

Brisbane, 17 October 2011

## Virgin Australia inaugurates ATR 72-500 services

A new era of air transport commenced today in Australia when Virgin Australia launched commercial services with the first of its new ATR 72-500 turboprop airliners.

The inaugural flight of Virgin Australia's first turboprop - and Australia's first ATR 72 – was also the airline's first flight from Brisbane to the regional industrial city of Gladstone.

And it was a milestone for ATR Regional Aircraft, the world's largest manufacturer of 50-74 seat turboprop airliners, adding Australia to an already-extensive list of Asia-Pacific markets where ATR 72-500 aircraft operate.

Virgin Australia flight DJ 1711 departed Brisbane at 10.30am.

Perth-based Skywest will operate the new ATR services on behalf of Virgin Australia, with a fleet of eight 68-seat ATR 72 aircraft.

The airline has orders for four of the series 500 model – three of which have now been delivered - and four of the next-generation series 600 model.

Skywest also has options to acquire another five ATR 72-600s, all of which it will operate for Virgin.

In addition to Gladstone, Virgin will operate the ATRs on a range of other regional or short haul primary routes, including Brisbane-Port Macquarie and Sydney-Port Macquarie, commencing this Wednesday, 19 October.

This will be followed by routes including Sydney-Canberra and another new market, Brisbane - Emerald.

Filippo Bagnato, Chief Executive Officer of ATR, said: "Virgin Australia needed an aircraft type which would provide an economic entry into new regional routes, and cost-effective expansion of a range of existing markets. The ATR 72 is that aircraft, offering both the lowest cost and the greenest option in the regional segment, while delivering a spacious, quiet cabin environment for passengers. We are delighted that Virgin Australia and Skywest have selected our aircraft for the next step in Virgin's growth strategy."



**About ATR**

Formed in 1981, ATR has grown to become a leading manufacturer of 50 to 74 seat regional turboprop aircraft, has sold more than 1,200 aircraft and has 175 operators in 94 countries. ATR operators have accumulated more than 21 million flights. ATR is a joint venture and equal partnership between major European aerospace companies Alenia Aeronautica (a Finmeccanica company) and EADS. Its headquarters are in Toulouse, France. ATR is certified ISO 14001, the worldwide standard for environmental management and sustainability.

For more information, visit [www.atraircraft.com](http://www.atraircraft.com)

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