

Etihad is set to ramp up the pressure on Qantas when it starts daily flights to Perth in July 2014 with a vow to target high-yielding corporate customers.

The long-awaited Perth services from the airline's Abu Dhabi hub start on July 15 and will initially use 262-seat Airbus A330-200 aircraft with 22 seats in business class and 240 in economy class.

It will bring to 35 the number of weekly flights operated by Etihad or Virgin between Abu Dhabi and Australia.

"Eighty of the top 300 Australian companies have their headquarters in Perth and many of these have commercial interests in Africa and the Middle East," James Hogan, Etihad CEO said. "Equally, many UAE businesses have a strong presence in Australia, particularly in the agribusiness, resources and tourism sectors.

"We anticipate that this will translate to strong demand for our new services.

"On the cargo front, we will aggressively pursue a stake of the current volume of outbound freight and will look to develop additional revenue streams from areas that have not yet been fully developed."