



HAWAIIAN AIRLINES TO INTRODUCE FULLY FLAT BUSINESS CLASS ON A330S

News / Airlines



Competition for premium travellers from Australia and New Zealand to Hawaii should heat up in 2016 with Hawaiian Airlines to introduce a **fully-flat** seat in **business class** on its Airbus **A330-200** fleet.

Hawaiian, which operates from Sydney, Brisbane and Auckland in Oceania to its Honolulu hub, is due to have its first A330 fitted with the new seats by the second quarter of calendar 2016 and have all 23 frames completed in 2017.

Once completed, Hawaiian and Qantas will be the only two airlines offering fully flat business class seats on nonstop Australia-Hawaii routes.

Hawaiian Airlines chief executive Mark Dunkerley says the new business class would substantially enhance the airline's product offering.

"We believe this is going to usher in a new era of premium service in Hawaii," Dunkerley told reporters at the airline's first ever global media day in Honolulu on Monday (US time).

"It has been designed to recognise that we are a primarily leisure-based carrier catering to couples and families travelling to the vacation of a lifetime.

"We believe this new cabin experience will cement our reputation as being the best value for

money proposition to be had.”

Hawaiian's new business class seats have been designed by Optimares and PaulWylde, replacing the current recliner seats that are currently installed on its A330 fleet. The business class cabin will remain at 18 seats, laid out in a 2-2-2 configuration.

Also, the airline is revamping its inflight entertainment offering in business class which will use tablet devices held in an adjustable arm.

Out of Australia, Hawaiian competes with Qantas (from Sydney) and Jetstar (Sydney and Brisbane), while Air New Zealand flies between Auckland and Honolulu. Jetstar also offers nonstop flights from Melbourne to Honolulu.

Qantas is also introducing fully-flat business class seats on its fleet of 28 A330-200s and A330-330s, with the Flying Kangaroo's reconfiguration program due to be completed by the end of 2016.

Meanwhile, the business class cabin on Jetstar's Boeing 787-8s has 21 recliner-style seats configured in a 2-3-2 layout, while Air NZ currently operates Boeing 767-300ERs to Honolulu which feature 24 recliner-style seats in a 2-2-2 configuration.

Dunkerley said the first reconfigured aircraft would enter “long-haul service” but declined to name a specific inaugural destination. In addition to Australia and New Zealand, Hawaiian uses the A330 to Asian destinations such as Beijing, Tokyo (Haneda) and Seoul.

Further, he said he expected yields, or average fares per passenger, “will likely go up” as a result of installing the new seats.

“If it is as successful as we hope it will be there may come a point where we have to think about adding extra seats but for the time being we think 18 is the right number,” Dunkerley said.

There are also other changes to its A330 cabins, with the number of extra comfort seats increasing from 40 to 68, and economy shrinking from 236 to 192. As a result the total seat count on the A330s falls by 16, from 294 to 278.

Hawaiian's extra comfort cabin features the same seats found in economy class but with additional leg room and benefits such as priority boarding, more inflight entertainment options and an improved meal service.



A Hawaiian A330 lands at Sydney Airport. (Rob Finlayson)

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