



Australian Government
International Air Services Commission

DETERMINATION

Determination: [2026] IASC 102
The Route: Solomon Islands
The Applicant: Qantas Airways Limited
(ABN 16 009 661 901)
Public Register File: IASC/APP/202606

The Commission makes a determination allocating to Qantas Airways Limited 97 seats per week in each direction, to be operated on the Solomon Islands route. The determination is valid for five years from 13 March 2026.

1. The application

1.1 On 23 January 2026, Qantas Airways Limited (Qantas) applied to the International Air Services Commission (the Commission) for an allocation of 97 seats per week on the Solomon Islands route. It is planned that Qantas will utilise the capacity to operate an additional service between Brisbane and Honiara from 29 March 2026, using Embraer E190 aircraft configured with 97 seats operated under a wet lease agreement with Alliance Airlines.

1.2 Qantas has requested the capacity allocation on the following basis:

- the allocation is requested for a period of five years from the date of the determination; and
- the capacity will be fully utilised by 30 June 2026.

1.3 In accordance with section 12 of the *International Air Services Commission Act 1992* (the Act), on 23 January 2026, the Commission published Qantas' application on the Commission's website inviting other applications for capacity on the Solomon Islands route. No other applications were received.

1.4 The Commission received one submission¹ from Solomon Airlines on 4 February 2026 opposing the application sought by Qantas. Qantas was offered an opportunity to provide a response to the submission but declined.

1.5 All non-confidential material supplied by the applicant and submitters is available on the Commission's website (www.iasc.gov.au).

¹ [Solomon Airlines Submission](#) – 4 February 2026

2. Air services arrangements

2.1 Paragraph 7(2)(aa) of the Act provides that the Commission must not allocate available capacity contrary to any restrictions on capacity contained in a bilateral arrangement(s).

2.2 According to the Register of Available Capacity, there are 1,612 seats per week available for allocation to Australian designated airlines to operate passenger services between the Solomon Islands and the following points in Australia: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and/or Perth.

2.3 Under the Australia-Solomon Islands air services arrangements, Australian designated airlines shall have the right, over all or any part of their route, to enter into code share, blocked space or other cooperative marketing arrangements, as the marketing and/or operating airlines, including with any other third-party airline.

3. Commission's consideration

3.1 Subsection 12(3) of the Act allows any person to apply to the Commission for a determination allocating capacity to enable an Australian carrier to operate international air services.

3.2 Currently, Qantas has a total capacity allocation on the Solomon Islands route of 388 seats of passenger capacity allocated under Determinations [2023] IASC 121 (as varied²) and [2024] IASC 109. Qantas is seeking the allocation of 97 seats per week to operate one additional weekly service between Brisbane and Honiara (vv.). The Commission notes that no other Australian carrier currently operates services between Australia and the Solomon Islands.

3.3 Subsection 7(1) of the Act empowers the Commission to make a determination allocating available capacity. Subsection 7(2) requires, in part, that the Commission's determination must not allocate capacity unless the Commission is satisfied that the allocation would be of benefit to the public and would not be contrary to any restrictions on capacity contained in bilateral arrangements, or combination of bilateral arrangements.

3.4 Further, subsection 7(3) of the Act provides that in assessing the benefit to the public of an allocation of capacity, the Commission must apply the criteria set out in the policy statements made by the Minister pursuant to section 11 of the Act.

3.5 Pursuant to section 11 of the Act, the Minister issued the International Air Services Commission Policy Statement 2018 (the Policy Statement) which came into effect on 28 March 2018. The Policy Statement sets out the criteria which the Commission is required to apply in assessing the benefit to the public of allocations of capacity.

² Varied by [Decision \[2023\] IASC 216](#)

3.6 The Commission notes that there are no other applicants seeking capacity on the route and that it has received one submission in opposition to the application.

3.7 Section 12 of the Policy Statement provides, in part, that in circumstances where there is one or more applicants and sufficient available capacity, and the Commission receives any submission, subsection 12(3) applies. Under subsection 12(3), in circumstances such as this one, in assessing the benefit to the public of an allocation of available capacity under a proposed determination, the Commission is to have regard to the ‘reasonable capability criterion’ in section 8 of the Policy Statement; and may have regard to any of the ‘additional criteria’ in section 9 of the Policy Statement that it considers to be relevant.

3.8 Additionally, section 6 of the Policy Statement provides that the Commission is to perform its functions in a way that will achieve the object of the IASC Act, that is, to enhance the welfare of Australians by promoting economic efficiency through competition in the provision of international air services by Australian carriers.

