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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Frequent flyer rewards grounded

Qantas has reshuffled its Frequent Flyer cards, deleting several credit cards from its pack offering Frequent Flyer points as a reward option.

The change, which is scheduled to take place from April next year, comes in the wake of the airline's plan to partially sell off its Frequent Flyer program.

"This move puts an end to the current practice of transferring rewards points over to Qantas Frequent Flyer points, a move we flagged in our latest *rewards star ratings* report," CANEX financial analyst Frank Lopez said.

The change is the second phase in the Qantas rewards upgrade, with the airline adding general rewards to its program a few months back.

"The banks have been aware of these development plans for many months and arrangements are now in place which, if anything, will give consumers even more choice of travel rewards."

Qantas has advised its Frequent Flyer customers of the new arrangement whereby only 12 credit and debit cards will continue to offer new customers the ability to earn Qantas Frequent flyer points on everyday spending.

These cards, or 'Direct Earn Cards' as Qantas calls them, offer users who make an eligible purchases from 350 Qantas partners the chance to double their rewards – once with the card and once with the other partner.

According to Qantas, from next April, the airline's 'Other Rewards Programs' will no longer provide the option to transfer card points to your Qantas Frequent Flyer account.

Well-known names in the rewards game, such as American Express, ANZ, Westpac and Diners Club, have simply co-branded new cards with Qantas. Others have opted to go down a different runway and sign up with Virgin's Velocity rewards program.

"Some providers are offering existing customers the option of keeping their existing credit cards but switching from their current rewards program to the Qantas Awards program. Some existing rewards programs are now partnering with Virgin Blue's Velocity program," Mr Lopez said.

"Travel vouchers will also play more of a key role, with many customers being able to buy Qantas or Virgin flights using this method of points redemption."

The most important thing to stress, according to CANNEX, is to communicate with your rewards card provider about the changes and how it will affect your credit card account from April next year.

“In the majority of cases you may even be better off under the new Frequent Flyer arrangements but you’ve certainly got time to look around and see which points program is going to reward you the most.”

✓ Qantas Direct Earn Cards

- Westpac Earth
- Westpac Earth Gold
- Westpac Earth Platinum
- ANZ Aust. Frequent Flyer Visa
- ANZ Aust. Frequent Flyer Visa Gold
- ANZ Aust. Frequent Flyer Visa Platinum
- Qantas American Express Card
- Qantas American Express Premium Card
- Qantas American Express Ultimate Card
- Frequent Flyer Diners Club (Aust) Charge Card
- Qantas ANZ NZ Visa Classic
- Qantas ANZ NZ Visa Platinum

✗ Qantas Other Rewards Programs

(Existing customers with these cards should speak to their provider as there may be an option to retain the credit card and but change over to Qantas' Frequent Flyer Reward program.)

- American Express Membership Rewards Ascent (Aust)
- American Express Membership Rewards (NZ)
- ANZ Rewards Visa
- Citibank Rewards
- Citibank Platinum Rewards
- Commonwealth Awards Program
- Diners Club Rewards
- Nab Gold Rewards
- Nab Ant Rewards Program
- St George Private Bank Platinum Choice Rewards
- Suncorp Clear Options
- Westpac Altitude

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