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News and Press Releases

SIMSATIONAL! VIRGIN BLUE COMMISSIONS MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR E-JET SIMULATOR AT BRISBANE TRAINING FACILITY

Thursday 8 May 2008: Virgin Blue Airlines Group is increasing its investment in pilot training infrastructure, with the commissioning today of a \$10-million EMBRAER aircraft simulator at its Brisbane Airport training facility. The simulator is the only EMBRAER simulator to operate in Australia and is the first electric motion simulator to be installed in this country.

The new advanced electric motion simulators are more economical to run than the hydraulic motion simulators and use up to 70% less power to operate, making them more environmentally friendly than existing models.

The simulator is an exact replica of Virgin Blue's first E190 jet and was manufactured at the same time as the actual aircraft. The training course has been developed by Swiss Aviation Training in conjunction with Virgin Blue and has been certified to world's best practises by the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

Virgin Blue recently introduced the Brazilian manufactured, EMBRAER executive style jet to its fleet of aircraft and currently operates five of the aircraft across its domestic network, with 13 more to come by the end of 2008. The E-Jet has allowed Virgin Blue to bring jet aircraft services to the Sydney-Canberra market as well as to new regional destinations such as Albury and Port Macquarie.

The initial group of Virgin Blue EMBRAER pilots travelled to Zurich to undertake their training and simulator sessions but the commissioning of the E-Jet simulator today will see all simulator training take place in Brisbane.

Virgin Blue Chief Executive, Brett Godfrey, said, "Virgin Blue is committed to providing its pilots with the highest levels of training and ensuring we have the facilities to support the airline's ongoing pilot recruitment needs. We consider the investment in the E-Jet simulator as an investment in the long term future of our pilots and the growth of our airline."

He added, "We are proud to be a Queensland based carrier and are committed to not just increasing the number of Queensland based team members, but also cementing our home state's position as a leading aviation training hub for the Asia Pacific region."

The E-Jet simulator is currently fully booked for Virgin Blue pilot endorsement training, command upgrade training, recurrent training and engineering training 21 hours a day, seven days a week, for the next two years. In the long term the facility will also be available for external commercial pilots seeking training and endorsements on the EMBRAER aircraft type.

The E-JET simulator sits alongside the Boeing 737 simulator already owned and operated by Virgin Blue at its high-tech crew training facility.

Captain Laurent Privet, Vice President of Training for Swiss Aviation Training (SAT), said the Brisbane facility is one of the best E-Jet training centres in the world.

"Both the training course organised by SAT and the simulator facility operated by Virgin Blue here in Brisbane, Australia, provide the highest possible level of flying training and gives aviators an EMBRAER endorsement above and beyond global standards, highlighting Virgin Blue's commitment to training excellence", he said.

The EMBRAER simulator has been christened "Simhorita" in honour of the Brazilian heritage of the E-Jet aircraft.

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