Tiger Airways Returns to Alice Springs

Alice Springs Airport this month announced that Tiger Airways will be making a comeback to the Red Centre, resuming flights to Alice Springs from 9th April this year. The airline will be reinstituting its four return services each week from Melbourne, as well as adding a new four times weekly service from Sydney. Alice Springs Airport worked closely with Tourism Minister Matt Conlan and Tourism NT CEO, Tony Mayell to ensure a collaborative approach to securing additional capacity to Alice Springs, and the successful negotiations with Tiger Airways will see close to 150,000 new seats added to the market.

Director of Airline and Airport Services, Jim Parashos is pleased that months of discussions between Alice Springs Airport and Tiger Airways have produced such a positive result for the Alice Springs community and tourism industry. “The resumption of Tiger Airways’ services is great for everyone,” he said. “What our previous research found was that both domestic and international travellers were using Tiger Airways to come to Alice Springs, to use it as a cost effective springboard to explore all of Central Australia. I am sure that tourism operators will be as excited as we are to have them back in town.”

Tiger Airways Australia Commercial Director, Carly Brear, said the news is exciting for consumers, the local economy and the airline. “We’ve been inundated with requests for Tiger’s low cost flights to serve Central Australia, a community that currently lacks low cost options and critically is so heavily reliant on tourism,” said Ms Brear. “The people of Alice Springs will be the first to tell you that they won our recent online voting poll calling for Australians to vote where Tiger should fly to next and today we are announcing not one but two new routes into Alice from Australia’s two largest capital cities. It really is a case of ‘the people have spoken’ and Tiger has responded!”

Alice Springs Airport General Manager, Katie Cooper added, “We are currently in the process of revamping our entire food and beverage offer with a completion date mid-year, and will shortly be upgrading other parts of our retail and airport experience. The timing for Tiger Airways’ resumption could not be better.”

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KATIE COOPER,
General Manager Alice Springs Airport
Here at Northern Territory Airports (NTA) the year has begun how we intend to continue—with a focus on growth, the future, and a growing list of achievements that are a credit to our committed team and strong partnerships.

Following NTA’s successful negotiations to bring Tiger Airways back to Central Australia, preparations are underway for the airline’s flights from Sydney and Melbourne into Alice Springs. The team at Alice Springs Airport are working towards the launch date of 9th April, and NTA is continuing to engage with NT Government and tourism operators to ensure that local industry benefits from the positive impact the new services will have on the region.

In other exciting news this month, Philippine Airlines announced their new daily service to Manila from Darwin. Top End travellers looking to explore the Philippines and beyond now have a regular full-service option available to them, and the daily schedule will benefit the large number of business travellers using the route. We look forward to the new flights beginning in June.

We revealed details of our new food and beverage offerings in late 2012, and construction on the exciting new developments has now begun in Darwin and Alice Springs. The project is a part of our new partnership with Delaware North and is one that will improve the customer experience as people move through each airport; with new spaces, a wider range of choices and offerings that are reflective of each distinct region.

These accomplishments are the first of many that we hope to see in 2013, as we continue to seek out route development opportunities and work to complete our upgrades as soon as possible. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank our terminal users for your patience while the works are in progress—we look forward to sharing the new facilities with you soon.

Please enjoy this first edition of Touchdown for 2013.

IAN KEW
Chief Executive Officer

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**Darwin Welcomes Philippine Airlines**

Philippine Airlines is the latest international carrier to begin services to Darwin, announcing a new daily service between Manila and the Top End. Beginning in June, the new flights are an exciting development for Darwin passengers, providing an extra option for travelling to Manila and allowing for same day domestic connections to other popular destinations such as Thailand, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan and the USA.

DIA welcomes the new flights, which form part of its strategy to develop services in the region and cement Darwin’s status as Australia’s Gateway to Asia.

“This is great news for Territorians, whose options for travelling throughout Asia continue to grow,” said CEO Ian Kew. “Manila and the Philippines are exciting holiday destinations that open up possibilities for NT passengers to explore more of Asia and the world. As we move into the Asian century, our ability to act as a gateway to Asia is as important as ever and is confirmed by moves such as this one from Philippine Airlines.”

