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Newsroom

Jetstar's new Rarotonga flights provide multi-million dollar tourism boost for Cook Islands

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Jetstar flights from Auckland to Rarotonga begin this evening and tourism officials are predicting the new services could boost tourism earnings in the Pacific paradise by over \$20 million a year.

Today’s inaugural flight marks the first time in more than ten years that a new airline has flown the route and it’s also Jetstar’s first direct flight from New Zealand to the Pacific Islands.

Grant Kerr, Jetstar Head of New Zealand, said the new year-round services will add more than 25,000 return seats a year on the route.

“Rarotonga has been a favourite holiday getaway for Kiwis for many years and we’re also promoting the destination across our international network to help grow the number of Australian visitors,” Mr Kerr said.

“As the only dedicated low fares airline on the route we’re making the Cook Islands more affordable for travellers and that will bring benefits to local tourism operators.”

Graeme West, General Manager, Cook Islands Tourism Corporation, said the growth opportunity is significant.

“Tourism is the backbone of the country’s economy, providing approximately 60% of GDP,” said Mr West.

“The increased seat capacity from Jetstar, together with its low fare options, will really help tourism numbers to grow and could inject over \$20 million a year into the local economy.

“Since Jetstar announced its plans last year there has been an increased number of enquiries and bookings, and tourism operators are looking forward to a bumper season.”

Around 84,000 New Zealanders currently visit the Cook Islands annually, representing more than two-thirds of the country’s overseas visitors.

Grant Kerr said Rarotonga was proving a hit with travellers in regional New Zealand destinations as well as the main centres.

“It’s already one of our most popular connecting markets from our new regional destinations,” Mr Kerr said.

Jetstar offers connecting services to Rarotonga from Wellington, Christchurch, Queenstown, Napier, Nelson, New Plymouth and Palmerston North.

Cook Island dancers will welcome Jetstar customers as they check in for the first flight this evening at Auckland Airport (JQ 149 departing 7:40pm) and a traditional island welcome is planned on arrival into Rarotonga.

Jetstar offers three return services a week departing Auckland Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday using a 180-seat Airbus A320 aircraft.

Special fares from Auckland to Rarotonga have been offered from as low as \$129* one-way while regularly available lead-in fares start from \$219*.

*** Checked baggage not included. Sale fares not available on all flights or days and conditions apply. Prices are based on payment by direct deposit/POLi, or voucher for bookings through jetstar.com. For all other bookings, a Booking and Service Fee of \$8.50 per passenger per international flight applies.**

