VIRGIN DISMISSES QANTAS'S CONCERNS ON TIGERAIR BALI FLIGHTS

News / Airlines

Virgin Australia has dismissed **Qantas's** request for more information regarding its application to the International Air Services Commission (IASC) for capacity for its wholly-owned subsidiary **Tigerair** Australia to fly to **Bali**.

Tigerair plans to begin services to Bali from Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne from March 2016, taking over routes that are currently flown by its parent Virgin.

Virgin applied to the IASC in early September seeking to vary its capacity allocation to Indonesia to facilitate the transfer of the three routes from Virgin Australia International Airlines (VAI) to its low-cost unit.

However, Qantas said in a submission to the IASC "questions remain about the basis upon which the VAI subsidiary can meet the various requirements necessary to utilise an allocation of capacity".

"Clarification and support for the assertion that the unnamed subsidiary is actually an "Australian carrier" and that it is reasonably likely to obtain the necessary approvals and licences to operate the relevant capacity is necessary for a complete assessment of the application to be made," Qantas said in its submission dated September 17.

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In a response to Qantas's submission, Virgin said its application complied with all necessary requirements under the relevant legislation.

Virgin Australia group executive for government relations Jane McKeon said Qantas's submission showed an apparent "lack of understanding of both the relevant legislative framework and the respective roles and responsibilities of the Commission and the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development".

"There is no requirement in the Commission's legislative framework that compels such applications to disclose the name of the wholly-owned subsidiary/subsidiaries for which flexibility in relation to the use of the capacity has been sought," McKeon said in Virgin's submission, dated September 22.

"In this case, the capacity will be utilised by Tigerair for the operation of services between points in Australia and Denpasar, as the Commission is well aware."

Virgin also criticised the IASC for accepting Qantas's submission apparently after the deadline for submissions had passed.

"It remains unclear to Virgin Australia why the Commission decided to accept Qantas's submission of 17 September instead of proceeding directly to make a decision on 14 September, given Qantas's failure to lodge a notice of intention to lodge a submission by 5pm on 11 September," Virgin said.

"It would also seem that compliance with the Commission's published procedures is optional.

"Virgin Australia expects that the Commission will conclude its assessment of our applications and issue its decisions in relation to these matters without further delay."

Qantas plans to operate seasonal services from Sydney to Bali over summer, while its low-cost unit Jetstar flies to the popular Indonesian holiday destination from various points in Australia.

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