New international airline to fly to the Territory

A new international airline will commence flights from Darwin to Singapore early next year following lobbying by the Territory Government.

Chief Minister Paul Henderson and Tourism Minister Malarndirri McCarthy today welcomed the announcement by Virgin Australia and Singapore Airlines subsidiary, SilkAir, to launch new services to Darwin in early 2012.

“SilkAir’s decision to set up operations in Darwin shows great confidence in the Territory’s future and underscores Darwin’s position as one of the best cities in the world to visit in 2012,” Mr Henderson said.

“We’ve been actively lobbying to secure a full service international airline to Darwin and these new flights to Singapore are great news for Territorians, business, and tourism.

“I’ve encouraged Virgin to take advantage of increased demand from the Inpex LNG project, the Marine Supply Base, and the increase in American troops to be based here.

“On top of this, Virgin will commence a new daily Sydney to Darwin flight, bringing even more great news for Territorians.”

Virgin Australia CEO John Borghetti said the Territory Government met regularly with Virgin Australia to build the case for Virgin to increase flights to and from the Territory.

“We have had discussions with Chief Minister Paul Henderson and his Government about the need for more flights to support Darwin’s growth as a commercial centre and as a gateway to the Northern Territory’s popular tourism destinations,” Mr Borghetti said.

“Today we have also announced a new lounge at Darwin Airport and we look forward to continuing to work with the Government, and Darwin Airport to promote the Northern Territory in hundreds of cities around the world.”

Minister McCarthy said the new SilkAir flights from Singapore will operate four return flights per week with the A320 aircraft. SilkAir is a premium airline that operates full service flights throughout the Asia region.

“This announcement by SilkAir follows active discussions by the Territory Government and Darwin Airport, over many months,” Minister McCarthy said.

“Tourism NT is now working with SilkAir and Virgin Australia on special cooperative marketing campaigns to promote the new flights to Darwin around the world.

“New Virgin Australia flights will operate daily between Sydney and Darwin with Virgin’s newly refurbished Boeing 737-800 aircraft, including the new business class product.
“These new flights will add over 1000 additional seats per week each way from Sydney and 600 seats per week each way from Singapore.”

Both airlines will code-share on each other’s flights, will have reciprocal frequent flyer programs and undertake joint sales and marketing under their new alliance arrangements.

The new Singapore flights commence on 26 March 2012 and Sydney flights on 2 April 2012, in time for Easter and the start of Darwin’s peak tourism season.

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