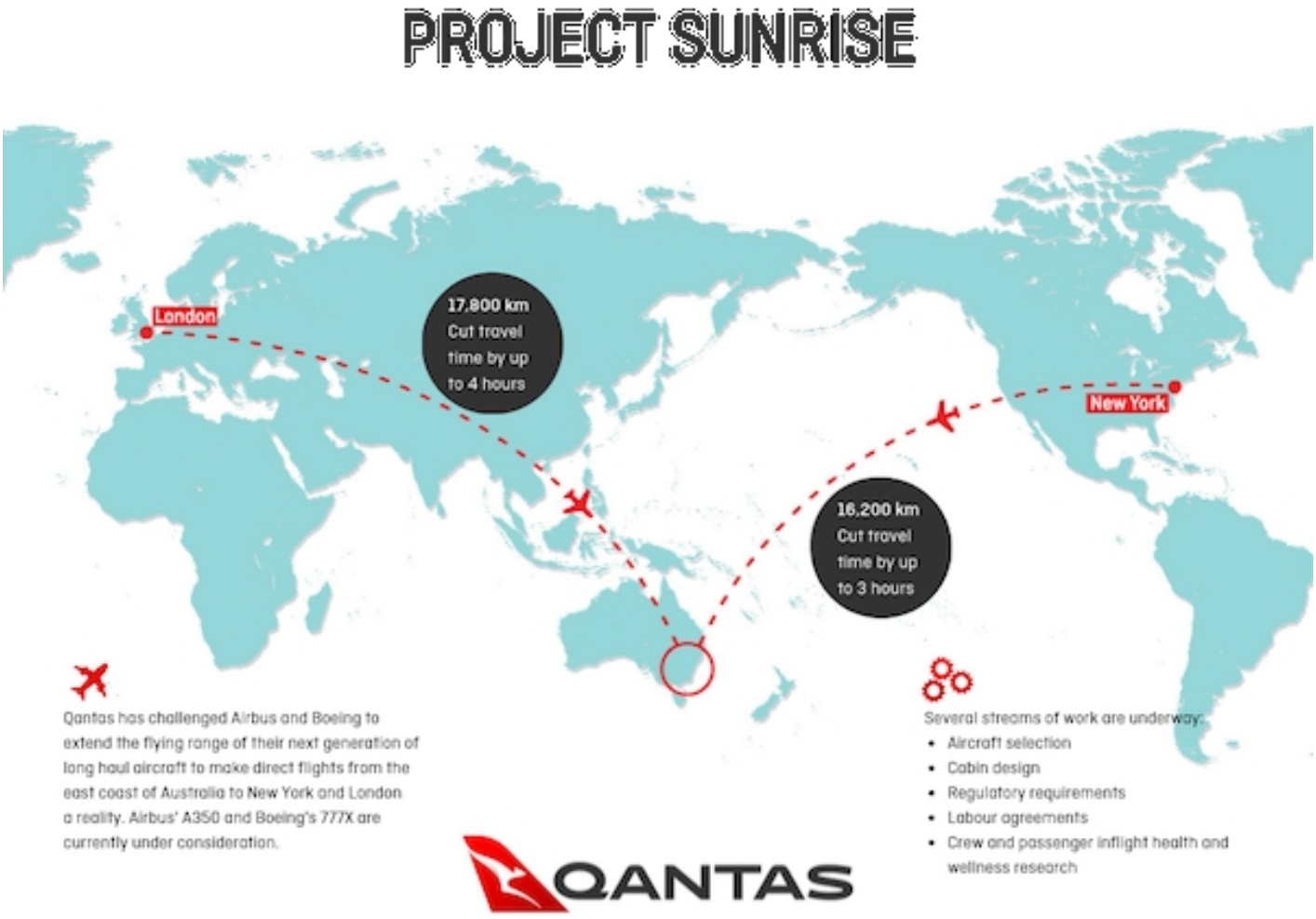
QANTAS FIRST PROJECT SUNRISE NEW YORK TO SYDNEY NON-STOP RESEARCH FLIGHT

News / Airlines



Qantas Flight 7879, with 50 passengers and crew on board, will depart New York's John F Kennedy Airport at 9pm New York as the first commercial airline to fly non-stop between New York and Sydney.

The 787-9 aircraft has been positioned to New York after being delivered from the Boeing factory in Seattle. After the research flight is complete, it will enter normal commercial service with Qantas.

The purpose of the record-breaking flight is to conduct scientific research on passengers and crew on an ultra-long haul flight, with the aim of increasing health and wellness, minimising jetlag and identifying optimum crew rest and work periods.

It is part of Qantas' ongoing quest to launch commercial flights between the east coast of Australia (Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane) and New York and London. The direct flights would save passengers up to four hours in total travel time and follow the successful Perth-London route, which started in March 2018 and is the only direct link between Australia and Europe.

While not designed for the 16,200 kilometre (10,200 mile) journey from New York to Sydney, the 787-9 being used for today's research flight will take off with maximum fuel and a restricted passenger and baggage load (and no cargo) to allow the aircraft to operate the flight non-stop. All carbon emissions from this flight, and two additional research flights from New York and London to Sydney in November and December, will be offset.

Airbus and Boeing have pitched aircraft (the A350 and 777X respectively) with the range to operate Project Sunrise flights on a commercial basis. These pitches, together with findings from the research flights and other streams of work, will form part of a business case being developed by Qantas to inform a final yes/no decision on Project Sunrise expected by the end of this year. If approved, flights would start in 2022/23.

Qantas has named its endeavor "Project Sunrise" after the airline's historic 'Double Sunrise' endurance flights during the Second World War, which remained airborne long enough to see two sunrises.

Fast Facts

– QF 7879 non-stop flight from New York to Sydney will take around 19-and-a-half hours subject to wind and weather conditions on the day. Distance between New York and Sydney is 16,200 kilometres. This compares to a travel time of 22 hours and 20 minutes on the current New York to Sydney via Los Angeles flight.

– The flight will be operated by a brand new Boeing 787-9, registration VH ZNI, named "Kookaburra"

– Months of flight planning has gone in to determining the optimum flight path, including running daily plans to establish wind and weather patterns

– Four pilots will be on rotation throughout the flight. Two additional pilots will be in the cabin, having flown the aircraft to New York. Total flight hour experience on the aircraft is 67,000.

– The aircraft will operate with a maximum fuel load of approx. 101,000kg. Projected fuel remaining upon landing is approximately 6,000kg which translates to about 90 minutes of flight time.

– Maximum take-off weight for a 787-9 is 254,000kg. QF 7879 JFK to SYD will depart at 233,000kg take-off weight with the same amount of fuel 101,000kg that Qantas departs Perth to London flights with.

– Nearly half of the aircraft weight on take-off is fuel. The other is aircraft, passengers and bags.

– Flight will travel at 85% the speed of sound which is around 930 kilometres an hour. Cruising altitude will start at 36,000 feet for the first few hours and then as the aircraft weight reduces with fuel burn, the cruising altitude will increase to 40,000 feet.

– Pantry galley weight will be 1,500kg’s (food, trolleys etc.)

Findings on crew wellbeing will be shared with the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority to help inform regulatory requirements associated with ultra-long-haul flights over 20 hours.

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