

ETIHAD AIRWAYS TAKES OFF WITH DAILY PERTH FLIGHTS

- **First ever commercial air link between Perth and Abu Dhabi**
- **One-stop flights from Perth to 30 destinations worldwide**
- **Codeshare with Virgin Australia between Perth and Abu Dhabi and to 13 airports throughout Western Australia**

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, today commenced daily, non-stop services between Perth and Abu Dhabi.

The inaugural flight – EY486 – touched down at Perth International Airport at 1.10pm where it was greeted by a water cannon salute and a traditional ‘Welcome to Country’ ceremony by members of the local Indigenous community.

Perth, the capital of Western Australia, is Etihad Airways’ fourth Australian gateway alongside Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. The new daily flights bring to 35¹ the total number of weekly services the airline offers between Australia and Abu Dhabi.

The new Perth flights offer an attractive and compelling proposition for travellers to and from the GCC countries, Middle East, Africa, Europe and USA with the convenience of one stop in Abu Dhabi. Cities such as Cairo, Dublin, London, Manchester, Doha, Jeddah, Beirut and New York will now be linked seamlessly with the Western Australian capital.

Etihad Airways’ President and Chief Executive Officer James Hogan said Perth was a strategically important addition to Etihad Airways’ Australian and global network.

“Today’s inaugural flight creates the first commercial air link between Perth and Abu Dhabi and marks the beginning of an exciting new era of partnership between the state of Western Australia and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

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“Abu Dhabi and Perth are each popular business travel and holiday destinations – attracting 2.8 million and 7.3 million visitors respectively in 2013 – and we are already seeing a strong commercial response to the new route from travellers in the UAE and Western Australia.”

Mr Hogan also pointed to data which shows that Western Australia is the largest contributor to trade between the UAE and Australia, accounting for 57 per cent of the \$A6.4 billion total in 2013.

“With two-way trade between the UAE and Western Australia growing at an annual rate of between 25 to 30 per cent in recent years we are forecasting strong demand for our cargo business.”

Mr Hogan noted interest in travel to Western Australia – particularly from the Middle East, UK, Ireland, Europe and east coast USA – and pledged to work with the airline’s government and industry partners to develop these visitor markets.

“We believe there is a significant opportunity to contribute to the state’s economic success by offering international tourists convenient connections to Western Australia – in 2013 alone tourism contributed \$A7.7 billion to the West Australian economy through visitor spend.”

Brad Geatches, Chief Executive Officer of Perth Airport said: “We are very excited to welcome Etihad Airways to Perth today. We have been working with the airline for some time now and it is pleasing to celebrate the arrival of the inaugural flight.”

“The commencement of Etihad Airways’ Perth operations will add approximately 190,000 annual seats from Perth to the Middle East.”

“The Middle East has become increasing popular as a hub for passengers travelling between Perth and North America, as well as for passengers between Perth and Europe.”

“When the construction of the Domestic Pier at Perth Airport’s Terminal 1 is complete, Etihad Airways and its codeshare partner Virgin Australia will be co-located in one terminal enabling

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easy connections to Virgin’s domestic network, as well as regional connections in the nearby Terminal 2.”

Mr Hogan said Etihad Airways’ partnership with Virgin Australia enabled it to offer connectivity to towns and cities outside the Perth metropolitan area and brought new competition to these markets.

“Our partnership with Virgin Australia enables us to offer codeshare flights from Perth to 13 regional airports throughout the state of Western Australia.

“Guests can now connect seamlessly between Virgin Australia’s regional network and Etihad Airways’ global network with the convenience of through-checked baggage, a single ticket purchase and convenient transfer times.”

Travellers can connect to Etihad Airways’ international flights by flying with Virgin Australia from Albany, Broome, Busselton, Derby, Esperance, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Kununurra, Karratha, Paraburdoo, Port Hedland, Ravensthorpe and Newman.

Virgin Australia will also place its VA code on Etihad Airways’ Perth-Abu Dhabi flights.

The Perth route will be operated by an Airbus A330-200 aircraft with 262 seats – 22 seats in Pearl Business Class and 240 in Coral Economy Class.

The new Perth flights augment Etihad Airways’ existing services to Australia – double daily to Sydney in conjunction with Virgin Australia, and daily to Brisbane and Melbourne.

¹. Includes three Sydney-Abu Dhabi services operated by Virgin Australia

New Abu Dhabi-Perth schedule, effective immediately:

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Flight No.	Origin	Departs	Destination	Arrives	Frequency	Aircraft
EY486	Abu Dhabi	22:10	Perth	13:10+1	Daily	A330-200
EY487	Perth	15:55	Abu Dhabi	23:25	Daily	A330-200

Note: All departures and arrivals are listed in local time

Photo caption 1: Perth Airport's Executive General Manager Rowan Chalmers, Etihad Airways' General Manager Australia and New Zealand Luisa Pastrello, Etihad Airways' State Manager Western Australia Vincent Frascogna and Tourism Western Australia's Chief Executive Officer Stephanie Buckland perform a ribbon cutting to officially mark the start of Etihad Airways' new daily services between Perth and Abu Dhabi.

Photo caption 2: Etihad Airways' inaugural Abu Dhabi - Perth flight is met by a traditional water cannon salute on arrival.

Photo caption 3: Australian Indigenous performer Phil Walley-Stack presents Captain Jeyalingam Tharumalingam with a boomerang as an arrival gift.

- Ends -

About Etihad Airways

Etihad Airways began operations in 2003, and in 2013 carried 11.5 million passengers. From its Abu Dhabi base Etihad Airways flies to 109 existing or announced passenger and cargo destinations in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas. The airline has a fleet of 102 Airbus and Boeing aircraft, and more than 210 aircraft on firm order, including 71 Boeing 787s, 25 Boeing 777-X, 62 Airbus A350s and 10 Airbus A380s. Etihad Airways holds equity investments in airberlin, Air Seychelles, Virgin Australia, Aer Lingus, Air Serbia and Jet Airways, and is in the process of formalising its equity investment in Swiss-based Etihad Regional*. For more information, please visit: www.etihad.com

**Operated by Darwin Airline*