



Indian Ocean Territories Air Services

Frequently Asked Questions

October 2025

This FAQ provides further information on the new partnership with Qantas for air services to the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) commencing 3 November 2025 and transitional arrangements from the current contract with Virgin Australia.

Who will provide passenger and air freight services to Christmas Island (CI) and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands going forward?

Qantas Airways Limited (Qantas) has been selected as the new long-term air services delivery partner for the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT), following an open and competitive tender process.

Qantas will deliver both passenger and air freight services to the IOT for a period of five years, with two possible two-year extension options. These services commence on 3 November 2025.

Why did the Government have to go out to tender? Why couldn't the existing arrangements continue?

This process commenced because the Department was required to re-tender for air services at the completion of the existing contract, which expires 30 October 2025.

Did the process reflect community views? Did the air services survey have an impact on the outcome?

Yes. The request for tender (RFT) was informed by consultation with the IOT community through a comprehensive survey of air services conducted in the second half of 2023.

Airfare and pricing, service reliability, seat availability, baggage limits and speed of recovery services were identified as key priorities by the community.

Why was Qantas selected?

There was a rigorous assessment of proposals as part of the tender process. Qantas' proposal represented best value-for-money, while also aligning with community preferences.

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What are the benefits of the new partnership?

The new arrangements are expected to deliver more than 5,000 additional seats on the IOT route each year, and more than 200 tonnes of extra air freight capacity to the IOT, per annum.

Cheaper prices for both passenger tickets (up to 42% less) and air freight are also anticipated. There will be an additional 12 Perth to Christmas Island return passenger flights each year.

While there may be some disruption in the short-term during the transition, this partnership is expected to provide significant benefits and improved services to the IOT over the long term.

Why are some flights only showing higher priced tickets available?

Consistent with other routes, there will be instances where you will pay higher prices for particular flights, in line with the airline's demand-driven pricing model. This will depend on factors such as when travellers book flights, and how full they are.

Are there cheaper flights for children?

Under the new arrangements, children's airfares will be at 75% of an adult's airfare, noting that on normal Qantas domestic routes, there is no price difference between child and adult airfares.

What will happen now?

Detailed transitional planning is now being progressed, ahead of Qantas commencing services on 3 November 2025.

Flights with Qantas are available to book now for flights from 3 November 2025.

Following Virgin Australia's decision to cancel and refund all bookings to and from the Indian Ocean Territories from 3 November, Qantas has confirmed that it will price-match cancelled Virgin flights for those rebooking on a new Qantas service and who provide appropriate supporting evidence.

Affected passengers should contact either Qantas or their travel agent, depending on how their booking was made.

The focus for all parties is on minimising disruptions to allow for a smooth changeover.

Will existing flight arrangements change?

From 3 November when Qantas commences service delivery, there will be a number of changes to the current passenger and air freight arrangements such as the days on which flights operate and the types of aircraft used.

Passenger flight days will be Mondays and Fridays moving forward – as well as an additional Christmas Island flight on one Saturday a month.

In addition to weekly Monday and Friday flights from 3 November 2025, Qantas has announced three additional monthly flights to Christmas Island.

Qantas will travel return from Perth to Christmas Island on:

- 15 November 2025
- 20 December 2025

- 31 January 2026
- 14 February 2026
- 14 March 2026
- 18 April 2026
- 23 May 2026
- 27 June 2026
- 18 July 2026
- 15 August 2026
- 26 September 2026
- 10 October 2026
- 14 November 2026
- 19 December 2026.

These flights are available to book 355 days out from the flight date. New ticket sales through Qantas include current pricing and Qantas Frequent Flyer redemptions. Further monthly flights be will be released in due course.

Flights will continue to depart from Terminal 1 at Perth Airport once Qantas commences services.

In the initial transition period, passenger flights to the IOT will include a stopover at Port Hedland. This is a temporary measure, and passengers will not disembark during the stop.

Interim freight operations will depart Perth to Christmas Island fortnightly on Fridays. The service will overnight on Cocos Islands on Friday before returning to Perth on Saturday.

What will happen with existing bookings people have already made with Virgin Australia for after 3 November 2025?

Virgin Australia has made the decision to cancel and refund all current bookings to and from the Indian Ocean Territories for flights after 3 November 2025.

Passengers with cancelled bookings do not need to request their Virgin refunds, as refunds will be processed automatically as soon as possible.

All affected passengers still wanting to travel will need to make new bookings through Qantas.

What will be the baggage allowances and priority bag arrangements? What about loyalty programs and points?

IOT travellers will receive a complimentary checked baggage allowance of 30kg, plus 7kg carry-on.

Additional baggage of up to 35kg can be purchased, subject to space on each flight. This includes eskies and similar cooler box items. No single piece of baggage can exceed 32kg, and any piece over 23kg may incur a heavy charge at the airport.

Qantas is working to implement a priority baggage system for the IOT routes, where each passenger will receive at least one 'priority' bag, with any excess bags uplifted on the next

available service. Additional baggage allowances may apply for Qantas Frequent Flyer and Qantas Club Members.

Will there be food and beverages on the flights?

Complimentary food and beverages will be offered on IOT flights, including halal and other dietary options. Passengers can request a dietary-required meal via the Qantas website under the 'Manage Booking' section at least 24 hours prior to departure (or 36 hours for halal meals).

What happens to PATS, Student and Pensioner travel schemes?

There will be no changes to the travel schemes funded by the Australian Government to support the Indian Ocean communities to connect with mainland services as a result of the new air services partnership.

Will the change in flight days impact accommodation providers and their future bookings?

We acknowledge that the new flight schedule will have some flow-on effects to future accommodation bookings in the short term but it is important to remember that going forward, the new arrangements will support the IOT tourism sector and economy more broadly through increased seat and freight capacity and additional flights.

Who can I call about my booking?

Virgin has been in contact with affected passengers directly. Queries about Virgin bookings should be directed to its contact centre on 13 67 89.

People still wishing to travel need to book new flights with Qantas, for 3 November onwards and should do so through the standard systems and processes.

Passengers can view their booking on the Qantas website to check the full terms and conditions of their fare as well as to manage flights incidentals such as additional baggage, meals, and other special requirements.

IOT route individual passengers who do need to make contact with Qantas urgently can call 1300 026 698, between the hours of 8am-7pm Christmas Island time.

For group bookings, the Qantas Group Travel team are available on 13 26 24, while travel agents can contact Qantas Agency Connect on 13 17 11 for assistance with agent bookings.

If you have general questions about the transition process, you can contact

IOTairservicetransition@infrastructure.gov.au

What is happening with freight?

The fortnightly freighter will run to CI and CKI every two weeks, departing Perth on Friday. The new arrangements are expected to significantly increase air freight capacity to the IOT, following an initial transition period.

Will there still be the same freight booking and handling arrangements?

Further information on freight arrangements will be released shortly. Detailed transition planning has commenced with our service partners.

When will the community get the next air services update?

Further information on the new air services arrangements will be provided regularly, by both Qantas and the Office of the Administrator, as arrangements are settled.

What if I have further questions?

We will ensure regular updates as information becomes available.

If you have questions, you can contact:

IOAirservicestransition@infrastructure.gov.au