

Virgin Australia appoints Dave Emerson as CEO



Virgin Australia CEO Dave Emerson

The Board of [Virgin Australia](#) has announced that Dave Emerson has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of Virgin Australia. Emerson will succeed Jayne Hrdlicka who indicated her intention to retire as Virgin Australia's CEO in February 2024.

Emerson is currently Virgin Australia's Chief Commercial Officer, a role he has held since June 2021. Throughout his 25 years of experience in the aviation and tourism industries, working alongside global airlines, Emerson has earned an international reputation for delivering business transformation and excellent financial results.

In his current role, Emerson has played an important role in positioning the airline as a value and choice carrier that puts its customers and people first.

He will begin his transition into the CEO role immediately, and will formally assume the role on Friday, March 14. Hrdlicka will continue to support the transition as needed for the next few months.

Virgin Australia Chairman Ryan Cotton said: "After a global search, it was clear that Dave is the right leader to continue the implementation of Virgin Australia's strategy. Detailed plans are in place which will deliver continued growth, strong business performance, and continuity of strategy further enhancing Virgin Australia's competitive position in the Australian market. Dave also appreciates what is special about Virgin Australia - our team and our people - and will continue to act as a steward of our amazing culture. We are confident Dave will not miss a beat in leading continued strong performance and growth across our business."

"Having had the opportunity to work with Dave over the last four years we recognise his unique breadth of commercial, digital and customer experience plus his deep knowledge of Australian aviation. He is well placed to support the strong momentum of the business and ensure the team continues to go from strength to strength."

"Dave has been a core part of the team, developing our plans for transformation and growth of the business, with our team and customers very much at the core. He is well-respected right across our organisation."

"On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Jayne for her exceptional leadership of the company. From administration and the challenges of restoring Virgin Australia's network post COVID, to our recent announcement of a return to long haul international flying with a new strategic investor, Jayne has been tireless in her mission to lead this company back to greatness. Virgin Australia is in an excellent position for the future thanks to her leadership through some of the most difficult times in our industry. Jayne shared with us all a vision for the role Virgin Australia could play in Australian aviation and has led the rebuilding of every aspect of our airline to ensure that we could deliver great outcomes for our people and our customers

while also delivering significant returns to shareholders. We are sad to see her go, and she leaves with our deepest appreciation and gratitude for a job well done."

Incoming CEO Dave Emerson commented on his appointment: “Travel is critical to the way we all live our lives and Virgin Australia plays a vital role for the community in making this possible every day.”

“I’m humbled by the opportunity to lead the airline and it’s 8,000 strong team on its next exciting chapter. I have experienced firsthand the remarkable journey over the past four years as we have reinvented Virgin Australia. We exist for our customers, but it is our people who are the heart of this organisation. They are central to our brand and our key differentiator in the highly competitive Australian aviation landscape.”

“Today, we are Australia’s most loved airline, delivering industry leading operational performance and record financial results. I will continue the transformation journey begun under Jayne’s outstanding leadership. The strategy we set as we emerged from Administration several years ago is now paying off. As we return to long-haul international flying, and innovate our domestic services, we can open greater choice and even better value travel experiences for our customers, including more opportunities to reward them for their loyalty. Importantly, it also creates new opportunities for our team.”

CEO Jayne Hrdlicka said: “It has been a career highlight and a huge privilege to lead Virgin Australia, and I could not be more proud of how much we have achieved together as a team. Today, Virgin Australia is the most reliable airline, the most trusted and the most loved airline in the country and is delivering exceptional returns for its shareholders. We have detailed plans in place for the next four years which support a very bright outlook for Virgin Australia Group. It is now the perfect time to transition leadership for this next chapter. Dave is an excellent choice to succeed me as CEO. He has proven himself as a strong leader and has been a key contributor to Virgin Australia’s successful transformation journey. His breadth of experience will be invaluable to the company and he brings the added advantage of being part of the team that created our blueprint for continued improvement in both profitability and growth.”