



MEDIA RELEASE

Nauru rekindles air links with Norfolk Island

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Nauru's Our Airline (formerly Air Nauru) is set to make a welcome return to the Norfolk Island route, following negotiations which were finalised this week to provide air services for Norfolk Air.

The preparation of contracts between the two airlines and their respective governments are in the final stages and are expected to be signed over the next week.

Under the arrangement, Our Airline will acquire an additional Boeing 737-300 series aircraft which will eventually replace Norfolk Air's current 737-200, thus providing approximately 25% greater seating capacity and up to 50% additional freight carrying capability.

The additional 737-300, to be based on Norfolk Island, is expected to be in service by October and will bear Norfolk Air's livery. In the interim, services will be operated using the Norfolk Air's existing aircraft, with interim services expected to start before the end of this month (April).

Norfolk Island's Minister for Finance, Neville Christian, said the five-year contractual arrangement would bring a host of benefits to both parties.

"The newer generation aircraft will provide more reliable services with onboard state-of-the-art navigational equipment to reduce the likelihood of diversions in poor weather.

"The additional seating and freight capacity, combined with lower fuel burn and extended over-water operational capability means the aircraft will be able to fly the Norfolk to Melbourne route with unrestricted payload.

"This is great news for travelling Norfolk Islanders and tourists coming into Norfolk," Mr. Christian said.

Nauru's Minister for Transport, Sprent Dabwido said the contractual agreement amounted to a resumption of the close relationship Nauru had held for many years under its previous airline, Air Nauru.

“Today, we are in a much better position to provide a completely reliable service with effective flight frequencies rightly expected by the people and the government of Norfolk Island.

“As a joint operation with Norfolk Air, we will have the combined strength to spread our wings, so to speak, with the linking of a wider network and a rapidly growing number of destinations, including Melbourne, Sydney, Newcastle, Coolangatta and Brisbane along with our established routes in the Pacific,” Mr Dabwido said.

The Norfolk Air agreement is the latest in a series of new opportunities for Our Airline, which recently signed an agreement with the Marshall Islands to provide air services between Majuro and Fiji on behalf of Air Marshall Islands.

Special Advisor to the government of Nauru, Manish Sundarjee of Melbourne-based Kidman’s Partners, who helped consummate the Norfolk contract with Norfolk Air CEO, Ewan Wilson, said the agreement was consistent with Our Airline’s projected growth plan.

“It will strengthen Our Airline’s position on key routes in the smaller regions of the Pacific, which have been under-serviced for far too long.

“Our Airline has a number of other exciting projects on the table designed to fill these voids and provide much-needed services to niche destinations in the Pacific” Mr Sundarjee said.

Norfolk Air CEO, Ewan Wilson said it was an exciting time for Norfolk Islanders and the island-based airline,

“The Our Airline – Norfolk Air contract will see a number of additional employment opportunities for Norfolk Islanders.

“Apart from our front-end ground staff, we will also be employing around ten new cabin crew members to accommodate the new services,” Mr Wilson said.

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