



MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIA'S NEWEST INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE GOES ON SALE – FLIGHTS TAKE OFF FROM 15 DECEMBER 2008*

FROM THE HARBOUR TO HOLLYWOOD - V AUSTRALIA ANNOUNCES SYD-LAX AS LAUNCH ROUTE

- The Virgin Blue Group introduces V Australia, its new premium three class international airline
- Sydney-Los Angeles daily to be V Australia Airlines launch route....more to come!
- V Australia to launch flights from 15 December 2008 - \$999* return economy fares on sale at www.vaustralia.com.au or via www.virginblue.com.au
- SYDNEY announced as V Australia's operational base

Monday 31 March 2008: Sydney, Australia: Australia's newest International Airline, V Australia, has announced daily direct Sydney-Los Angeles flights as its inaugural trans-Pacific route and a premium product offering when it takes to the skies from 15 December 2008.*

The announcement was made in Sydney today by Virgin Blue co-founders Sir Richard Branson and Chief Executive, Brett Godfrey, together with New South Wales Premier, The Hon. Morris Iemma.

Sir Richard Branson said, "In a delightful case of déjà vu, I was here eight years ago at Customs House with Brett in Sydney announcing our intention to launch a new airline for Australia. That airline was Virgin Blue."

He continued, "I am excited to be back here today to join the Virgin Blue and V Australia teams in unveiling bold plans for our new international airline and we are hopeful our Australian friends will join us for the ride. The trans-Pacific route is in dire need of competition and a good shake-up and that's a challenge we are always keen to take on."

Sir Richard Branson added, "The launch of V Australia means the Virgin Group for the first time will offer a global network of airlines that allow travellers to fly worldwide on Virgin airlines' that all share the same vision and commitment to safety, service, fun and flair."

V Australia Airlines officially starts selling seats today, just in time for Christmas travellers to take advantage of the competitive fares.

To celebrate the "go live" sale date, V Australia Airlines is offering Australian travellers 1,000 International Economy seats between Sydney and Los Angeles for **\$999* return inclusive of all taxes and charges of approximately \$415** (Internet sale fare). Every day economy fares will start from \$1899 return which is 16% lower than the current lowest available published fare on the route for the same travel period (as at noon Sunday 30 March 2008).

The launch of V Australia Airlines will be the first time ever there has been a second Australian airline competing on the trans-Pacific route. It comes just weeks after the Australia and US Governments signed an historic open skies agreement, allowing Australian or US owned airlines to fly freely between the two countries.

V Australia Airlines will offer the full suite of products expected of an international long haul airline but with its usual twist of innovation as part of its three class offering.

Virgin Blue Chief Executive, Brett Godfrey, said, "I am pleased to announce that V Australia Airlines will be a contemporary modern Australian style airline, initially offering three classes of travel including **International Business**, **International Premium Economy** and **International Economy**."

He continued, "We have spent the past two years researching what people value most in an international travel experience and our research shows that the highest ranking desirables are seat size, personal space and being entertained."

"We held off finalising our own in-flight offering until other international airlines unveiled their updated product highlights. Off the back of that, we made modifications to ensure V Australia's in-flight products and services benchmark favorably against all competitors, including those flying today or those with declared plans for tomorrow."

V Australia's product will include full service features such as complimentary meals and beverages and generous seating. The airline will also be the only airline operating on the trans-Pacific to offer the latest in-flight technology connectivity throughout all cabins so Guests are able to send and receive SMS text messages, as well as send and receive emails using GPRS devices such as BlackBerrys® and mobile phones exactly as they are used on the ground.

Brett Godfrey added, "V Australia's focus on space, comfort and entertainment, coupled with Virgin Blue's renowned customer service will stand the airline in good stead to compete with the region's best carriers, with the added bonus of lowering the fares."

"International Business" will be a boutique style executive business product with an intimate dedicated cabin and crew. International Business will offer a fully flat horizontal bed (stretch out and sleep with 77 inches of space) and offers choice and individuality, including the freedom of an *à la carte* menu and on demand entertainment so Guests can watch and eat what they want, when they want, depending on personal preference.

"International Premium Economy" will be an all-inclusive dedicated cabin. It will offer 40 seats that are amongst the largest seats ever offered in a Premium Economy class of any airline, either flying today or declared to fly in the future. The seats boast a full 20 inches of width and a 9 inch recline and no seat will have less than 38 inches of leg room. The new premium style of travel is tailored to those who want more comfort, more space and the little things that make a difference including mood lighting and in-seat audio and video on demand.