The new services are part of a major expansion by Philippine Airlines that will see the new flights to Darwin continue onto Brisbane and Perth.

“Brisbane, Perth and Darwin represent some of the fastest growing sections of the Australian economy and our new Darwin services will allow us to connect all three cities to the growth regions of Asia,” said General Manager of Philippine Airlines’ Australian representative Rakso Australia, Brett McDougall. “Our new flights will serve Australian business travellers, leisure travellers and significant Filipino communities, providing more efficient travel north to the Philippines and beyond.”

Operated by an Airbus A320 aircraft, Philippine Airlines’ new Darwin services will fly direct to Manila each day at 3.00pm. According to Department of Immigration and Citizenship data, the number of passengers travelling between Northern Territory and the Philippines has increased fourfold since 2010, while the number of passengers clearing customs at Darwin Airport en route to the Philippines was close to 50,000 passengers in 2012.
Food and Beverage Upgrades Underway

Works on the upgraded food and beverage facilities at Darwin International Airport and Alice Springs Airport commenced at the beginning of February, with existing stores hoarded off as part of the expansion. The redevelopment will mean an exciting new range of dining options will be on offer to customers of both airports. In Alice Springs, Café Terra Rosa will incorporate a bar and a café and introduce a new look and feel that will appeal to the airport's unique passenger mix. Bumbu is a new concept restaurant that has been developed in collaboration with well-known NT foodie Jimmy Shu, and will open during the first stage of the Darwin upgrade.

Northern Territory Airports Director Airline and Airport Services Jim Parashos said the airport is excited about introducing Bumbu to the market.

“Jimmy Shu has an outstanding reputation in the Northern Territory and we’re pleased that he’ll be working with Delaware North on the Bumbu concept,” he said. “As the Darwin market evolves and we move into the Asian century, it’s imperative that we cater for our diverse passenger mix, especially given that Darwin is Australia’s gateway to Asia and our closest northern neighbour is Indonesia.”

In addition to Bumbu, a Hungry Jacks outlet will also be introduced on the first floor during stage one of the new food and beverage build.

Alice Springs Airport General Manager Katie Cooper said the development of Café Terra Rosa will see a significant capital investment in the entire food and beverage area, modernising the look and feel as well as the menu.

“We’re opening up the front of the café so that ‘meeters and greeters’ can comfortably wait for their family and friends arriving into the terminal whilst at the same time, providing an increased menu option and level of service. We have worked with Delaware North Companies (DNC) to provide three distinct, yet integrated zones within the footprint”, she said.
**Darwin Airport Overnight Transition**

Delaware North Companies was recently appointed as the new food and beverage provider for Darwin International and Alice Springs Airports. An overnight handover between DNC and the previous provider, Spotless Services Australia, was planned for Darwin Airport and occurred throughout the night of 31st January into the morning of 1st February.

The transition was very well planned – both companies assisted each other in the changeover, which meant that all point of sale equipment, EFTPOS units and coffee machines were removed and replaced incredibly quickly. The first outlet to change was Velluto’s Café on the ground floor, following a stocktake and restocking of shelves it was ready to trade again at about 7.30pm. This was followed by the Velluto’s Café in International, which opened to domestic trade when the glass swing doors were opened.

Whilst all this was happening the hoarding was installed around the existing Aroma’s Café, Red Rooster and Fannie Bay Ale House to allow redevelopment to begin. Temporary options were also set up—a temporary café now makes use of the seating area adjacent to Aroma’s Café, and a temporary bar is now positioned directly opposite the top of the escalators.

By 4.00am all hoarding was complete, temporary outlets operational and the existing outlets on the ground floor and in the international departures lounge were all operating as DNC outlets. An awesome effort from everyone involved!

Spotless Services was able to continue the good work done in the transition by making a donation to the local branch of the Salvation Army. “We have enjoyed a wonderful 10 year relationship with NT Airports in both Alice Springs and Darwin and it was fantastic to work closely with Delaware to ensure a smooth transition for the Airport users,” said Paul Hopwood, National Manager Airport Retail Spotless Services. “As part of our handover we wanted to give something back to the local community, so all of our fresh food from the final day, along with the equipment and furniture that was no longer needed, was given to the Salvos to support them in the wonderful work they do for the greater NT community.”

