

Media Release

Qantas hosts 10-year-old CEO for airline executive summit



Hong Kong, 4 April 2019 - Qantas today announced it would form a partnership with fledgling local carrier Oceania Express – and start a behind-the-scenes program for budding airline executives – after a much-anticipated meeting between the two airline bosses in Sydney.

It follows 10-year-old Alex Jacquot's letter to Qantas Group CEO Alan Joyce asking for advice on how to run an airline he founded during his school holidays. Mr Joyce wrote back to say he would be pleased to discuss further in person – an exchange that has since captured attention globally.

Mr Joyce, who became Qantas Group CEO the same month Alex was born, hosted the meeting at the national carrier's headquarters. They were joined by Qantas Group executives Olivia Wirth (CEO, Qantas Loyalty) and John Gissing (CEO, QantasLink) plus Oceania Express's 10-year-old Deputy CEO Wolf Stringer and 7-year-old Head of Inflight Service, Mila Jacquot.

Speaking after the meeting, Mr Joyce said: "In his letter, Alex asked me to take him seriously. So we did. It's hard not to be impressed by his enthusiasm. The aviation industry needs people who think big and Alex has that in spades. It was a pleasure meeting with him and his co-founders.

"We wanted to capture all that enthusiasm and formalise a connection between Australia's oldest and newest airlines. Today we signed a memorandum of understanding for our airlines to cooperate from 2026*, once Alex has completed high school. It might be pushed out a bit if he chooses to go to university, which I hope he does."

As part of the agreement, Alex was presented with a new logo, business cards and artist impression of the Oceania Express brand on a state-of-the-art Boeing Dreamliner. The domain name *oceaniaexpress.com.au* has also registered on Alex's behalf. Alex and his co-founders also received a tour of the Qantas Integrated Operations Centre, engineering facilities and one of its Airbus A380.

At the 30 minute meeting, the six airline executives discussed aircraft types, in-flight catering and the importance of a Frequent Flyer program. Improving passenger comfort on ultra long-haul flights was a focus, particularly given Qantas' plans to fly direct from the east coast of Australia to London and New York by 2022.

"This is a big day for our little airline," Oceania Express CEO Alex Jacquot said.

"We've got a lot to learn from them but they can learn from us, too. We've got some ideas about how to make long flights less boring. I like the Qantas inflight entertainment for kids but I think we can beat it," added Mr Jacquot.

Since the exchange of letters between the two CEOs, Qantas has received scores of notes from other children with a strong passion for aviation. Mr Joyce said: "There are clearly a lot of budding airline executives out there, probably because it's an industry that really captures the imagination. When we thought about the right way to respond these letters, we decided to start a program that gives the biggest enthusiasts the chance to come and see behind the scenes at Qantas. I have no doubt some will wind up working at Qantas one day."

The 'Qantas Future High Flyers' program will offer a select number of school children the opportunity to experience a day in the life at the Flying Kangaroo in Sydney. The young aviators will meet engineers, pilots and head office staff as well as share their thoughts on how the customer experience can be improved. The program will be timed with school holidays later in 2019.

Children aged from seven to 12 who would like to apply to be part of the behind-the-scenes visit can go to [qantasnewsroom.com.au/qantas-future-high-flyers](https://www.qantasnewsroom.com.au/qantas-future-high-flyers) and write in 50 words or less why they'd like to spend the day at Qantas.

**Subject to regulatory approval*

Please download the MOUs, hi-res images and videos of the summit at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/46782pa3nsgvuam/AAAMTyhXwkoHdvSbmcMz1M7Ea?dl=0>

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About Qantas Airways

Founded in regional Queensland in 1920 – as Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services – Qantas is one of the world's oldest airline and Australia's most iconic brands, with a central role in the development of the Australian and international aviation industry.

For the fourth year in a row, Qantas has been ranked the world's safest airline by AirlineRatings.com. Qantas also holds many major awards for service, food and wine, technology and innovation, including the world's best lounges by airlineratings.com in 2019.

Qantas Airways is part of the Qantas Group, a diverse global aviation business comprising Qantas Domestic, Qantas International, low-cost carrier group Jetstar, and Qantas Loyalty. Operating more than 7,300 flights each week, Qantas Group carries over 50 million passengers each year to more than 1000 destinations around the world together with its codeshare and **oneworld** partners.