"International Economy" will provide the most spacious economy seating option of any airline operating the trans-Pacific route, individual on-demand seat back entertainment and comfy seating (designed for the yet to fly Boeing 787) in a 3x3x3 configuration, with an unparalleled 18.8 inches of seat width and 32 inches of leg room. V Australia's International Economy will offer more for less in terms of superior comfort for some 16% lower than existing fares on the route. ^

V Australia will unveil further details about its discount fares and its in-flight product in coming months but travellers can expect some of Virgin's personable point of difference including crew that will take service levels to a new height for trans-Pacific travel.

V Australia has confirmed its Sydney-LA launch route following months of discussions and negotiations with a number of airports in both Australia and the United States of America.

The schedule has been specifically designed to offer the only daily evening departure from Sydney to LA, allowing travellers a full day's work or play in Australia before heading to the United States. V Australia will initially launch with daily trans-Pacific services and will ramp up additional frequencies as it takes delivery of more brand new Boeing 777-300ER aircraft direct from the Boeing factory. V Australia is also looking at other potential international destinations and will announce its next two markets in coming weeks.

Sydney-Los Angeles was chosen as the first route for V Australia due to both Sydney and Los Angeles being major gateway cities in both countries. In the United States, passengers will be able to connect to or from North West Airlines, the first US based airline to partner with V Australia Airlines and the fifth largest airline in the world, to continue on to other US cities.

In Australia, Virgin Blue's Sydney hub will offer a host of connecting options from V Australia, starting with Virgin Blue's domestic destinations and expanding to include connections to Pacific Blue flights to New Zealand and the South Pacific.

V Australia has also announced it will set up its Australian operations in Sydney, with over 1,000 new team members to be based there. The airline will base its recently acquired aircraft simulator and soon-to-be acquired Cabin Crew Trainer in Sydney and conduct its 777 pilot and cabin crew training in the state. The overall investment is worth at least \$44-million.

NSW Premier, The Hon. Morris Iemma, said, "We are delighted V Australia has chosen Sydney to be its main Australian operational base as well as Sydney-LA as its first route. The launch of this new airline is set to bring great benefits to Australia and in particular for New South Wales, as it will not only bring a new wave of visitors to our shores, it is creating jobs for Australians in an exciting, vibrant and dynamic industry."

Brett Godfrey said, "Today is a very significant day for V Australia, for Virgin Blue, for our team, for Australian and US travellers and Australian tourism."

"We are proud as an Australian airline to be bringing a new, contemporary and passionate airline to the trans-Pacific market that will bring genuine competition and a fresh alternative to travellers."

Brett Godfrey added, "V Australia Airlines is a multi-billion dollar investment for the Virgin Blue Group of Airlines and it's not one we have taken lightly. Today's announcements are the first of many and we have every intention of bringing revolutionary change not just to the trans-Pacific route but across the region."

Members of Virgin Blue's loyalty program "Velocity" will be able to both "earn and burn" flights with V Australia with one return International Business flight from Sydney to LA earning enough points to redeem for 2 return Virgin Blue flights between Sydney and Melbourne.**

For V Australia Airlines bookings, log on to www.vaustralia.com.au or via www.virginblue.com.au, call 138 287 or contact your local travel agent. (Note: Agent bookings to come on line shortly)

V AUSTRALIA SYDNEY- LOS ANGELES LAUNCH SCHEDULE

SYDNEY – LOS ANGELES - EFFECTIVE 15 DECEMBER 2008

FLIGHT NO	DEP	ARR	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
VA 001	9.45pm	4.30pm	→	→	→	→	→	→	→

LOS ANGELES – SYDNEY – EFFECTIVE 15 DECEMBER 2008

FLIGHT NO	DEP	ARR	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
VA 002	11.30pm	9.20am + 2 days	→	→	→	→	→	→	→

^ Based on current lowest available published fare on the route for the same travel period as V Australia commencing operations

* **Subject to regulatory approval.** Launch fare on sale from 10am AEST Monday 31 March 2008 until sold out for travel between 15 December 2008 and 15 March 2009. A credit card surcharge of an additional \$15 per person per booking is applicable. Terms and conditions apply. The launch fare may not be available on all flights

** Based on redeeming an R class fare and valid as at 31 March 2008. Taxes and surcharges are payable separately at time of booking

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