
Qantas operates first zero-waste flight

By **Rachel Debling** on May, 24 2019 | Airline & Terminal News



Earlier this month, [Qantas](#) announced it flew the first flight free of landfill waste as part of the airline's commitment to cut 100 million single-use plastics by the end of 2020 and eliminate 75% of the airline's waste by the end of the following year.

All products flying on board QF739 from Sydney to Adelaide on May 8 were disposed of via compost, reuse or recycling. In addition, the flight was 100% carbon offset and staffed by cabin crew from the carrier's "Green Team."

Andrew David, Qantas' Domestic CEO, commented on the flight in a statement from the airline: "In the process of carrying over 50 million people every year, Qantas and [Jetstar](#) currently produce an amount of waste equivalent to 80 fully-laden Boeing 747 jumbo jets.

"We want to give customers the same level of service they currently enjoy, but without the amount of waste that comes with it."

A flight like QF739, according to David, would generally produce 34 kilograms, or nearly 75 pounds, of waste; the Sydney to Adelaide route alone produces 150 tonnes of waste annually.

"This flight is about testing our products, refining the waste process and getting feedback from our customers," David continued.

Numerous steps were taken to ensure the flight left as small a carbon footprint as possible. One thousand single-use plastic items, including individually-packaged servings of milk and [Vegemite](#), were replaced with sustainable alternatives or were removed from the flight altogether. Other onboard efforts included the use of meal containers made from biodegradable sugar cane and cutlery made from crop starch. Meal service items were also collected by cabin crew for reuse, recycling or composting via multiple waste streams. Paper boarding passes and bag tags were disposed of in a sustainable fashion and digital boarding passes and bag tags were encouraged.

From now until the end of 2020, Qantas and Jetstar have pledged they will replace 45 million plastic cups, 30 million cutlery sets, 21 million coffee cups and 4 million headrest covers with sustainable alternatives. As noted in the press release from Qantas, airlines are legally required to dispose of some materials permanently, such as quarantined food from international flights. Qantas has noted it will work with suppliers and government to reduce the volume of this type of waste.

In addition, the Qantas lounges at [Sydney Airport](#)'s domestic terminal also went "green" for the flight, with multiple waste streams in use.

For more information regarding the efforts undertaken during this milestone flight can be found in [this factsheet](#).