



Indian Ocean Territories air services

Frequently Asked Questions

August 2025

This FAQ provides further information on the new partnership with Qantas for air services to the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) 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.

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 and air freight are also anticipated.

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.

What will happen now?

Detailed transitional planning can be progressed now the announcement has been made, ahead of Qantas commencing services on 3 November 2025.

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

Qantas will provide further information on new ticket sales and for individuals who have future flights booked with Virgin Australia over the coming weeks.

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.

Freight services will be fortnightly, travelling to the islands on a Saturday.

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

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

People with future bookings on Virgin Australia flights after 30 October 2025 will receive further direct information from the airlines on their flight arrangements in coming weeks.

We request your patience for a short period while transition planning between the Department, Qantas and Virgin Australia is now progressed with urgency.

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

Qantas will provide further information on these elements of their service offering in coming weeks.

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?

A reminder that transitional arrangements for passengers with future bookings on Virgin Australia are now being progressed urgently by Qantas. People with future bookings on Virgin Australia flights after 30 October 2025 will receive further direct information from the airlines on their flight arrangements in coming weeks. We request your patience in this period.

IOT route passengers who do need to make contact with Qantas as a matter of urgency can call:

- 1300 026 698, between the hours of 8am-7pm Christmas Island time.

PLEASE NOTE: This contact is for IOT route matters only and cannot be used for enquiries about other bookings or routes

What is happening with freight?

The fortnightly freighter will run to CI and CKI every two weeks, departing Perth on Saturday. 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 is now commencing 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 in the next two weeks, by both Qantas and the Office of the Administrator.

What if I have further questions?

The airlines will be in contact with those passengers who have future bookings. We will ensure regular updates as information becomes available.

If you have questions, you can contact:

IOAirservicestransition@infrastructure.gov.au