# ADELAIDE RECEIVES AUSTRALIA'S FIRST A350 FLIGHT

**News / Airports / Routes**




**Adelaide has welcomed Australia's first scheduled Airbus A350-900 passenger flight, with Qatar Airways QR914 touching down in the City of Churches a few minutes before 1600 local time on Tuesday.**

**The inaugural service, operated by A7-ALH, covered the 6,109nm journey between Doha and Adelaide in a little under 13 hours and landed about an hour ahead of schedule.**

The aircraft was due to spend about five hours on the ground, including hosting some media and special guests for an on-board function, before operating the reciprocal QR915 back to Doha that was due to depart at 2125.

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Adelaide Airport managing director Mark Young said the daily service from Qatar would offer South Australians ““some unique destinations in Europe, including a significant number of secondary airports” not served by other airlines from Australia.

It also had a very good spread of destinations in the United States.

“We are very strategic about the airlines we seek to attract, and Qatar has been on our radar for several years.” Young said on the eve of the inaugural flight’s arrival on Tuesday.

Qatar is the second airline from the Middle East to serve Adelaide alongside a daily Emirates Boeing 777-300ER service, which is operated flown under a codeshare partnership with Qantas.

Its arrival was excellent news for SA tourism and SA travellers, Young added. The wide-bodied aircraft would be handled at Adelaide Airport without any new infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Adelaide Airport was continuing its efforts to attract direct services from the US West Coast and China, with both China Eastern and China Southern in its sights.

Young said the Chinese airlines were “very focused” on the business case for serving SA, and discussions were proceeding satisfactorily.

However, there was no forecast of the timing of new entrants from either target market.

The South Australian Government offered inducements to Qatar Airways, including a contribution to marketing the new service, but would not disclose details of the deal.

South Australian Tourism Minister Leon Bignell said the international visitors was critical to the state’s economy.

“The new daily direct service is a great opportunity for South Australia to further strengthen our growing international reputation as a must-see tourism destination,” Bignell said in a statement.

“Not only will the Qatar Airways flights bring tourists to South Australia, but the return flights present the chance to fill the A350-900’s cargo holds with as much as 80 tonnes of premium South

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Australian produce.”

The move to add a fourth Australian destination to Qatar’s network – after Sydney, Melbourne and Perth – will open up competitive routes to the Middle East, Europe and the eastern US for SA air travellers.

Qatar Airways, launch customer for the A350-900, has been steadily expanding destinations for the new aircraft after making the first commercial flight between Doha and Frankfurt in January 2015.

This year, ahead of the Adelaide service, the oneworld alliance member began flying the A350-900 to Philadelphia in January and New York and Boston in March.

The aircraft has a range of about 8,100nm at a cruising speed of about 900 km/h, with Airbus claiming a faster, more efficient aircraft type because of its extensive use of light composite materials and its tapered wing, and the reduced fuel burn of its twin “next generation” Rolls Royce Trent engines.

In a statement ahead of the aircraft’s arrival, Qatar’s chief executive, Akbar Al Baker, said Adelaide was an important addition to the airline’s route map.

The service would connect the South Australian capital with 38 countries in Europe, 23 countries in Africa and 27 destinations in the Middle East, he said.

Al Baker was due to hold a media conference in Adelaide on Wednesday.

On the eve of the Adelaide service, Airbus announced an order for six A350-XWBs, and six options, from Philippine Airlines, taking the order book for the Airbus type to 783 aircraft for 42 airlines.




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