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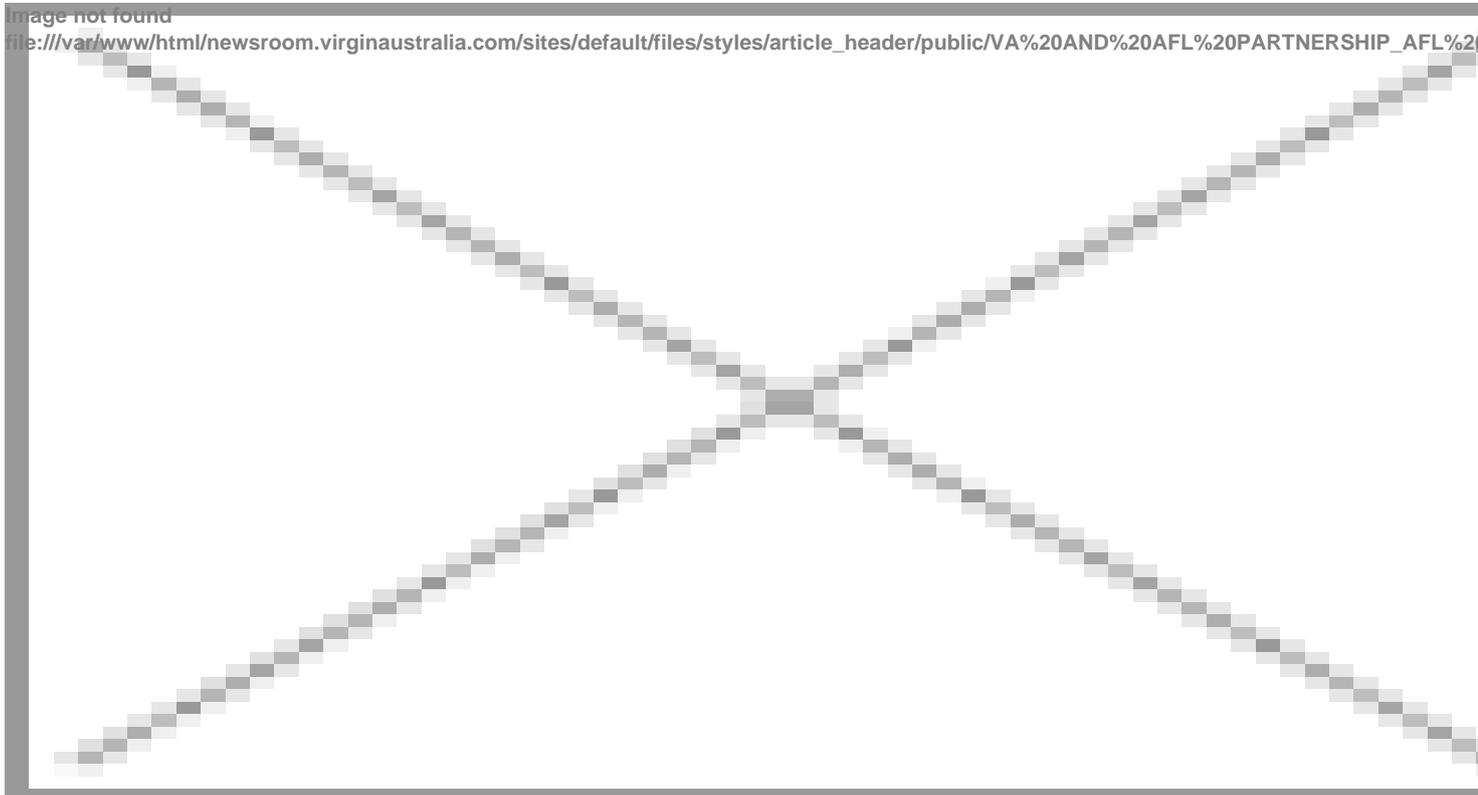
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Monday 15 March 2021: Virgin Australia will continue to be the official airline partner of the AFL and AFLW until 2025 in an agreement announced today.

The five-year deal will see Virgin Australia continue to fly the league's 32 teams including players, coaches and support staff to interstate matches, making it one of the largest airline sponsorships of any team sport in the country.

Virgin Australia CEO and Managing Director Jayne Hrdlicka said the partnership continues to be an important part of the airline's community engagement plan, while helping to get more Australians travelling around the country and connecting with their footy passion.

"AFL is the most popular sporting code in the country and there are no fans more passionate than AFL fans. We're proud to be continuing our partnership until 2025, helping Australians all over the country connect with their love of this great game," said Ms Hrdlicka.

"The AFL and Virgin Australia have both had a challenging 12 months, but we've come out the other side, stronger, fitter, better, re-energised and ready for the season ahead.

“The partnership enables Virgin Australia to fly the AFL and AFLW’s 32 teams and their fans across the country, which helps get Virgin Australia people back to work, while contributing to rebuilding market demand for air travel, and the nation’s broader tourism recovery.

“Flying the league means that we’ll have approximately 16,000 seats booked by the clubs each season which means more flying hours for our people and more travel opportunities for fans keen to watch their team play interstate.

“For fans, travelling to your team’s game has never been cheaper or easier with Virgin Australia’s extensive network of domestic destinations. And, thanks to the Federal Government’s recently announced aviation support package, flying to support your team will be more affordable than ever,” she said.

AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan said the extended partnership will ensure footy continues to be as accessible as possible for fans all across the country.

“The AFL’s partnership with Virgin Australia has gone from strength to strength over the last 10 years. It has been testament to our shared commitment to the footy community.” Mr McLachlan said.

“Virgin Australia has been flying our players and fans around the country since 2011 and we are thrilled to extend our partnership and continue to take our game all around the country.”

Under the new agreement, Virgin Australia will continue to develop its Footy Families platform – a diverse fan engagement platform to promote the game at a grassroots level and both partners will continue to collaborate on marketing efforts, including advertising campaigns, on-ground promotions, and activations.

The deal will also give Virgin Australia access to business development opportunities through the AFL’s extensive network of partners and opportunities to fly ad hoc charter services.

In new, realigned club deals, reinforcing the airline’s commitment to the game, Virgin Australia has also extended its partnerships with Carlton Football Club and the Gold Coast Suns, until 2024 and 2023 respectively.

To celebrate the announcement, Virgin Australia showcased its signature flair at Melbourne Airport this morning, with Jayne Hrdlicka and Carlton and Richmond captain’s Sam Docherty and Trent Cotchin, alongside AFLW players Izzy Huntington (Western Bulldogs) and Kaitlyn Ashmore (North Melbourne Kangaroos), checking-in fans and giving away free flights and tickets to away games.

Virgin Australia has been the official airline partner of the AFL since 2011, transporting players, coaches, league officials and support staff on more than 4,000 flights (or 144,000 seats), carrying more than 2,600 tonnes in club cargo in that time, while sharing the magic of the game all over the country.

NOTES TO EDITOR

A study conducted by IER in 2019 on the economic impacts of the Australian Football Industry found the following key data:

Total travel and accommodation spending by spectators and other supporters \$346.1m

AFL Matches only - Total interstate and intra-state travel by teams and support staff \$4.9m

AFL Matches only - Total inter and intra-state and local travel by supporters - \$196.3m

The economic contribution of AFL/AFLW/JLT/Finals matches on host cities (from intrastate, interstate and overseas attendees) - \$637.6m (total across 12 cities)

54% of this expenditure is on travel

This figure is visitor spending only, and does not include local residents spend on attending matches

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