

ETIHAD AIRWAYS OUTLINES MAJOR EXPANSION OF AUSTRALIAN OPERATIONS

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, today outlined a range of major changes to its Australian operations, including new aircraft, new routes, additional flights and new airport facilities.

Speaking in Sydney at the CAPA Australia Pacific Aviation Summit, the President and Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Airways, James Hogan, said Australia was a key and long-term market for the airline and one for which there were exciting growth plans.

Mr Hogan said the airline's future steps for Australia included:

- Airbus A380 aircraft from Sydney and Melbourne to Abu Dhabi
- Construction of premium lounges at Sydney and Melbourne Airports from 2014
- Additional flights from Melbourne and Brisbane to Abu Dhabi
- Commencement of nonstop flights between Perth and Abu Dhabi

He also reaffirmed that Etihad Airways was already moving to increase its equity in Virgin Australia, following recent approval by the Foreign Investment Review Board to increase from a 10 per cent shareholding to 19.9 per cent.

“Virgin Australia is a key member of our ever-expanding airline equity alliance, and Etihad Airways is an active and long-term investor in Virgin,” Mr Hogan said. “We have a significant presence in Australia, with 28 weekly departures, annual expenditure of over \$100 million, direct employment of 106 staff and engagement of 415 local contractors,” he said.

“The Virgin Australia partnership enables us to connect with 45 destinations in Australia, New Zealand and South-East Asia, while we reciprocate by providing connections via our Abu Dhabi hub to a wide range of destinations in Europe, UK, Ireland and Africa.”

Mr Hogan also highlighted the contribution of codeshare partners such as Air France, KLM, Alitalia and Air Serbia to strengthening Etihad Airways' position between Australia and Europe.

"Together with our partners, we have a continuous wave of flights coming down from Europe over our global hub in Abu Dhabi with connections to a significant network of destinations," he said.

Mr Hogan said the Etihad Airways equity alliance - an alternative to legacy airline alliances - now had five members, following a deal last week to invest in Serbia's national airline. Etihad Airways also is awaiting regulatory approval for investment in a sixth airline, India's Jet Airways, which gives the equity alliance a combined total of more than 420 destinations, 500 aircraft and more than 96 million passengers each year.

While in Sydney, Mr Hogan will also host a VIP event at Sydney Opera House to celebrate Etihad Airways' 10th anniversary and its sixth year of flying to Australia. The airline is a major partner of Sydney Opera House having signed a three-year agreement with the iconic World Heritage-listed performing arts centre in January this year.

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About Etihad Airways

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, began operations in 2003, and in 2012 carried 10.3 million passengers. From its hub at Abu Dhabi International Airport, Etihad Airways serves 94 passenger and cargo destinations in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas, with a fleet of 78 Airbus and Boeing aircraft, and over 80 aircraft on firm order, including 41 Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners and 10 Airbus A380s, the world's largest passenger aircraft. Etihad Airways also holds equity investments in airberlin, Air Seychelles, Virgin Australia and Aer Lingus, will acquire 49 per cent of Air Serbia from January 2014, and, subject to regulatory approval, will acquire 24 per cent of India's Jet Airways. For more information, please visit: www.etihad.com