

Air battle looms

Intense airline competition into Fiji is expected after a recent decision by the Australian Government's aviation body over all rights to Fiji.

But the 1759 extra seats per week into Fiji will not be as many as V Australia and Jetstar had individually hoped to gain.

International Air Services Commission (IASC) last week determined that V

Australia and Jetstar will have to split the air rights to Fiji, giving neither carrier the full capacity that they had sought, e-travelbackboard reported.

IASC split the seat capacity saying it wanted to create "intense competition" on the Australia-Fiji route.

It allocated 907 seats per week to V Australia and 852 seats per week to Qantas, which

have been earmarked for Jetstar. V Australia plans to operate its Fiji services with its new Boeing B777-300s, while Qantas has said that Jetstar will be utilising its Airbus A321-231s.

"It is apparent that V Australia and Jetstar would bring competition benefits that the other does not," said IASC in its ruling.

"Public benefits are likely

to be magnified through splitting the available capacity between the two carriers."

"That would facilitate increased choice, a higher frequency of service and more capacity than if an allocation is made only to one of the two applicants. It would create intense competition between the two as well as with the incumbent Qantas/Air Pacific partnership."