



Australian Government
International Air Services Commission

RENEWAL DETERMINATION

Determination:	[2025] IASC 116
Renewal of:	[2015] IASC 108
The Route:	United Kingdom
The Applicant:	Qantas Airways Limited (ABN 16 009 661 901)
Public Register File:	IASC/APP/202529

The Commission makes a fresh determination allocating to Qantas Airways Limited unlimited capacity and frequency on the United Kingdom route, subject to certain conditions. The determination is valid for 99 years from 1 September 2026.

1 The application

1.1 On 4 September 2015, the International Air Services Commission (the Commission) issued Determination [2015] IASC 108 (the Determination), allocating, in favour of Qantas Airways Limited (Qantas), unlimited capacity and frequency on the United Kingdom route.

1.2 Section 17 of the International Air Services Commission Act 1992 (the Act) requires the Commission to start its consideration of the renewal of a determination at least 12 months before the expiry of the original determination. The original Determination is due to expire on 31 August 2026. In view of this, the Commission sent, on 1 September 2025, a letter to Qantas inviting it to apply for renewal if it wished to renew the Determination.

1.3 On 2 October 2025, Qantas applied to the Commission for a renewal of the Determination for a further 99-year period from 1 September 2026, including conditions permitting Qantas to utilise the capacity to provide joint services with any wholly-owned subsidiary of the Qantas Group and by any wholly-owned subsidiary of the Qantas Group to provide joint services with Qantas.

1.4 As required by sections 12 and 17 of the Act, the Commission published, on 3 October 2025 a notice on its website and subsequently sent a notification by email to stakeholders inviting other applications for capacity on the route. No other applications were received.

1.5 On 6 November 2025 Qantas clarified that as part of its renewal application the carrier wishes to retain the following conditions:

- only Qantas or another Australian carrier which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Qantas is permitted to utilise the capacity; and
- the capacity may be used by Qantas to provide joint services with any wholly-owned subsidiary and by any wholly-owned subsidiary of the Qantas Group to provide joint services with Qantas.

1.6 All non-confidential material supplied by the applicant is available on the Commission's website.

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). Any variation made to an existing allocation of capacity should also not be contrary to any restrictions on capacity contained in a bilateral arrangement(s).

2.2 Under the Australia-United Kingdom air services arrangements, Australian designated carriers may determine the frequency and capacity of services operated.

3 Commission's consideration

3.1 Section 8 of the Act provides that the Commission may, at any time while a determination is in force, make a fresh determination allocating the capacity to which the original determination relates. Subsection 8(2) provides in part that the fresh determination must make the same allocation of capacity as the original determination unless the Commission is satisfied that the allocation is no longer of benefit to the public.

3.2 In assessing the benefit to the public of an allocation of capacity, the Commission must apply the criteria set out for that purpose in the policy statement made by the Minister under section 11 of the Act.

3.3 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.

3.4 Section 14 of the Policy Statement applies where the Commission is proposing to make a fresh determination under section 8 of the Act, and is considering whether the allocation of capacity in the original determination is no longer of benefit to the public for the purpose of section 8(2)(a)(i) of the Act. Section 14(2) of the Policy Statement provides that, without limiting the matters to which the Commission may have regard, an allocation is generally no longer of benefit to the public if:

- the carrier has failed to service the route effectively (s 14(2)(a)); and
- there are other applications for some or all of the capacity (s 14(2)(b)); and
- the Commission is satisfied that a different allocation of capacity would be of greater benefit to the public, having regard to the criteria set out in sections 8 and 9 of the Policy Statement (s 14(2)(c)).

3.5 The Commission notes that, under subsection 14(2) of the Policy Statement, an allocation will generally no longer be of benefit to the public where all of the above conditions are satisfied.

3.6 There are no other applications for some or all of the capacity to which the determination in question relates, and therefore the condition in section 14(2)(b) of the Policy Statement is not satisfied. The Commission therefore finds that the proposed allocation does not fall within the class of allocations that are generally no longer of benefit to the public contemplated by subsection 14(2) of the Policy Statement.

3.7 However, subsection 14(2) of the Policy Statement operates 'without limiting the matters to which the Commission may have regard'. In view of the circumstances pertaining

to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has proceeded to consider whether the allocation is no longer of benefit to the public in all the circumstances.

3.8 On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic. In response, the Australian Government introduced a range of health, financial and other measures to prevent and minimise the transmission of COVID-19.

