

Farewell to the Queen of the Skies

TEARS flowed in Hangar 96 at Sydney International Airport yesterday, as Qantas marked the end of an era with the final departure of its last Boeing 747 jumbo jet. In operation for 49 years, the emotional day sparked tributes from Qantas staff, suppliers and thousands of Australians for whom the iconic plane is a symbol not just of the carrier but the hopes and aspirations of an entire nation. Developed by Boeing in partnership with Qantas, the record-breaking aircraft enabled millions of Australians to explore the globe, as well as bringing visitors to our shores to experience everything that is great about our country.

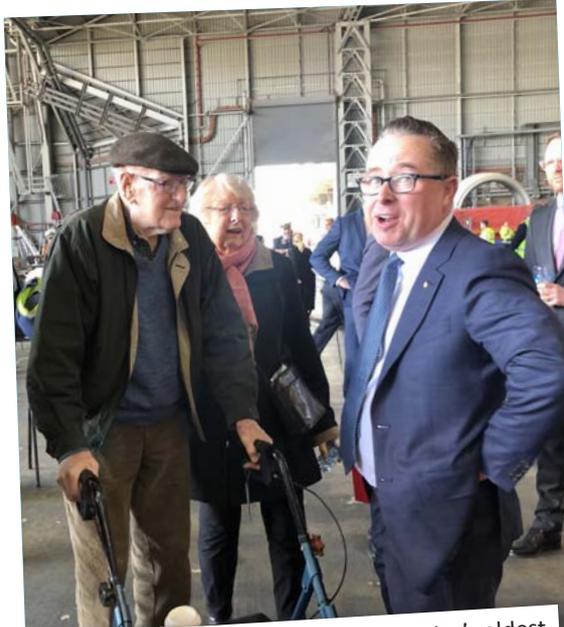
Qantas CEO Alan Joyce highlighted the contribution the 747 had made to the carrier, with scores of milestones including the first Business class cabin on any airline in the world, as well as ushering a new era of lower fares and non-stop flights.

“It’s hard to overstate the impact that the 747 had on aviation and a country as far away as Australia. It replaced the 707 which was a huge leap forward in itself but didn’t have the sheer size and scale to lower airfares the way the 747 did. That put international travel within reach of the average Australian and people jumped at the opportunity,” he said.

An album of photos from the event, as well as the subsequent Sydney Harbour low altitude flyover, is now live at facebook.com/traveldaily.



THE aircraft heads off across the Pacific from above Sydney Harbour.



QF CEO Alan Joyce spoke to the carrier’s oldest living employee - who used to clean the spark plugs on aircraft landing in Sydney’s Rose Bay.



VH-OEJ will go to California’s Mojave Desert covered in messages from devoted engineers who worked on the QF jumbo fleet.



CABIN crew present sported Qantas uniforms through the decades.



THE aircraft was celebrated in an Aboriginal ceremony, reflecting the way Qantas has carried Australia’s ancient culture across the globe.



AN HONOUR guard farewelled the final flight crew.



BOEING Australia chief Brendan Nelson spoke of the manufacturer’s long-standing partnership with Qantas.



STRICT physical distancing was in place during the event, with chairs widely spaced meaning just 150 people, rather than thousands, could attend.