

# SOLOMON AIRLINES (IE) looks to the future

At the close of what represents one of its most difficult years in recent times, Solomon Airlines GM Operations and Commercial and acting CEO, Gus Kraus, acknowledged the difficulties faced by the national carrier but with the achievements Solomon Airlines accomplished this year, he also pointed to what he sees as a bright future.

“Successful codeshare agreements with Qantas and Air Niugini give us confidence to develop similar arrangements with other regional airlines.”

“We also experienced increased freight lift and revenue, a focus on on-time performance and government assistance was just some of those accomplishments.” said Mr Kraus.

However, a series of negative concurrent events played a role in offsetting these positives. A drop in international visitor numbers, increase of competition from Virgin Australia on the Brisbane-Honiara route earlier in the year and the decision to temporarily suspend the Sydney service in May, a loss of revenue on the Vanuatu service when codeshare partner Qantas covered the extended leave of absence of the flagship Airbus A320 while undergoing maintenance overseas, suspend the Port Vila service due to safety concerns landing on Bauerfield International Airport’s runway and the termination of CEO Captain Ron Sumsum mid-year.

Looking forward, Mr Kraus said the future bodes well for the airline as it moves into a new era in its history with forward plans coming designed to give Solomon Airlines a far better chance of turning business around in 2017.

These plans, he said, included a review of revenue generating plans including schedules aimed at maximising revenues and sales, increasing the use of the A320 in order to better spread fixed costs, more focus on staff training, ongoing departmental budget reviews, a review of all inflight catering matters and airline staff uniforms to give all staff a better sense of pride.

“All of these mid-term growth plans are seen as essential if Solomon Airlines is to steady the ship under a new Captain and in the process develop an increased yield management focus,” Mr Kraus said.

*News reference: Solomon Times*



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