END OF AN ERA: QANTAS MARKS FINAL DAY OF 717 FLYING IN AUSTRALIA

News / Airlines

26th October marks the end of an era for the Qantas Group with the last remaining QantasLink Boeing 717 jet taking passengers to Australian skies for the final time. The final flight (QF1511) landed in Canberra at approximately 18:00 this evening, operated by a crew with a long and proud history operating this aircraft and more than 100 years combined experience flying the 717 in Australia. The flights were flown on 'Great Otway National Park' (registration VH-YQS) between Sydney, Launceston and Canberra. After completing more than 15,000 flights, over 17,000 flight hours and safely carrying more than one million customers for QantasLink over almost 11 years, Great Otway National Park will spend the next few weeks on the ground in Canberra ahead of its retirement in November.

The 717s have flown for QantasLink and Jetstar for more than 20 years.

QantasLink is one of the last three commercial airlines in the world to operate the Boeing 717 aircraft, which were popular for their ability to deliver on high-frequency short to medium routes and serve smaller ports, while carrying around 100 passengers, tapping into a gap in the market for this size aircraft. Following more than two decades of service in the Qantas Group, connecting Australian capital cities and regional hubs and supporting the resource sector in the West, the fleet of 20 QantasLink 717 aircraft are being replaced by 29 new fuel-efficient Airbus A220s, as part of

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the Qantas Group's fleet renewal program, which will reshape its domestic and regional network over the next decade and beyond.

With four A220s currently flying for QantasLink, the next A220 to arrive the 'Tasmanian Devil' and is scheduled to enter into service by the end of the year.

QantasLink Chief Executive Officer Rachel Yangoyan said the airline was proud to celebrate and recognise the 717's history and contribution to aviation in Australia: "Today marks a significant moment in Australian aviation with the 717's iconic T-shaped tail taking passengers to Australian skies for the last time. The 717 aircraft have a long history in Qantas and Jetstar's fleet. From being the aircraft that launched Jetstar's first ever flights in 2004 to serving major cities, regional towns and the mining sector in the West as part of QantasLink for more than 20 years, we know our people and customers have loved flying on the 717. As we farewell the Boeing 717 in Australia and the end of an era, we are excited about the future of QantasLink jet flying onboard the A220 aircraft. We're already getting great feedback from customers and our crew about their experience onboard the A220 aircraft. With almost double the range, lower emissions per seat and a more comfortable inflight experience, the A220s will allow us to deliver the next generation of flying for our customers and our people."

History of the 717 Fleet

- The 717 is a twin-engine jet first marketed by McDonnell Douglas in the early 1990s as the MD-95, until the company merged with Boeing in August 1997. It was affectionately known as Mad Dog due to its MD initials, its power and the noise made by its engines.
- 156 Boeing 717s were produced with YQW, The Tassie Devil, the last 717 to be built at Boeing's Long Beach assembly facility in California in 2006.
- The 717 aircraft first came into Qantas when the Group acquired Impulse Airways in 2001 flying for QantasLink.
- 14 of 717 fleet were converted to support the launch of Jetstar in May 2004 before moving back into QantasLink.

Looking to the future with the A220

The next generation A220 will deliver an improved onboard experience with a number of key features including:

- 137 passengers across two cabins, with 10 Business seats in a 2-2 configuration and 127 seats in Economy in a 2-3 configuration.
- The largest windows of any single aisle aircraft and a cabin with a greater sense of space.
- Fast, free Wi-Fi, allowing customers to stay connected, as well as the improved Qantas Entertainment App for streaming content to their own device.
- An integrated personal device holder and USB A and C charging in both Economy and Business; additional wireless charging pad in Business.
- More comfortable Economy seat with extra padding compared with the 717.

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- Around 20 per cent more overhead locker space for all customers.
- Reduction in noise footprint of up to 50 per cent and reduction in carbon emissions of 25 per cent per seat compared with the aircraft it’s replacing.

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