

3 May 2022
Our ref: GP/js

Darrell Channing
Director
Competition Exemptions
ACCC
23 Marcus Clarke Street
Canberra ACT
2601

Dear Sir

SUBJECT: Virgin Australia Pty Ltd application for authorisation AA1000608

North Queensland Airports (Cairns and Mackay) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the application made by Virgin Australia Pty Ltd, seeking authorisation for codeshare agreements with international “Partner Carriers.”

Virgin Australia currently represents approximately 30% of domestic traffic in and out of Cairns Airport and 40% in and out of Mackay Airport. They represent a major part of the recovery of air traffic to both regions and throughout COVID (outside of the period of Administration) maintained essential services.

As international travel to Australia resumes and visitation by both the corporate and leisure sectors begins to return to pre pandemic levels in the coming years, interline connectivity by international carriers, using major gateway airports, on to domestic carriers will be critical for re-opening to major markets such as the USA, Europe, and Asia. Virgin Australia’s existing codeshare agreement with Singapore Airlines has shown how beneficial this can be. Cairns in particular, has never been so well connected domestically and knowing passengers from Europe or Asia can travel seamlessly between Singapore Airline international flights and Virgins domestic network, provides a powerful marketing proposition that Australia is open for tourism. Similarly, if a partnership with United Airlines and Virgin Australia were approved this would have a major impact on the attractiveness of our market in North America. United serves over 300 destinations with hubs in Chicago, Denver, Guam, Houston, Los Angeles, New York/Newark, San Francisco, Tokyo and Washington, D.C.

North Queensland Airports welcomes the approach by Virgin Australia to seek partnerships with other global carriers providing access to major international markets to feed an expanding domestic footprint.

Yours faithfully



Garry Porter
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

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