



## **FLIGHT CENTRE TAKES OFF IN ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST**

THE famous Flight Centre travel brand is spreading its wings in Asia and the Middle East.

The iconic leisure travel brand, which was established in Australia in 1981, has announced plans to open its first Middle East shop in Dubai.

Flight Centre shops have also opened recently in Hong Kong and Singapore, as part of the company's ongoing plan to expand its global footprint by 6-8% annually.

"Almost half of our 2400 shops and businesses globally are located outside Australia and we're now closing in on 100 corporate and leisure travel outlets in Asia and the Middle East," Flight Centre Limited (FLT) Asia-Middle East executive general manager Rob Flint said.

"We see the region as a solid growth opportunity and are developing a network of leisure travel shops that will operate alongside our more established corporate travel businesses in India, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

"Together, these leisure and corporate businesses are making solid returns.

"During 2011/12, they generated more than half a billion dollars in total transaction value and contributed more than \$6million in EBIT to FLT's overall results."

FLT's Asia-Middle East leisure travel network now includes:

- Three Flight Centre shops in Singapore
- Two Flight Centre shops in Hong Kong, plus three head office-based sales teams
- Two sales teams in mainland China. These Shanghai-based teams predominantly service phone and email enquiry; and
- 13 shops in India, where Flight Shop is the company's flagship leisure travel brand

The first Flight Centre shop in the United Arab Emirates is due to open later this month in the Gold and Diamond Park on Dubai's Sheikh Zayed Road.

“In terms of leisure travel expansion, our intention in Asia and the Middle East initially was to leverage the Flight Centre brand’s strength and to target the ex-pat market, many of whom would have been familiar with our offering,” Mr Flint said.

“Our leisure travel offerings have, however, already established a strong following from local customers, particularly in Singapore and Dubai, where we have previously established a web and call centre presence.

“Customers are typically looking for outstanding service from expert consultants who have firsthand knowledge of the product they sell and go out of their way to find the right product to suit the client.”

The Flight Centre leisure brand was first exported to New Zealand in 1987.

During the ensuing 12 years, the brand was exported to the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa and the United States.

In Asia, the Flight Shop brand was launched in India during 2008/09, with the first Flight Centre branded shop opening in Singapore in June 2011.

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