TIGERAIR COUNTS DOWN TO NEW BALI SERVICE

News / Airports / Routes



Tigerair Australia chief executive Rob Sharp says events such as the volcanic ash cloud and Jakarta terrorist attacks have not dampened demand for the low-cost carrier's proposed Bali flights due to kick off in March.

The Virgin Australia-owned airline has completed the reconfiguration and repainting of the first of three Boeing 737-800s, VH-VUB, that will be used to operate Adelaide-Bali, Melbourne-Bali and Perth-Bali flights from March 23.

The 737s, which will remain on Virgin Australia's air operators certificate and be flown by Virgin pilots alongside Tigerair cabin crew, are being repainted at the Flying Colours paintshop in Townsville, while the seat reconfiguration work is being carried out by Virgin's engineering unit at Melbourne Tullamarine.

With about seven weeks to go until the inaugural services take off, Sharp says ticket sales so far have been "tracking to our business plan".

"We are very pleased with the take-up," Sharp told reporters at Melbourne Airport on Monday.

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“Ash cloud and also the events in Jakarta recently obviously do have impacts on airlines and people travelling. Having said that, Bali is just one of those destinations Australians love and people are still very keen to travel to Bali.”

Tigerair announced in August it was taking over the three Bali routes from parent Virgin. The 180-seat all-economy cabin features three rows of extra leg room seats with 34-inch pitch at the front of the aircraft, while the regular economy seat has 31-inch pitch. There are also two over wing exit rows that feature 39-inch pitch.

The Bali flights will also offer a mix of free and paid wireless inflight entertainment that passengers will be able to access on their own personal electronic devices, while a selection of hot and cold food and drinks can be pre-purchased online or while on board.

The airline expected to carry a full payload of passengers in both directions between Melbourne and Bali – which clocks in at almost six hours and was one of the longest routes served by narrowbody aircraft – on all but a handful of days during the year when wind conditions could restrict the number of seats sold.

Since the announcement, the airline has been training cabin crew to operate the Boeing 737-800, which is a new type to the Tigerair fleet given it currently operates 14 Airbus A320s.

About 70 cabin crew have been certified for 737 operations, with more to be added over the coming months.

The airline said it had recruited more than 100 cabin crew to support both the new Bali flights and new domestic flying.



Tigerair Australia’s Boeing 737-800s will seat 180 passengers.

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Tigerair Australia 737-800 cabin interior.

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The first three rows of Tigerair Australia’s 737s feature extra leg room seats.

Meanwhile, Tigerair has secured Australian regulator approval, international traffic rights and landing and takeoff slots at the busy Denpasar Airport for its three services, with the green light from Indonesian regulators one of the last remaining steps in the approvals process.

The three Tigerair 737s – a second aircraft recently entered the paintshop – have all gone through a heavy maintenance check and will be based at Melbourne, taking the total number of Tigerair aircraft at Tullamarine to 10.

Melbourne Airport chief executive Lyell Strambi said the Tigerair flights to Bali was “more good news for Victoria”.

“Tigerair will bring more price competition to Bali, a destination that just continues to grow in popularity,” Strambi said.

Victorian Minister for Industry Lily D’Ambrosio welcomed the expansion of Tigerair Australia’s network to include international destinations, given the new jobs that have been created as part of the airline’s growth.

“The benefits to the broader economy are clear for all to see,” D’Ambrosio said.

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“We are very excited about these new jobs here.”



Melbourne Airport chief executive Lyell Strambi, Victorian Minister for Industry Lily D’Ambrosio and Tigerair Australia chief executive Rob Sharp. (Tigerair Australia)

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