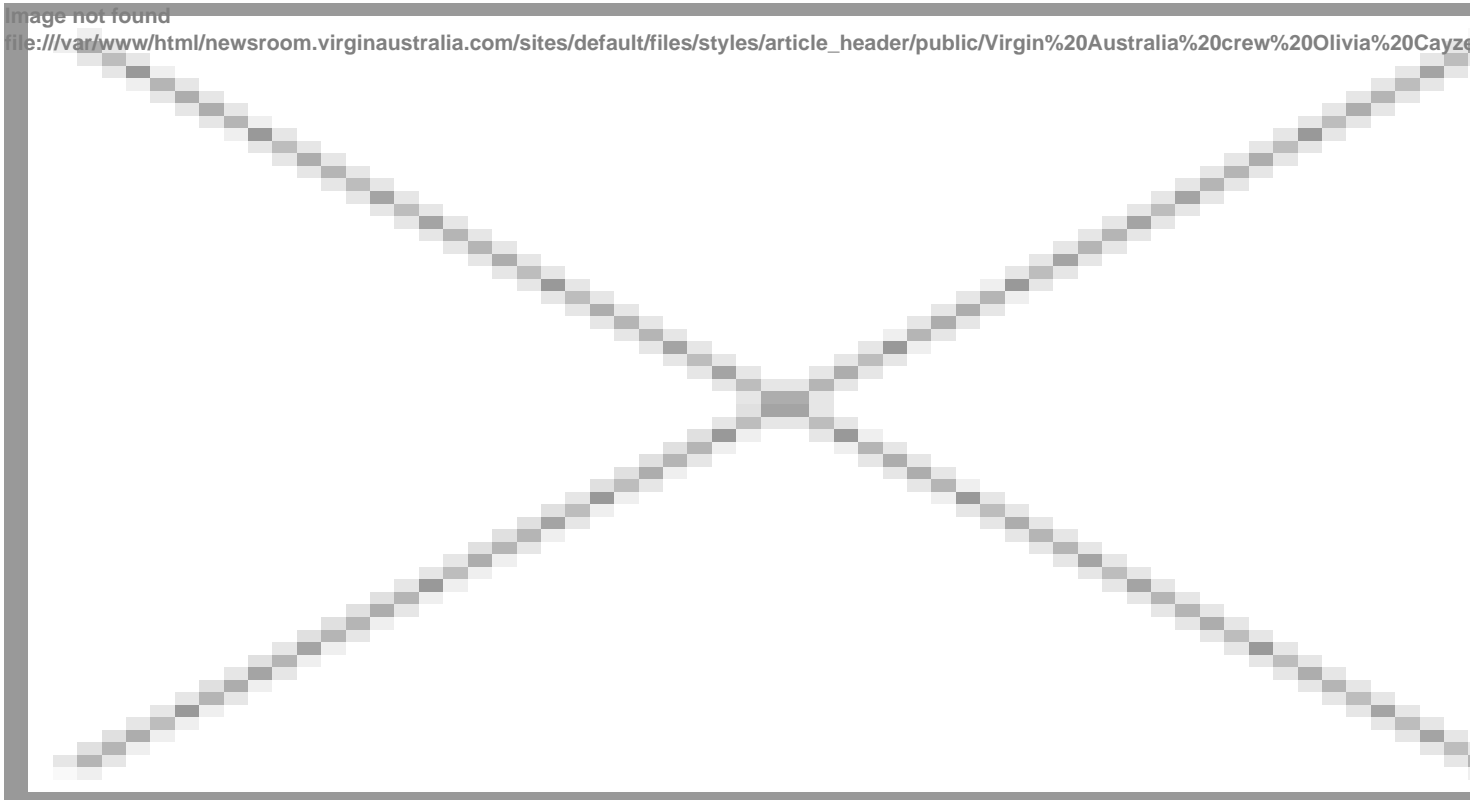




Virgin Australia brings stranded pooch home [2]



Every dog has its day and that couldn't be more accurate for Pipsqueak, a stranded dachshund pup, who Virgin Australia reunited with its family at Sydney Airport this week.

In March, the pooch was sailing around The Gulf of Mexico with her owners on a four-year global sailing adventure when COVID-19 struck, separating the family and Pip, as she's affectionately known, when owners Zoe and Guy Eilbeck and their children were forced to fly back to Australia urgently.

Over the next five months, strangers all over the United States cared for Pip, before she began her 17,000 kilometre journey home to Sydney via North and South Carolina, Los Angeles, Auckland, and Melbourne.

The homecoming, however, was thwarted on the final leg of the journey when cargo flights between Melbourne and Sydney were full as a consequence of COVID-19 state border restrictions, leaving Pip pipped at the post.

Virgin Australia quickly came to the rescue on Tuesday night after hearing the story, booking her on the next available service to Sydney.

In a video of the reunion released by the airline, Pip's owners Zoe and Guy Eilbeck thanked Virgin Australia for bringing their family back together.

"She's part of our family and it's been five months and that's a long time to miss anybody," said Mr Eilbeck.

"We just can't believe we got her home this was such a team effort and good on you Virgin," said Mrs Eilbeck.

Virgin Australia Group General Manager Cargo, Glen Moloney said the airline was thrilled to have played a part in reuniting the much-loved sausage dog with her family after many months and thousands of kilometres apart.

"During these difficult times it's nice to be able to put a smile on someone's face and I know it was a real joy for our team to come to the rescue," said Mr Moloney.

Virgin Australia crew member, Olivia Cayzer who was instrumental in the reunion said Pip was given the VIP service.

"Pip disembarked the flight before anyone else and was then ushered through the terminal to be reunited with her family," said Ms Cayzer.

"Whether our guests are furry or human we love them all and so we jumped at this opportunity to help one of our furry friends," she said.

Virgin Australia transports more than 30,000 pets around Australia each year.

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