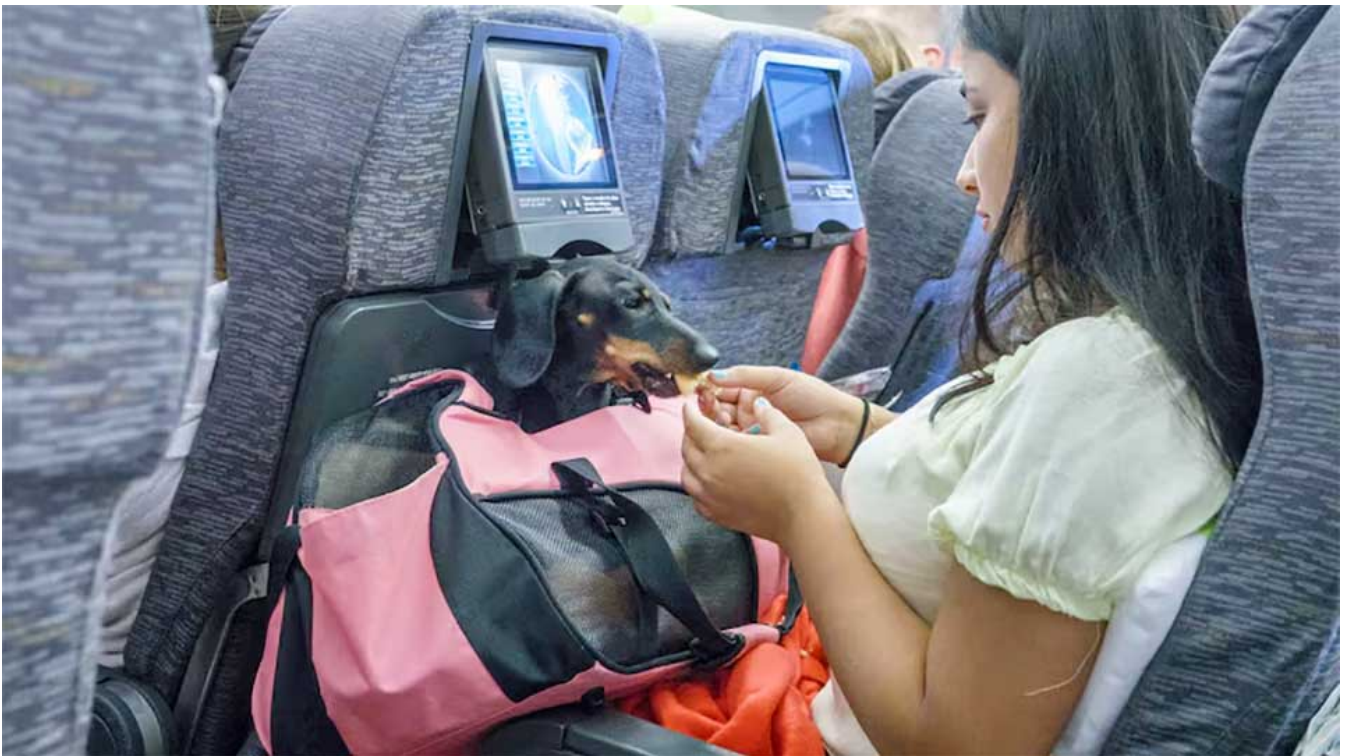


Virgin Australia to allow pets onboard by year-end

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Virgin Australia’s plan to allow pets in the cabin is finally on track, with the airline confirming it expects to launch the service by the end of 2025 — more than a year after first announcing the move.

A key regulatory hurdle was cleared last month when Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) approved changes to the Food Standards Code, allowing small cats and dogs to travel in airline-approved carriers under the seat in front of their owner.

The delay, according to Virgin CEO Dave Emerson, was largely due to food safety regulations. “Aircraft are treated like restaurants under aviation rules, so we had to secure exemptions to allow pets,” he said at the CAPA Airline Leader Summit in Cairns.

FSANZ assessed the risks and found that, with proper safety measures, in-cabin pets pose minimal health risk. The code change applies to

Australia only and was backed by food ministers earlier this month.

Virgin plans to roll out the option gradually on select domestic routes, starting with high-traffic services like Sydney to Melbourne. However, final approval on the day will rest with the pilot.

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