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**Christmas, Alice-Style**

In December last year, the Airport hosted a party to share some Christmas spirit with the other airport-based workers, stakeholders and their families. It turned out that the invitations went as far as the North Pole when Santa himself dropped into Alice Springs Airport and was met by the Aviation rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) team.

They kindly gave him a lift to the party in their large fire truck. Santa’s bubbling laugh and sackful of presents made him an instantly popular figure with the younger (and older!) crowd. There was plenty of fun to be had on the jumping castle, or testing out the skills of the balloon modelling clown. To ensure everyone remained refreshed on a very hot summer’s day, the ice cream van, bar and barbeque were working overtime.

The party was a great way to finish up a very busy 2012 and the Alice Springs Airport team is looking forward to another successful year in 2013.

**Hoarding Doesn’t Always Mean Boring**

As part of the construction work now underway for the new food and beverage concessions in the domestic departure lounge, a great big (and visually dull!) hoarding was installed around the construction zone in late January.

We’ve taken the opportunity to have some fun with this hoarding, working closely with Darwin agency Boab Design to create some exciting new graphics that not only add visual interest to the departure lounge during the construction period, but also communicate to the public the works that are going on as part of the Terminal Expansion Project. The hoarding graphics have also proven helpful as a wayfinding tool, directing passengers to the temporary café that’s now up and running.
Matboerrma Gardens Ceremony in Memory of Darren Hirst

On Saturday, 12 January 2013 a memorial ceremony was held in DIA’s Matboerrma Gardens to celebrate the life of Darren Hirst, a well-known member of Darwin’s aviation community during the 1980s and 90s. Family and friends gathered to pay their respects and be present for the unveiling of a commemorative plaque.

Darwin held a special place in Darren and his family’s life, as he began his aviation career as a Darwin-based fixed wing pilot working for Helimuster Pty Ltd. The success of this position led to the establishment of Executive Air Charter Pty Ltd, on the grounds of the old general aviation area on the south side of the airport (now RAAF). During his time at EAC Darren was instrumental in the hiring and nurturing of many young Pilots who cut their aviation teeth in the NT. Most have gone on to hold airline positions internationally and around Australia.

Darren joined National Jet Systems (now Cobham) in Darwin not long after they successfully tendered the coastal surveillance contract in 1995. He skippered Dash 8s for Surveillance Australia (now Special Mission) before moving on to NJS Regional on the McArthur River contract. Darren eventually moved across to the BAe 146 and became a Darwin-based Captain on the AirLink (now QantasLink) contract.

Darren left Cobham and Darwin in 2002 when he was hired by All Nippon Airways in Japan as a direct entry Captain flying a Boeing 767. Darren was promoted to Check and Training Captain for ANA up until the time of his death in March 2012.

Darren’s friend Geoff Selvey writes: “Darren was a well-mannered, likeable larrikin who possessed the ability to see the funny side of any situation. He had an infectious laugh, a cheeky grin and a very positive attitude toward his work and life in general.”

“Darren’s wife is respectful of their time in Darwin and how it shaped their lives. As a young man, Darren carved out a very successful career in aviation and it was in Darwin where their three beautiful children were born. It is my belief that aviation in Darwin did not only have a significant influence on the life of Darren Hirst, but Darren Hirst had an equal influence on aviation in Darwin. I therefore feel it’s appropriate that the third portion of his ashes rest at the Darwin Airport.”
NT Police Air Section – Alice Springs Airport

Works were completed late last year on a new facility to house the NT Police Air Section in Alice Springs. The investment, which responded to an NT government EOI, includes the development of a hangar and associated offices; provision of roads and services; and the provision of airside infrastructure such as taxiway, apron and lighting. A sublease has been agreed with the NT Government for the development and lease of the facility for a 10 year term.

Ahrens was appointed by ASA to design and construct the NT Police facility, and ASA carried out the associated airside and landside infrastructure works. This concurrent development, separately funded by ASA, has provided a second site of 1,750sqm (adjacent) with airside frontage that is now available to meet future demand.

