

Virgin's new link is golden opportunity

DESTINATIONS TO BOOK

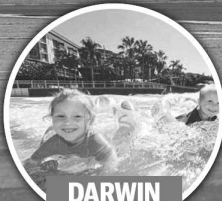
DIRECT FROM CAIRNS



GOLD COAST



BRISBANE



DARWIN



SYDNEY



MELBOURNE



ADELAIDE



PERTH



Travellers can book to fly direct from Cairns Airport to key Aussie destinations, plus regional locations such as Townsville, Weipa, Proserpine, Toowoomba and the Sunshine Coast. Note that Covid restrictions are still in place for many destinations that affect visitors wishing to return to Queensland.

SALLY BOXALL AND ALISON PATERSON

VIRGIN Australia has launched a new direct flight service between Cairns and the Gold Coast with the airline suggesting more destinations could be on the way.

Tickets are now on sale for the new flights, which are scheduled to begin on December 9 and will provide nearly 9000 seats a month.

The airline joins Jetstar on the direct Cairns-Gold Coast route.

Cairns Airport chief executive officer Richard Barker said the increase in servi-

SALE FARES

Promotional fares for Virgin's new Cairns to Gold Coast flights starting from \$79 one way are now on sale until midnight October 15, unless sold out prior. Visit Virgin Australia's website for more information and to book.

ces was a very welcome announcement for both the region and the airport.

"The addition of Gold Coast services means Virgin Australia are serving more destinations from Cairns than ever by Virgin Australia and

that's great testament to their commitment to serve Tropical North Queensland and rebuild after the past 18 months," he said.

Mr Barker said more than 120,000 passengers flew between Cairns and the Glitter Strip each year, with their busiest time the December to January period.

"It's another opportunity for people to enjoy holidays with everything from the surf of the Gold Coast to the reef and rainforest of Tropical North Queensland," he said.

"Subject to border restrictions easing soon, Virgin Australia will operate 53 per cent

more seats to and from Cairns in December 2021 versus December 2019, and that's a great vote of confidence in Cairns and our region."

Virgin Australia's chief strategy and transformation officer Alistair Hartley said the airline recognised a growing demand and increasing confidence to travel.

Member for Cairns and Assistant Tourism Minister Michael Healy said Virgin's direct flights would add an extra 55,000 seats between Cairns and the Gold Coast.

"The additional visitor capacity will be welcomed by Cairns' tourism operators after

a challenging year," he he said.

"For local tourism operators and businesses, this has potential to add up to \$19.6 million to Cairns' Covid Economic Recovery Plan and support up to 156 jobs between the two cities."

It follows recent launches of other domestic routes from Cairns, including a new QantasLink service to Adelaide and SkyTrans Whitsundays flights. FNQ residents are also looking towards potential overseas travel in 2022 as Jetstar confirmed it intends to restart Japan flights in February and Bali flights in April, depending on restrictions.