

Media Release

19 March 2025

Air New Zealand and Air India enter new codeshare partnership and MoU to explore direct flights between India and New Zealand

Mumbai, India – Star Alliance Partners Air New Zealand and Air India today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the objective of boosting air connectivity between India and New Zealand.

The MoU was signed at an event in Mumbai in the presence of Honourable Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr Christopher Luxon, and other dignitaries.

The MoU includes the establishment of a new codeshare partnership on 16 routes between India, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand, conferring travellers more choice and convenient access between the two countries.

Customers will now be able to travel from the Indian cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai on Air India, and connect at Sydney, Melbourne or Singapore onto Air New Zealand-operated flights to Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington and Queenstown.

Besides improving customers' ease of booking and travel, the codeshare aims to increase visibility of the respective markets as tourism destinations.

The MoU will also see Air New Zealand and Air India explore the introduction of a direct service between India and New Zealand by the end of 2028, subject to new aircraft deliveries and approvals from relevant government regulators.

Air New Zealand Chief Executive Greg Foran emphasised the strategic significance of India as a future destination, highlighting its rapidly expanding tourism market and increasing travel demand.

“India represents a key growth market for Air New Zealand, and we are excited about the opportunity to enhance connectivity for travellers between our two countries. This codeshare agreement is an important first step, offering more options for customers while we work to understand what a direct service could look like.

“Today’s event underscores the significance of the India market to New Zealand, not only for tourism but also for strengthening business and education ties. We are committed to working collaboratively to grow the travel market over the coming years, ensuring a strong foundation for a successful direct service by 2028,” said Foran.

Campbell Wilson, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Air India, said: “As part of Air India’s ongoing transformation, we have been expanding our global network using our own aircraft as well as through new or expanded codeshare agreements with other airlines, chiefly our Star Alliance partners.

We are delighted to be deepening our relationship with Air New Zealand, which follows the recent expansion of our codeshare partnerships with Lufthansa Group, Singapore Airlines,

and All Nippon Airways. This partnership will not only strengthen our presence and simplify customer journeys, but also help us develop traffic so that, in time to come, we may viably operate a non-stop service between India and New Zealand, which we and Air New Zealand have committed to explore together with the respective authorities.”

With India emerging as a growing tourism and business hub, this partnership reflects the airline’s commitment to delivering enhanced travel experiences while supporting trade, tourism, and economic growth.

Currently, Air New Zealand customers travelling between New Zealand and India benefit from strong connectivity options via Singapore Airlines, offering a smooth transit through Singapore. The prospect of a future direct route would further strengthen the relationship between the two countries, providing more efficient and accessible travel opportunities.

The MoU also outlines Tourism New Zealand’s commitment to growing inbound tourism from the Indian market. Tourism New Zealand’s research shows that 18 million people in New Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai are actively considering traveling to New Zealand, making it a key emerging market. More than 80,000 international travellers arrived from India last year, 23% more than in 2019.

The long-term growth potential is significant, with India ear-marked as one of the fastest-growing outbound travel markets. Indian travellers are keen to explore New Zealand’s vibrant landscapes, film sets and rich cultural opportunities.

Tourism New Zealand Chief Executive Rene de Monchy said: “It’s fantastic to see Air New Zealand and Air India working on stronger international connectivity between the two countries. We know improved aviation links have a crucial role to play in the growth of international tourism and will make it easier for Indian travellers to come and enjoy a holiday in New Zealand.

“An added bonus is that travellers from India also have a strong tendency to visit New Zealand in the off-peak months that coincide with their major holiday periods.”

The codeshare flights will be available for booking progressively, subject to due regulatory approvals.

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About Air New Zealand:

Air New Zealand's story started in 1940, first taking to the skies between Auckland and Sydney on a flying boat - a Short S30. Known for its warm Kiwi hospitality, today, the airline has 98 operating aircraft ranging from Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners and Airbus A320s to ATRs and Q300s, offering customers comfort in the latest most efficient jets and turboprops. It's a modern fuel-efficient fleet with an average age of 6.7 years. Air New Zealand's global network of passenger and cargo services centres around New Zealand. Pre-Covid, the airline flew more than 17 million passengers every year, with 3,400 flights per week. Air New Zealand was named 2022 World's Safest Airline by the Australian rating service AirlineRatings.com, highlighting the airline's laser-focus on safety and won Best Corporate Reputation in New Zealand in the same year – 8th year in a row.

Air New Zealand has a well-connected domestic business, connecting customers and cargo to 20 different regions around New Zealand. Internationally, the airline has direct flights to major cities across Australia, Asia, the Pacific Islands and the US, and through its strong relationships with alliance partners, offers customers more choice and convenience to connect further afield to hundreds of destinations. Air New Zealand has a particular focus on sustainability and its [Sustainability Framework](#) helps guide the airline's efforts in tackling some of New Zealand's and the world's most complex challenges. Airpoints, Air New Zealand's loyalty programme, is seen as the most valuable loyalty programme in New Zealand with 3.5 million members. It allows members to earn Airpoints Dollars™ and Status Points for VIP benefits in the air and on the ground. Air New Zealand aircraft are proudly identified by its distinct tail livery of the Mangōpare, the Māori symbol of the hammerhead shark which represents strength, tenacity, and resilience.

About Air India Group:

The Air India group – comprising of full-service global airline Air India and low-cost regional carrier Air India Express – is spearheading a new era of Indian aviation. The Air India story began in 1932 when JRD Tata piloted the airline's inaugural flight and opened the skies for aviation in India. Today, Air India group employs more than 30,000 people, operates over 300 aircraft and carries customers to 55 domestic and 48 international destinations across five continents.

Returning to the Tata Sons in 2022 following 70 years under Government ownership, Air India group is in the midst of a five-year transformation program, Vihaan.AI. As part of the transformation, Air India has placed an order for 570 new aircraft. In 2024, sister airlines Air Asia India and Vistara were successfully merged into Air India Express and Air India, respectively, and the Airline opened South Asia's largest aviation training academy. A new flying school is scheduled to open in 2025, and construction of a greenfield maintenance base, to be operational in 2026, is underway. In addition to receiving new aircraft, all existing aircraft are progressively undergoing a full interior refit.

With transformation underway across all facets of the business and India's rich legacy of hospitality, Air India is committed to being a world class global airline with an Indian heart.

About Star Alliance:

Air New Zealand is proud to be a member of Star Alliance. The Star Alliance network was established in 1997 as the first truly global airline alliance to offer worldwide reach, recognition and seamless service to the international traveller. Its acceptance by the market has been recognized by numerous awards, including the Air Transport World Market Leadership Award and Best Airline Alliance by both Business Traveller Magazine and Skytrax. The member airlines are: Aegean Airlines, Air Canada, Air China, Air India, Air New Zealand, ANA, Asiana Airlines, Austrian, Avianca, Brussels Airlines, Copa Airlines, Croatia Airlines, EGYPTAIR, Ethiopian Airlines, EVA Air, LOT Polish Airlines, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines, Shenzhen Airlines, Singapore Airlines, South African Airways, SWISS, TAP Portugal, Turkish Airlines, THAI and United. Overall, the Star Alliance network currently offers more than 18,500 daily flights to 1,321 airports in 193 countries.

For more information about Air New Zealand visit www.airnewzealand.com and for more information about Star Alliance visit www.staralliance.com