NT Police Air Section facility details:
• 740sqm Hangar (including 63sqm of offices, engineering workshops and storage)
• Six car parking bays
• 1,750sqm Site
• 700sqm Aircraft Apron
• Works commenced in early September 2012 with the facility completed and handed over to NT Police on 18 December

Alice Springs’ Kangaroo Sanctuary in the Spotlight

Alice Springs Airport tenant The Kangaroo Sanctuary has recently enjoyed some international attention, with BBC2 airing a documentary focusing on the life and work of its founder, Chris ‘Brolga’ Barnes. He set up his sanctuary to care for orphaned joeys, taking them in and caring for them until they are ready to be released back into the wild.

The two-part documentary Kangaroo Dundee aired in the UK in late January and since then, Brolga has received over 2000 emails (some of them marriage proposals!) and had more than $20,000 donated to his sanctuary via its website, www.kangaroosanctuary.com. He has been featured in the UK press, with pieces in The Guardian and The Daily Mail; and closer to home has taken a nine-month old joey called Keith along for his first radio interview with ABC Alice Springs. For now though, Brolga says he’ll be taking a break from fielding media requests from the likes of Australian Story and 60 Minutes to focus on getting the sanctuary’s sunset tours back up and running. He’s also looking at ways to incorporate local indigenous knowledge to share with visitors.

Catch Kangaroo Dundee when it screens on ABC1 on Thursday 21st and 28th March at 8.30pm.
Science used for risk management at Darwin Airport

The Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*) is one of the world’s most abundant birds of prey and this year the population has been more abundant than we’d like at DIA.

Whether this is due to the unusual dry ‘wet’ season in the Top End or due to a generally increasing population in Darwin and the airport environs we are yet to determine, but we will continue to monitor this situation. What we do know is that in the past years the Black Kite numbers around DIA usually drop off around November with the onset of the wet season when they migrate to drier climates.

A gregarious species with numbers sometimes in the hundreds, they have grouped together to enjoy the rising currents of air over the runway that allow them to soar to height and therefore increase the risk of a bird strike on an aircraft.

To learn more about the Kites and to determine what makes the airfield so attractive, our Operations Team and Environment Manager work closely with scientists to improve our knowledge and inform our management actions. We have employed local biologists from EcOz Environmental Services to undertake bird surveys and crop and gut analysis to determine what the Black Kites are eating.

An agile raptor, the Black Kite eats a variety of food and we are using this research to determine whether managing the food source is a viable management tool.

We also wanted to know what insects were jumping around the airfield, and called out Dr. Graham Brown (pictured), former Curator of Insects at the Darwin Museum and Art Gallery and a Consultant Insect Taxonomist, who assisted with crop and gut analysis to identify the species on airport. Two grasshopper species were identified and excitedly, for our Environment Manager Jill Holdsworth, a new butterfly species that has introduced itself to Australia also enjoys life on the airfield.

As we continue to undertake research, our Airfield Operations teams remain vigilant in their management activities, and work closely with Air Traffic Control, the airlines and aircraft operators to mitigate the risks during periods of high bird activity.

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**Brown’s Mart ‘Live on Fridays’**

The highly successful series of free Friday afternoon music sessions featuring local musicians performing in the Brown’s Mart Courtyard from 5 – 7pm (Bar opens at 4pm).

*Season commences Friday 26 April 2013 and runs until 30 September 2013. More info: brownsmart.com.au*

**Airnorth Kimberley Moon Experience**

**SATURDAY 25TH MAY**

Staged on the banks of the majestic Ord River at the Jim Hughes Amphitheatre, the Airnorth Kimberley Moon Experience this year features Guy Sebastian, Mark Seymour, James Reyne and Gurrumul.

*For more information visit: www.airnorth.com.au*

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**Red Shield Appeal**

**BEGINNING SATURDAY 25TH MAY**

The Salvation Army’s annual Red Shield Appeal will be held again this year, with money raised supporting the Salvos’ various community services. You will be able to make a donation in the DIA Terminal from Saturday 25th May until Sunday 2nd June.