



JETSTAR HEADING TO THE COOK ISLANDS

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Jetstar is expanding its international network from New Zealand beyond trans-Tasman routes with new flights to the **Cook Islands** starting in March 2016.

The three times a week service between Auckland and Rarotonga will be operated by Airbus A320s and is Jetstar's first non-Australian international destination from NZ since it dropped direct Auckland-Singapore services in July 2014.

The Qantas-owned low-cost carrier says the flights will originate from Sydney or Melbourne and it will offer formal connections from Australian-originating passengers, as well as those departing from its NZ domestic ports.

Jetstar head of New Zealand Grant Kerr says the airline will be the first new entrant on the Auckland-Rarotonga route, which is currently served by Air New Zealand and Virgin Australia, in more than 10 years.

"Whenever Jetstar enters a market our low fares help to grow that market," Kerr said in a statement on Wednesday.

"We expect our new flights to Rarotonga will significantly lift passenger numbers from both New Zealand and Australia, delivering substantial benefits to Cook Islands tourism."

The flights represent about 25,000 seats a year and would help boost tourism, Cook Islands

Tourism general manager Graeme West said.

“Tourism contributes 60 percent of GDP in the Cook Islands so the new services will provide a major boost to the country’s economy,” West said.

“Rarotonga welcomes more than 82,000 visitors from New Zealand each year and the additional Jetstar capacity from March 2016 will allow the market to grow even more.

The Cook Island is Jetstar’s second Pacific Islands destination. It also flies to Nadi, Fiji from Sydney and the Gold Coast.

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