



MEDIA RELEASE

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BROOME INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND VIRGIN AUSTRALIA SIGN 10-YEAR AGREEMENT

Broome International Airport has finalised a 10-year air services agreement with Virgin Australia, underpinning the airport's continuing role as the gateway to the Kimberley.

More than 400,000 passengers a year transit through Broome Airport, with Perth-Broome the second busiest air route in Australia in August 2021. In October 2021, 47,000 passengers passed through Broome Airport, up 10,000 from the same month in 2020 whilst November and December passenger numbers averaged close to 30,000 for the two months even with the usual seasonal decline.

The air services agreement (ASA) replaces the previous five-year agreement between Broome International Airport (BIA) and Virgin Australia.

"The agreement we have reached with Virgin Australia provides the certainty Broome International Airport requires to continue to invest in efficient passenger services and improved passenger amenities which will add to the passenger experience and further enhance our role as the region's most important tourism entry point," said Broome International Airport CEO, Paul McSweeney.

"Signing the ten-year ASA demonstrates Virgin Australia's commitment to Broome International Airport, the Kimberley and WA's North West, and we are pleased that our relationship has been cemented for an extended period."

During 2021, Virgin Australia grew its market share on the Perth-Broome route from 34 per cent to over 40 per cent. Throughout the year Virgin Australia operates up to three daily return services from Perth to Broome and the airport and airline will work closely to add more flights in the future.

Virgin Australia's Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer Alistair Hartley said the agreement with Broome International Airport was reflective of the airline's investment in Western Australia and its importance to the national Virgin Australia network.

"Broome International Airport is the gateway to one of Australia's most popular tourism destinations, and despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, its importance as a destination continues to increase," Mr Hartley said.

"Virgin Australia is committed to Broome and to Western Australia and is proud to do our part in connecting passengers with the North West and supporting the local community and local economy."

BIA caters for scheduled jet, turboprop and helicopter services, as well as charter flights and light aircraft. It is home base for three critical services in the North West – a major Royal Flying Doctor Service Base, the southern hemisphere's largest heliport (used to service offshore oil exploration and development in the Browse Basin) and a north-west coast-watch operation. Broome is also the aviation hub for the Kimberley with regular inter-regional regular public transport services to the Pilbara and Derby.

Ten general aviation companies also operate from Broome International Airport keeping remote communities, cattle stations, tourism outposts, mine sites, exploration areas and regional towns in touch with mainstream transport and communications.

“Broome is one of Australia’s premiere tourist destinations, is a gateway to the wonders of the Kimberley and the airport is a crucial service provider to local industry, so agreements like the Virgin Australia ASA ensure the future of a critical service to the North West economy and community,” Mr McSweeney said.

“Passenger numbers in October made it our best month for eight years, and our best October ever, with further momentum continuing through to November with more than 33,000 passengers, which was 17 per cent up on November 2020.

“We know passengers want a good experience and value for money when they use our airport and our previous investments in terminal upgrades and the new agreement with Virgin Australia will help us to achieve that.”

BIA and the company’s contractors employ 90 direct staff members generating almost 800 jobs in Broome and the Kimberley region. BIA is investing in upgrades to its facilities, including construction of a second arrivals hall and a new undercover walkway to improve the passenger drop-off experience and various tarmac works.

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