

Air Vanuatu Begins Port Vila-Melbourne Flights

Air Vanuatu has added a third Australian destination to its route network with the start of nonstop flights to Melbourne from its Port Vila hub.

The inaugural service, operated by Boeing 737-800 YJ-AV8, touched down at Tullamarine a little after 2000 local time on Wednesday, some four and a half hours after taking off from Port Vila's Bauerfield Airport as NF8.

The aircraft was on the ground overnight before taking off as the reciprocal NF7 bound for Port Vila a little before 0730 on Thursday.

Air Vanuatu has scheduled three flights a week to Melbourne, with departures from Port Vila on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

PORT VILA WILL BE MELBOURNE'S TULLAMARINE'S SIXTH DESTINATION IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC ALONGSIDE:

- Auckland and Christchurch (Air New Zealand, Jetstar, Qantas and Virgin Australia),
- Nadi (Fiji Airways and Virgin Australia),
- Noumea (Aircalin),
- Queenstown (Air New Zealand, Jetstar and Virgin Australia) and
- Wellington (Air New Zealand, Qantas and Singapore Airlines).



Air Vanuatu Boeing 737-800 at the Melbourne Airport on June 20, 2019.

The return service operates on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. It will be the only carrier on the route.

Melbourne joins Brisbane and Sydney in the airline's Australian network. Qantas codeshares on all Air Vanuatu flights between Australia and Vanuatu.

The only other airline with nonstop flights between Australia and Vanuatu is Virgin Australia, which is on the Brisbane-Port Vila route.

"This new direct morning flight - which has guests arriving to Vanuatu by lunch time - is a great opportunity for Victorian travellers to explore our idyllic island nation and

immerse themselves in the Melanesian spirit from the moment they step on board," Air Vanuatu chief executive Derek Nice said in a statement.

Melbourne Airport chief of aviation David Hall said the new flight would make the South Pacific easier to visit and more affordable for tourists.

"Air Vanuatu not only flies to Port Vila but also links to almost 30 destinations across the Pacific giving jetsetters plenty of options to explore the region's stunning sights," Mr Hall said in a statement.

Source: Australian Aviation

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