



Australian Government

International Air Services Commission

RESOLUTION

Resolution: [2022] IASC R01
Determination: [2019] IASC 126
The Route: Tonga
The Applicant: Virgin Australia International Airlines Pty Ltd
(ABN 63 125 580 823)
Public register file: IASC/APP/202219

On 29 November 2019, the International Air Services Commission (the Commission) issued Determination [2019] IASC 126 (the Determination) allocating to Virgin Australia International Airlines Pty Ltd (Virgin Australia) 360 seats per week of capacity in each direction on the Tonga route. The Determination is subject to certain conditions, including the requirement for the capacity to be utilised from no later than 31 December 2020, or such other date approved by the Commission.

On 23 June 2022, Virgin Australia wrote to the Commission seeking an extension of the date for utilisation of the capacity from 31 December 2020 to 30 June 2023. As part of its application, Virgin Australia indicated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic impacts, including travel restrictions put in place by the Kingdom of Tonga in March 2020, Virgin Australia was not able to commence these services as originally planned.

In its application, Virgin Australia noted that due to border restrictions and an expected slow return in commercial demand at the potential easing of travel restrictions, the airline plans to recommence its Tonga services in the Northern Summer 2023 season.

The Commission notes that COVID-19 preventative measures and restrictions are still in effect in most countries within the Asia Pacific region, impacting airlines' international operations and consumer demand. Only citizens and permanent residents of Tonga are allowed to enter Tonga at this time, while international travellers with an approval from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can also enter. All international travellers are subject to five-day quarantine requirements upon arrival. Community restrictions, such as curfews and social distancing, remain in place.

The Commission notes Australian Government travel advice recommends travellers reconsider their need to travel to Tonga due to the impacts of COVID-19.

In light of these extraordinary circumstances and a lack of certainty as to when travel restrictions will be lifted by the Kingdom of Tonga, the Commission issues Resolution [2022]

IASC R01 to provide that the capacity issued under Determination [2019] IASC 126 is to be utilised from no later than 26 March 2023 (the start of the Northern Summer 2023 season), or such other date approved by the Commission.

The Commission will continue to monitor the airline's ability to fully utilise the capacity on the route.

Dated: 08 July 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Genevieve Butler". The script is cursive and fluid.

GENEVIEVE BUTLER
Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane McKeon". The script is cursive and fluid.

JANE MCKEON
Commissioner