

## VIRGIN BLUE GROUP OF AIRLINES BACKS AVIATION GLOBAL DEAL TO TACKLE EMISSIONS

**Friday 5 June 2009:** The Virgin Blue Group of Airlines is the first Australian operator to join a growing list of airlines and international non-profit The Climate Group, (collectively, the Aviation Global Deal Group), working to develop a way of tackling aviation emissions as part of a global deal on climate change.

The AGD Group is an expanding group of airlines seeking to develop a standardised, industry-based, recommendation on a mechanism for tackling CO2 emissions from international aviation as part of a new global climate change deal to be agreed in Copenhagen in December.

The AGD Group's proposal, which was shared with climate change negotiators at a UN side event in Bonn, Germany, in April, marked the first time that aviation sector companies have made direct recommendations to UN climate change officials on how their sector's CO2 emissions should be accounted for. The AGD Group expects to release its draft proposal publically at the UNFCCC Climate Change Talks taking place in Bonn next week.

The proposal is gaining growing support from a range of aviation stakeholders, including those in developing countries who recognise the need for aviation to play its part.

The Virgin Blue Airlines Group believes that the AGD Group's initiative is important in helping to support the industry-wide efforts of the International Air Transport Association (IATA); as well as the work of the UN's International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), which has responsibility for developing an intergovernmental response for the sector.

Virgin Blue Airlines Chief Executive Brett Godfrey said his company which comprises Australian domestic carrier Virgin Blue, new Long Haul international airline V Australia, New Zealand based Pacific Blue, and Polynesian Blue, a joint venture airline with the Government of Samoa is committed to continuous improvement and sustainable aviation practices.

"Already we are pursuing initiatives across a wide range of our operations to offset the impact of our emissions and to limit emissions at source. We believe there is a limit to what individual airlines can achieve and it makes sense to work together globally with like-minded organisations to seek a uniform and integrated approach to international policy on aviation's contribution to climate change.

"Aviation is a global cross-border industry. The last thing we need is a patchwork of national policies imposing conflicting or contradictory requirements on airlines," he said.

Rupert Posner, Australian Director of The Climate Group, said: "It is extremely encouraging to see one of the leading players in Australia join the Aviation Global Deal Group. This announcement demonstrates the growing momentum that is building behind the group's work.

"By coming to the table to discuss constructive ideas on how international aviation should be included in the next global climate deal, the Virgin Blue Group, along with the group's other airlines, are demonstrating commendable leadership on this issue. This type of engagement will be essential in helping Australia and the world transfer to a low carbon economy."

Virgin Blue will join existing AGD Group members – Air France - KLM, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Finnair, Qatar Airways, Virgin Atlantic, airport operator BAA, and international NGO The Climate Group – when they make further recommendations to the UN in June.

The AGD Group has consulted various government, industry and NGO stakeholders on their proposals over the past months and has received wide-spread support for its approach.



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## The AGD Draft Proposal:

In April, the AGD Group hosted an event alongside the UN negotiating session in Bonn, Germany, to present their ideas on including international aviation emissions in a post-Kyoto deal to be negotiated in Copenhagen in December.

Their proposal was well received by UN negotiators and other industry stakeholders and the group is now working towards finalising its recommendations in June.

The AGD Group's Draft Proposal set out an "ambitious, equitable and effective" way of tackling these emissions designed to maintain a level playing field for airlines. It outlined that:

- International aviation CO2 emissions should be addressed through a global sectoral agreement, rather than a patchwork of regional initiatives, in order to avoid carbon leakage and maintain a level playing field;
- A global target is set for the sector, to ensure it plays its part in global CO2 emissions reductions;
- This is achieved through a 'cap and trade' emissions trading mechanism, where the sector has open access to global carbon markets;
- An airline's CO2 emissions is based on the carbon content of its annual fuel purchases and the use of sustainable, lower life-cycle carbon alternatives are incentivised;
- An international body administers the system;
- Any revenue generated from auction of a proportion of CO2 allowances is used for climate change adaptation and mitigation activities in developing countries and also research into greener aviation technology.

## About The Climate Group

The Climate Group ([www.theclimategroup.org](http://www.theclimategroup.org)) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works internationally with government and business leaders to advance climate change solutions and accelerate a low carbon economy. The Climate Group was founded in 2004 and has offices in the UK, USA, China, India and Australia.



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