

Qantas to operate flagship Australia-London direct flight in Nov

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Qantas has confirmed it will operate its flagship direct flight from Australia to London via Darwin when international flights resume in November with the reopening of Australia's border.

The national carrier has reached an agreement with the Northern Territory Government and Darwin Airport to temporarily reroute its flights from Melbourne and Sydney through Darwin.

The Darwin hub arrangement will be in place in time for borders reopening from November 14, 2021 until at least April 2022 when London flights are scheduled to operate via Perth again. While this is a temporary change to the route, Qantas will watch how it performs and is open-minded about what it could lead to down the track.

The Sydney-Darwin-London route will begin on November 14 while the Melbourne-Darwin-London route is currently scheduled to begin on December 18, 2021 but could start earlier depending on discussions with the Victorian Government on shorter quarantine arrangements for returning travellers.

Qantas Group CEO Alan Joyce said the new route via Darwin will be made possible due to

the support from the Northern Territory Government who have been instrumental in helping Qantas facilitate the new route in a post Covid-19 operating environment.

Joyce added, "The Kangaroo route is one of the most iconic on the Qantas international network and we are delighted that Darwin will play a vital role in Australia's post pandemic reopening to the world."

The passenger transit arrangements will be split into two stages to reflect Covid-safe arrangements in the Territory itself. In stage one, transiting passengers from all Australian states, or returning from London, will be able to visit the international lounge and shops at Darwin Airport.

Passengers travelling from London to Sydney and Melbourne via Darwin and wanting to travel onwards to other Australian cities may also be subject to state and territory quarantine requirements.

Darwin was also part of the original 1947 Kangaroo Route between London and Sydney which took four days and flew from Sydney to Darwin and then onwards to Singapore, Calcutta, Karachi, Bahrain, Cairo and Castel Benito before landing in London.