



MEDIA RELEASE

VIRGIN BLUE GROUP OF AIRLINES LAUNCHES THORPEDO BACK INTO THE POOL

SYDNEY, 2 February 2010: Australia's most successful Olympian Ian Thorpe today announced that he intends to compete at the trials for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London and that the Virgin Blue Group of Airlines has played a major role and will act as his official airline.

At a media conference in Sydney, Ian confirmed that he had applied this morning to be reinstated on the international drug-testing register.

Speaking at a press conference today, Ian said: "While there was a time in my life that I thought I would never swim competitively again, things have changed, and I'm very excited to once again be back in the pool."

"When I initially spoke with Virgin Blue about the prospect of competing again at the Olympics, I wasn't completely sure that I would be able to do it, but they were happy to back me. In fact, I told them it was a 50/50 chance and they wanted to support me regardless.

"Today I can say that I am now 100% mentally and physically committed to competing at the Olympic trials and am doing all in my power to best prepare for them and beyond."

The partnership between Ian Thorpe and Virgin Blue will see Virgin Blue as Ian's official airline, supporting him in his training program for the Olympic Games.

Virgin Group of Airlines CEO and Managing Director John Borghetti said: "Virgin Blue is thrilled to support the return of one of Australia's biggest sporting legends, and our most successful Olympian, to the pool.

"We have been supporting Ian over the past few months as he began his initial training. We were willing to support him even when he was still unsure about whether he could get back to that elite level, as we believed his focus and dedication as a world champion would see him succeed in the pool.

"It's also very timely that we're launching our new V Australia service to Abu Dhabi and Europe, as it will provide the international travel required for Ian's intensive training program. We're very excited that Ian will be flying to Abu Dhabi on Virgin Blue's first-ever flight Sydney-Abu Dhabi flight on February 24.

Swimming Australia Head Coach Leigh Nugent said: "Ian is a considered and mature young man and I know he hasn't made this decision to return to competitive swimming lightly."

"His return to the pool will be a huge bonus for our sport and particularly for the Australian Swim Team as we look to prepare for London 2012.



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“He looks to be in pretty good shape, and I know he’s been enjoying being back in the water and training to keep fit. But now that he’s confirmed his intention to compete, we can really increase his training and make good steps towards further success.

“We know he is an outstanding athlete and with application and commitment I know he will also make a success of this comeback.”

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