3.9 Under the reasonable capability criterion in section 8 of the Policy Statement, the Commission is required to assess the extent to which all Australian carriers that are, or would be permitted to use the capacity allocated under a determination are reasonably capable of: (a) obtaining any licences, permits or other approvals required to operate on and service the route to which the determination relates; and (b) using the capacity allocated under the determination.

3.10 The Commission notes that Qantas is an established international carrier which currently operates scheduled international services between Australia and several international destinations. Accordingly, the Commission has concluded that Qantas satisfies the criteria under section 8.

3.11 The Commission notes the opposing submission received from Solomon Airlines, which outlines several concerns regarding the competitive dynamics on the Brisbane–Honiara route. In particular, Solomon Airlines submits that overall demand on the route is declining, that any additional services would merely redistribute existing passengers rather than stimulate growth, and that Qantas’ services largely mirror the schedule and timings operated by Solomon Airlines. The submission also suggests that the proposed increase in Qantas services amounts to an attempt to introduce excess capacity with the effect of weakening or displacing Solomon Airlines. Solomon Airlines further argues that Qantas’ stronger brand presence, frequent flyer program and access to government and corporate travel contracts attract higher-yielding passengers on the route, thereby reducing Solomon Airlines’ financial sustainability.

3.12 On 13 February 2026, the Commission wrote to Qantas to ask whether or not the carrier wished to respond to Solomon Airlines’ submission. On 13 February 2026 Qantas confirmed that the carrier would not lodge a submission in response.

3.13 As previously noted, subsection 12(3) specifies that in assessing the benefit to the public of an allocation of available capacity under a proposed determination, the Commission may have regard to any of the ‘additional criteria’ in section 9 of the Policy Statement that it considers to be relevant.

3.14 The Commission notes that the issues raised by Solomon Airlines in its opposing submission relate to competition. Solomon Airlines has raised concerns that Qantas' proposed capacity allocation may affect the competitive dynamics on the Australia–Solomon Islands route and potentially influence the balance of opportunities available to each carrier.

3.15 The Commission notes the competition criteria that may be considered under section 9 of the Policy Statement that may be relevant in this case are: (a) the desirability of fostering an environment in which Australian carriers can effectively compete with each other and with foreign carriers on the route in question; (b) the number of carriers operating on the route in question and the existing distribution of capacity among Australian carriers; and (c) the likely impact on consumers of the proposed allocation, including on costs of airfares, customer choice, product differentiation, stimulation of innovation by incumbent carriers, and frequency of service.

3.16 The Commission notes that it is required to assess Australian public benefit and competition outcomes. The Commission has considered issues raised by Solomon Airlines that are relevant to the object of the IASC Act, in order to assess the applicability of the additional public benefit criteria in section 9 of the Policy Statement relating to competition.

3.17 While the Commission acknowledges the concerns raised by Solomon Airlines regarding commercial impacts, the Commission considers that these primarily relate to the effect of increased competition on Solomon Airlines' own commercial operations, rather than any demonstrable detriment to Australian public benefit. Under the Act and the Policy Statement, the Commission is required to assess Australian public benefit, consistent with the object of the Act to enhance economic efficiency through competition.

3.18 Solomon Airlines submits that there is no increase in schedule choice for travellers with both carriers operating the same days and in general the same timings.

3.19 The Commission notes that only Qantas and Solomon Airlines operate direct services on the Australia-Solomon Islands route in the Northern Winter 2025-26 IATA scheduling season³:

Brisbane – Honiara (non-stop)

| Carrier | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Qantas | 10:05am – 14:15pm | 11:30am – 15:45pm * | 10:05am – 14:15pm | - | 10:05am – 14:15pm | - | 10:05am – 14:15pm |
| Solomon Airlines | 09:05am – 13:25pm | - | 09:05am – 13:25pm | - | - | 08:00am – 12:20pm | - |

³ Sourced from flightconnections.com (Brisbane-Honiara vv, March 2026). The service highlighted in red is subject to the application before the Commission.

Honiara – Brisbane (non-stop)

| Carrier | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|
| Qantas | 15:15pm | 16:45pm | 15:15pm | | 15:15pm | | 15:15pm |
| | – 17:35pm | – 19:00pm * | – 17:35pm | - | – 17:35pm | - | – 17:35pm |
| Solomon Airlines | 14:25pm | | 14:25pm | | 15:35pm | | 11:20am |
| | – 16:40pm | - | – 16:40pm | - | – 17:50pm | | – 13:35pm |

3.20 The Commission notes the following changes to flight schedules for the Northern Summer 2026 IATA scheduling season⁴:

Brisbane – Honiara (non-stop)

| Carrier | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Qantas | 11:30am | 11:30am | 11:30am | | 11:30am | | 11:30am |
| | – 15:45pm | – 15:45pm | – 15:45pm | - | – 15:45pm | - | – 15:45pm |
| Solomon Airlines | 09:00am | | 09:00am | | | 08:30am | |
| | – 13:20pm | - | – 13:20pm | - | - | – 12:50pm | - |

