

Virgin Teases “Significant Refresh” for Melbourne but Cool on Cairns



While Virgin Australia’s Melbourne airport lounge is getting a make-over, the airline remains noncommittal on reopening its regional lounge at Cairns, despite a ramp-up of flights to the Far North Queensland city.

The airline’s lounge at Melbourne T3 was closed for extensive maintenance and renovation work in late 2020, although travellers seem generally happy with the short-term arrangement of two temporary lounges.

“The pop up lounge has gone really well,” Virgin Australia CEO Jayne Hrdlicka tells Executive Traveller, although she’s “very much looking forward to reopening the main Melbourne lounge as soon as we can.”

That’s expected to be “mid-year”, possibly as soon as next month, and Hrdlicka says when the hoardings come down and the welcome mat is put out, travellers can expect to see the results of “significant maintenance work as well as a pretty significant refresh.”

The refresh is expected to incorporate elements of the new-look lounge design, unveiled at Adelaide in February, to give Melbourne a relaxed vibe that's less corporate than casual, and certainly more on-brand with today's Virgin Australia.

"There will be elements (from Adelaide) that we'll be able to inject into our existing spaces as we go through our maintenance and refurbishment plan," Virgin's General Manager of Product and Customer Experience, Sarah Adam, told Executive Traveller earlier this year.

Adam cited greenery, soft furnishings and fresh signage as likely candidates "where it makes sense that aesthetically we can make those changes."

However, Hrdlicka wouldn't commit to a reopening of the Cairns lounge – which the airline axed in November 2020 under new owners Bain Capital – on the back of new flights from Perth and Adelaide joining the existing multiple daily services from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

"Our lounge network at the moment we think is doing a great job covering the core needs of our guests and the network" she said, "but we'll always keep our eyes open to opportunities as we better understand the market."

And what will happen to Melbourne's The Club lounge when the main lounge reopens remains to be seen.

Once a haven for well-heeled members of Virgin's invitation-only, The Club VIP tier, this cosy sanctuary has since flung open its frosted doors to business class passengers and Velocity Platinum frequent flyers as one of Melbourne's two temporary lounges.

Asked if the reopening of the Melbourne lounge might be the point at which Virgin would relaunch The Club – potentially expanding it to become a Velocity VIP tier open to the airline's most frequent flyers – Hrdlicka said "we are working our way through our VIP program design right now, and we will unveil it as we get confidence in exactly what it will hold."

Source: [Executive Traveller](#)

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