3.9 In this context, on 24 March 2020 the Prime Minister announced that the Australian Government was introducing a ‘do not travel’ ban on Australians travelling overseas under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. On 27 October 2021, the Government announced it would lift the international travel ban for certain categories of travellers from 1 November 2021, subject to certain conditions. On 7 February 2022, the Prime Minister announced that Australian international borders would re-open from 21 February 2022.

3.10 With the imposition of travel restrictions in March 2020, Qantas suspended its scheduled international flights in 2020-21.

3.11 In assessing the current Qantas application for the renewal of the Determination, the Commission considered whether the carrier has failed to service the route effectively.

3.12 Until travel restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic were imposed by the Australian Government in March 2020, Qantas operated regular services between points in Australia and the United Kingdom. Prior to March 2020, there was no information to suggest that Qantas has failed to service the Australia-United Kingdom route effectively.

3.13 The Commission considers that the temporary suspension in 2020-21 of Qantas’ services between Australia and the United Kingdom was directly in response to travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission therefore finds that the temporary suspension of the Qantas’ services in these circumstances does not mean that Qantas has failed to service the route effectively. Moreover, the Commission notes that since November 2021¹ Qantas has resumed offering regular scheduled services between points in Australia and the United Kingdom.

3.14 The Commission has also considered the ‘reasonable capability criterion’ in section 8 of the Policy Statement, i.e. 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.

3.15 The Commission notes that Qantas is an established carrier that currently operates scheduled international services between Australia and several international points, including the United Kingdom. The Commission therefore finds that the carrier is reasonably capable of obtaining the necessary regulatory approvals and of using the capacity allocated on the Australia-United Kingdom route.

3.16 Based on its findings above, the Commission is not satisfied that the allocation of capacity in the original determination is no longer of benefit to the public for the purposes of section 8(2)(a)(i) of the Act. Therefore, the Commission is required to make the same allocation of capacity as the original determination (see section 8(2)(a) of the Act).

¹ [QANTAS BRINGS FORWARD INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS TO 1 NOVEMBER](#)

3.17 The Commission will continue to monitor the utilisation of capacity by Qantas on this route.

3.18 As part of its application, Qantas has requested to retain conditions permitting:

- Qantas or another Australian carrier which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Qantas to utilise the capacity; and
- Qantas to utilise the capacity to provide joint services with any wholly-owned subsidiary of the Qantas Group and by any wholly-owned subsidiary of the Qantas Group to provide joint services with Qantas.

3.19 Under section 19 of the Act, the Commission “must include the same terms and conditions as the original determination to which it relates”(subsection 19(1)(c)), but “may make such changes (if any) to the terms and conditions included in the original determination (including adding or deleting terms and conditions) as it is satisfied that are warranted because of changes in circumstances since the original determination was made” (subsection 19(3)).

3.20 The Commission has decided to issue this determination subject to the conditions set out in item 4 below.

4 Determination [2025] IASC 116 allocating capacity on the United Kingdom route to Qantas Airways Limited

4.1 In accordance with section 8 of the Act, the Commission makes a fresh determination in favour of Qantas Airways Limited, allocating unlimited capacity and frequency, in each direction on the United Kingdom route, in accordance with the Australia – United Kingdom air services arrangements.

4.2 The determination is valid for 99 years from 1 September 2026.

4.3 The determination is subject to the following conditions:

- a) Qantas Airways Limited is required to fully utilise the capacity from the date the determination comes into effect or from such other date approved by the Commission.
- b) The capacity may be utilised by:
 - Qantas Airways Limited; or
 - such other wholly-owned subsidiary of Qantas Airways Limited that the Commission approves in writing, as long as it remains a wholly-owned subsidiary of Qantas Airways Limited.
- c) Neither Qantas Airways Limited or its wholly-owned subsidiary are permitted to utilise the capacity to provide code share or joint services with another carrier or any other person unless approved by the Commission.
- d) Subject to the preceding condition, the capacity may be used by Qantas Airways Limited to provide joint services with any wholly-owned subsidiary of the Qantas Group, and by any wholly-owned subsidiary of the Qantas Group to provide joint services with Qantas Airways Limited.
- 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 the airline as an Australian carrier under the Australia – United Kingdom 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 Qantas Airways Limited without the prior consent of the Commission.

Dated: 7 November 2025



Genevieve Butler – Chairperson



Jane McKeon - Commissioner