



Australian Government

International Air Services Commission

RENEWAL DETERMINATION

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| Determination: | [2013] IASC 133 |
| Renewal of: | [2009] IASC 110 |
| The Route: | Solomon Islands |
| The Applicant: | Virgin Australia Airlines (SE Asia) Pty Ltd (Virgin Australia) (ABN 36 090 670 965) |
| Public Register File: | IASC/APP/201327 |

The Commission's delegate makes a fresh determination in favour of Virgin Australia allocating 180 seats of capacity per week on the Solomon Islands route for five years.

1 The application for renewal

1.1 On 9 July 2009, the delegate of the Commission issued Determination [2009] IASC 110 (the Determination) allocating to Pacific Blue Australia 180 seats of capacity per week on the Solomon Islands route, in accordance with the Australia – Solomon Islands air services arrangements. The Determination was for five years and was subsequently varied by:

- Decision [2011] IASC 215, allowing the air services to be provided jointly with V Australia; and
- Resolution [2011] IASC R16 recognising the name change of Pacific Blue Airlines Pty Ltd to Virgin Australia Airlines (SE Asia) Pty Ltd, the current holder of the capacity.

1.2 Under the *International Air Services Commission Act 1992* (the Act), the Commission must start its consideration of the renewal of a determination at least 12 months before the expiry of the Determination. The Determination expires on 8 July 2014. In view of this, the Commission sent, on 4 July 2013, a letter to Virgin Australia inviting it to apply for renewal if it wished to renew the Determination.

1.3 Virgin Australia applied to the Commission on 5 July 2013 for a renewal of the Determination for five years from 9 July 2014.

1.4 As required by sections 12 and 17 of the Act, the Commission published a notice on 5 July 2013 inviting other applications for the capacity. No applications were received.

1.5 All material supplied by the applicant is available on the Commission's website (www.iasc.gov.au).

2 Delegate's assessment

2.1 In accordance with section 27AB of the Act and regulation 3A of the International Air Services Commission Regulations 1992, the delegate of the Commission may consider the Virgin Australia application. (For purposes of this determination, all references to the Commission include the delegate of the Commission).

2.2 In considering an application for renewal of a determination under section 8 of the Act, the Commission must make the same allocation of capacity as the original determination unless the Commission is satisfied that the allocation is no longer of benefit to the public. In assessing the benefit to the public of an allocation of capacity, the Commission must apply the criteria set out for that purpose in the policy statement made by the Minister under section 11 of the Act.

2.3 Under paragraph 6.2 of the Minister's Policy Statement (No. 5) issued on 19 May 2004 (the Policy Statement), in circumstances where there is only one applicant for allocation of capacity on a route, only the criteria in paragraph 4 are applicable. Paragraph 4 provides that the use of entitlements by Australian carriers under a bilateral arrangement is of benefit to the public unless such carriers are not reasonably capable of obtaining the necessary approvals to operate on the route and are not reasonably capable of implementing their applications.

2.4 Virgin Australia is an established international carrier and is therefore reasonably capable of obtaining the necessary approvals to operate on the route and of implementing its application.

2.5 Under paragraph 8.1 of the Policy Statement, there is a presumption in favour of the carrier seeking the renewal which may be rebutted by applying the following criteria, where the start-up phase has concluded:

- whether the carrier seeking renewal has failed to service the route effectively; and
- whether the use of the capacity in whole or in part by another Australian carrier that has applied for the capacity would better serve the public having regard to the criteria set out in paragraphs 4 and 5.

2.6 The Commission notes that:

- there are no other applicants seeking capacity on the route; and
- there is no evidence that Virgin Australia has failed to service the route effectively.

2.7 In these circumstances, the Commission is satisfied that renewal of Determination [2009] IASC 110 would be of benefit to the public.

2.9 Virgin Australia has advised the Commission that from mid-January 2013 all Virgin Australia flights will be operated under the VA designator and that once this occurs, code share operations between Virgin Australia entities will no longer be required. Accordingly, in this determination, the Commission has removed conditions contained in Determination [2009] IASC 110, as varied by Decision [2011] IASC 215, allowing for code sharing between Virgin Australia entities.

3 Determination for renewal of Determination [2009] IASC 110 allocating capacity on the Solomon Islands route to Virgin Australia ([2013] IASC 133)

3.1 In accordance with section 8 of the Act, the delegate of the Commission, makes a determination in favour of Virgin Australia Airlines (SE Asia) Pty Ltd, allocating 180 seats of capacity per week on the Solomon Islands route in accordance with the Australia – Solomon Islands air services arrangements.

3.2 The determination is for five years from 9 July 2014.

3.3 The determination is subject to the following conditions:

- only Virgin Australia is permitted to utilise the capacity;
- Virgin Australia is not permitted to utilise the capacity to provide services jointly with another Australian carrier or any other person without the approval of the Commission; and
- changes in relation to the ownership and control of Virgin Australia are permitted except to the extent that any change:
 - results in the designation of the airline as an Australian carrier under the Australia – Solomon Islands air services arrangements being withdrawn; or
 - has the effect that another Australian carrier, or a person (or group of persons) having substantial ownership or effective control of another Australian carrier, would take substantial ownership of Virgin Australia or be in a position to exercise effective control of Virgin Australia, without the prior consent of the Commission.

Dated: 19 July 2013



Marlene Tucker
Executive Director
Delegate of the IASC Commissioners