Honiara – Brisbane (non-stop)

| Carrier | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|
| Qantas | 16:45pm | 16:45pm | 16:45pm | | 16:45pm | | 16:45pm |
| | – 19:00pm | – 19:00pm | – 19:00pm | - | – 19:00pm | - | – 19:00pm |
| Solomon Airlines | 15:20pm | | 14:20pm | | 15:45pm | | 11:20am |
| | – 17:35pm | - | – 16:35pm | - | – 18:00pm | | – 13:35pm |

3.21 Solomon Airlines also operates one weekly service between Brisbane and Munda.

3.22 The Commission notes that both Qantas and Solomon Airlines currently operate services on two overlapping days per week between Brisbane and Honiara, and four overlapping days per week between Honiara and Brisbane. Both carriers also offer an additional service on different days between Brisbane and Honiara. The route is serviced by two operators, each able to compete on scheduling, pricing, product offering, and other commercial dimensions.

3.23 The Commission notes that Qantas’ additional service is proposed on a day not currently served by either carrier, thereby expanding schedule choice and frequency.

⁴ Sourced from Flightconnections.com (Brisbane-Honiara vv April 2026). Subject to regulatory approval. The service highlighted in red is subject to the application before the Commission.

3.24 The Commission notes that consumer demand is a key driver of airline schedules. Further, the Commission considers that capacity expansion is generally consistent with promoting competition and enhancing public benefit. The introduction of additional frequency on a route is expected to increase consumer choice by improving scheduling options, and may place downward pressure on airfares, as well as stimulating additional passenger traffic.

3.25 The Commission considers that the increase in services supports competitive market conditions and aligns with the object of the Act to enhance economic efficiency through competition.

3.26 The Commission concludes that consumers are likely to benefit from increased frequency and choice, and competitive pricing as a result of the additional capacity on the route.

3.27 The Commission is satisfied that asking Qantas to address additional criteria under Section 9 of the Policy Statement in response to the opposing submission is not necessary to assist the Commission's assessment and decision-making in relation to the allocation of capacity.

3.28 For the reasons set out above, the Commission is satisfied that the allocation of capacity as requested by Qantas would be of benefit to the public. The Commission has decided to allocate the capacity as requested by Qantas.

3.29 Subsection 15(1) of the Act empowers the Commission to include such terms and conditions as it thinks fit. The Commission has decided to issue this determination subject to the conditions set out in Item 4 below.

3.30 Paragraph 15(2)(a) of the Act requires a determination to specify the period during which it is to be in force. Subsection 15(3) of the Act effectively provides that if the Minister's Policy Statement sets out how the period of validity of the determination is to be fixed, then the period of validity is as so fixed. In any other case, an interim determination is to be in force for three years while a determination that is not an interim determination is to be in force for five years.

3.31 Section 20 of the Policy Statement sets out how the Commission is to fix the period during which a determination is to be in force. The Commission considers that this application is within the scope of subsection 20(4) and has decided that this Determination is to be in force for a period of five years.

4. Determination allocating capacity on the Solomon Islands route to Qantas Airways Limited ([2026] IASC 102)

4.1 In accordance with section 7 of the Act, the Commission makes a determination in favour of Qantas Airways Limited, allocating 97 seats of passenger capacity per week in each direction on the Solomon Islands route, in accordance with the Australia-Solomon Islands air services arrangements.

4.2 The Determination is valid for five years from 13 March 2026.

4.3 The Determination is subject to the following conditions:

- a) Qantas Airways Limited is required to fully utilise the capacity by no later than 30 June 2026.
- b) Only Qantas Airways Limited is permitted to utilise the capacity.
- c) Qantas Airways Limited is not permitted to utilise the capacity to provide services jointly with another Australian carrier or any other person unless approved by the Commission.
- d) Qantas Airways Limited is permitted to utilise the capacity to operate services on the route in accordance with the ACMI agreement between Qantas Airways Limited and Alliance Airlines Pty Limited dated 22 February 2023.
- e) Changes in relation to the ownership and control of Qantas Airways Limited are permitted except to the extent that any change:
 - results in the designation of Qantas Airways Limited as an Australian carrier under the Australia-Solomon Islands air services arrangements being withdrawn; or
 - has the effect that another Australian carrier, or a person (or group of persons) having substantial ownership or effective control of another Australian carrier, would take substantial ownership of Qantas Airways Limited or be in a position to exercise effective control of the airline, without the prior consent of the Commission.

Dated: 13 March 2026



GENEVIEVE BUTLER
Chairperson



JANE MCKEON
Commissioner