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Alliances at heart of airport shake up

Sydney Airport will be structured around airline alliances under a radical overhaul unveiled this morning that would end the divide between domestic and international terminals.

Long term plans will see Qantas, Jetstar and its international partners operate from the current domestic Terminals 2 and 3 with Virgin Australia and its partners housed under one roof at the current international Terminal 1.

Carriers not aligned with either Qantas or Virgin would continue to operate from Terminal 1.

Tiger, Regional Express, AeroPelican and Brindabella meanwhile will have guaranteed access but which terminal they will operate from is unclear.

Qantas and Virgin both support the plan and have signed a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to "progress the proposal".

Sydney Airport, which said the proposal is at the "concept stage", has earmarked 2019 as the year the vision will be realised.

"Under the proposal, the passenger experience is improved through faster connect times and more efficient airline and airport operations," chief executive Kerrie Mather said. "This initiative has the potential to transform aviation in NSW."

Qantas chief executive Alan Joyce said: "The proposed new terminal would have significant benefits for all passengers travelling with both Qantas and Jetstar."

"As passenger numbers grow over the next decade it is vital that airlines and airports work closely together to deliver a seamless travel experience."

Virgin Australia chief executive John Borghetti said there was "potential" in the plan to deliver an "integrated global alliance network".

"We support any proposal that improves services to the travelling public and grows tourism in Australia," he said.

A consultation process will get underway.