

Bonza airline launches budget flights in Australia

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The Whitsunday Islands in the Great Barrier Reef were the destination for Bonza's first flight.

A new Australian budget airline, Bonza, launched its first flight Tuesday, promising cheap tickets, onboard craft beer, snags (sausages) and a relaxed approach to crew uniforms.

Branding itself as a down-to-earth Aussie airline and the nation's only independent low-cost carrier, Bonza named its first three Boeing 737-8 MAX planes Shazza, Bazza and Sheila.

Tickets, which can only be booked on the airline's mobile app, are priced from Aus\$49-79 (US\$35-56)—too cheap to be profitable according to one analyst.

The inaugural flight took off from Bonza's base in Queensland's Sunshine Coast to the Whitsunday Islands in the heart of the Great Barrier Reef.

Bonza chief executive Tim Jordan marked the Sunshine Coast launch by addressing the media in sneakers, purple socks, dark shorts and a floral short-sleeve shirt.

"We're about the many and not the few. We are about visiting friends and relatives and that's our focus," Jordan told Channel Nine news.

"That's good for stimulating competition across the country."

Bonza, brandishing a slogan "Here for Allstralia" and backed by US investment firm 777 Partners, said it planned to serve 17 mostly regional destinations.

It boasts a purple-themed mix-and-match crew uniform including sneakers, T-shirts, and shorts, and no rules on hairstyles, lipstick or tattoos.

The onboard menu includes craft beer, no-alcohol beer, and "snag in a bag"—a sausage in a bread roll.

But despite a rebound in air travel demand since the height of the

COVID-19 pandemic, Bonza may face significant headwinds.

The airline is likely doomed unless it changes its business plan, said aviation analyst Neil Hansford of Strategic Aviation Solutions.

Its business model of flying to secondary cities on new 737-8 aircraft, fares "in the gutter" and [mobile app](#)-only booking was not sustainable, he told AFP.

"They die or they have to come back with a more realistic [business plan](#)," Hansford said.

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