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Ms Jasmina Ackar  
Director  
International Air Services Commission  
CANBERRA ACT

21 January 2025

By email: [contact@iasc.gov.au](mailto:contact@iasc.gov.au)

Dear Ms Ackar

### Response to public submissions

Thank you for the invitation for Virgin Australia International Airlines Pty Ltd (**Virgin Australia**) to respond to submissions following the IASC's recent request for public submissions, which has now closed, regarding Virgin Australia's application for capacity on the Australia – Qatar route.

Virgin Australia welcomes and appreciates the support conveyed for our planned Qatar services in submissions made to the IASC. We believe that the strong support from stakeholders across the aviation, tourism, and business communities underlines the broad benefit that will result from Virgin Australia's proposed 28 weekly return services between Australia and Qatar if Virgin Australia's application is granted.

Published stakeholder submissions strongly support the application, citing:

- the likelihood the new services will enhance competition in airline markets (both internationally and domestically), lowering concentration levels in relation to services between Australia and the Middle East and addressing capacity shortages;
- improved connectivity to destinations in EMEA through the Doha hub with increased capacity, greater choice and schedule flexibility for travellers;
- greater travel opportunities for regional Australian communities, including comments on the benefit of inbound tourism throughout Queensland and increased connectivity to Canberra and Southern NSW; and
- expanded tourism opportunities and expanded freight capacity for exporters.

This positive stakeholder support builds on the IASC's earlier 3 December 2024 invitation to stakeholders for capacity on the Australia-Qatar route, in response to which there were no competing applications. It also builds upon the ACCC's 29 November 2024 decision to grant interim authorisation for a proposed integrated alliance between Virgin Australia and Qatar Airways Group. The ACCC's Draft Determination is expected in early February 2025.

In summary, Virgin Australia's application for capacity was not contested, interim approval from the ACCC allowed sale of the planned flights to commence (which is now underway), and supportive public responses have been received following the IASC's calls for comment. For the reasons outlined in its application and submissions to the IASC, Virgin Australia believes that it meets the reasonable capability criteria for such an application and would therefore welcome the earliest possible decision by the IASC to approve its application for capacity on the Australia-Qatar route.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. D. Bennett', with a small dot at the end.

**Christian D. Bennett**  
Chief Corporate Affairs & Sustainability Officer