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## **New charter flights put Alice Springs on the map for Japanese visitors**

Next week, Alice Springs Airport will receive its first charter flight from Japan in over 10 years. The flight will be operated using a 161 seat Japan Airlines 787-800 Dreamliner aircraft. The first in a series of four JTB World Vacations charter flights from Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka touches down in Alice Springs in the early hours on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Most visitors arriving on the charter flights will spend time touring the sights in Alice Springs before heading to Uluru on specially arranged Alliance Airlines charter flights.

Alice Springs was chosen as the arrival port for the international charter flight as the runway at Uluru can't accommodate the wide body Japan Airlines 787-800 Dreamliner aircraft. Dave Batic, General Manager, Alice Springs Airport said, "We are delighted Alice Springs Airport will be the first port of call in Australia for this program of international charter flights. It gives our airport the opportunity to facilitate international flight arrivals and departures for leisure travellers. By working closely with Australian Border Force, this demonstrates our airport's readiness to enhance regional tourism, without significant additional capital spend."

"Most importantly, these flights give Alice Springs a terrific opportunity to shine on the international tourism stage. Our hotels, tourism operators, retailers, cafes and restaurants all stand to gain enormous benefit from the influx in Japanese visitors in the coming weeks."

The charter program is being arranged by JTB World Vacations, the largest travel wholesaler in Japan. The program is expected to generate an estimated additional 1,440 visitor nights and an estimated one to two million dollars in visitor spend in the Territory. Japan is the fourth largest visitor market in the NT and the fifth largest market to Australia, recently eclipsing Singapore, with 434,600 Japanese visitor arrivals to December 2017.

A multi-year agreement between JTB and Alliance Airlines has helped facilitate the charter flights between Alice Springs and Uluru. By using Alliance Airlines charter flights on a range of itineraries, JTB is able to create unique visitor experiences for JTB World Vacations guests to the Northern Territory. Lee Schofield, CEO of Alliance Airlines said, "The Fokker jet service from Alice Springs to Uluru and return allows visitors to maximise their experience on the ground and minimise their overall travel time."

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