ETIHAD OPENS MELBOURNE LOUNGE, ANNOUNCES NEW MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

News / Airports / Routes



Etihad has cut the ribbon on its new premium lounge at Melbourne Airport.

It is the airline's second lounge in Australia, having opened its Sydney Airport lounge in March 2014.

Featuring wide views of the airfield, the lounge is the largest in Etihad's network outside Abu Dhabi at 800m2 and has enough seating for 133 passengers. It will be open three hours before Etihad's two daily services from Melbourne to its Abu Dhabi hub, including the start of Airbus A380 operations from June 1.

In addition to an a la carte menu with a focus on local Victorian produce and dedicated dining area, the lounge also has a cocktail bar, shower facilities, a children's play area and prayer rooms. Eligible passengers will also have complimentary wifi internet access.

Etihad Airways senior vice president for marketing Shane O'Hare described the lounge as "in a class of its own".

"Blending the best of a fine dining restaurant and a chic city cocktail bar, this lounge is a showcase of intelligent design and sophistication where guests will enjoy the highest levels of comfort and luxury, complemented by our world-class hospitality, culinary innovation and cutting-edge

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beverage technology," O'Hare said in a statement.

"The opening of this remarkable new facility and the launch of our flagship A380 services on 1 June, offer travellers on the Melbourne-Abu Dhabi route our most compelling guest experience proposition ever."

The Melbourne lounge is located in Terminal 2 near gate 10 and is Etihad's ninth premium passenger lounge outside Abu Dhabi.





Meanwhile, Etihad chairman His Excellency Mohamed Mubarak Al Mazrouei has announced a new management structure for the airline and its associated businesses.

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Under the new structure, current Etihad Airways chief executive James Hogan will step away from the day-to-day stewardship of the airline to spearhead the wider Etihad Aviation Group as its president and chief executive.

Hogan said the structural changes and new appointments would “ensure that we have a unified approach that links all parts of the group and provides wider strategic direction to deliver success”.

“The new management structure will enable us to maximise opportunities for growth, revenue generation and cost control on a much bigger scale so that the Etihad Aviation Group continues to deliver to its fullest potential and for the benefit of its guests, employees and suppliers,” Hogan said.

Under the Australian-born Hogan will be the group’s chief financial officer James Rigney, group chief strategy and planning officer Kevin Knight, group chief people and performance officer Ray Gammell and group chief information and technology officer Robert Webb.

Etihad Aviation Group executives would provide “leadership, governance and strategic direction in their expert areas” across all companies in the group.

“This has been driven by the formation of new companies, including Etihad Airways Engineering, Etihad Global Cargo Management Company, the Global Loyalty Company, Hala Abu Dhabi, and Etihad Airport Services,” Al Mazrouei said in a statement on Sunday.

“The acquisition of minority equity stakes in Alitalia, airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Etihad Regional operated by Darwin Airline, Jet Airways, and Virgin Australia, has also necessitated the need for a dedicated team to manage our shareholding, and the delivery of wide-ranging synergies that are beneficial to all parties.”

Replacing Hogan as Etihad Airways chief executive will be the airline’s current chief financial officer Peter Baumgartner.

Elsewhere, Bruno Matheu was named the chief executive of Airline Equity Partners, which covers the group’s partnerships and equity stakes in various airlines. Matheu is Etihad’s representative on the Virgin Australia board. Etihad holds a 25.1 per cent stake in Virgin.

Etihad’s full year financial results published in April showed about 30 per cent of all passengers travelling on its aircraft were from its codeshare and alliance partnerships with other carriers. Further, partnerships generated US$1.4 billion in revenue in calendar 2015, representing about 16 per cent of the company’s total revenue of US$9.02 billion.

Etihad Airways Engineering will be led by Jeff Wilkinson as its chief executive.

A new entity, Hala Group, has been established covering Etihad’s travel and hospitality businesses, with the chief executive to be named at a later date.

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