

AIRSIDE INVESTMENT: DUBAI



TOM ALLETT
SPOKE TO
EMIRATES
AND DNATA
ABOUT THEIR
RECENT AIRSIDE
VEHICLE FLEET
CHANGES.

Since our last Middle East edition, a number of airside vehicle investments have been made at the two Major Dubai airports by Emirates and its ground handling partner dnata. Back in November, Emirates began to introduce a new fleet of buses with a carrying capacity of 63 (33 seated and 30 standing). They are used to ferry Emirates' passengers between the

terminals and its aircraft at remote stands at Dubai International Airport (DXB). Ten of these new Cobus diesel-powered buses were already in use by the end of 2018 and, at the time of writing, more than 40 were in service. The fleet will comprise 128 vehicles by 2020. Adel Al Redha, Emirates' Executive Vice President and CEO said: "In line with our 'Fly Better' brand promise, Emirates has

taken the decision to invest in our own customised buses at our Dubai Airport hub. Together with our latest transport management system, the new buses enable us to provide our valued customers with a more comfortable ride and smoother connections." Emirates said it was the first airline in the world to introduce airside buses that have equal standing and seating capacity, a significant improvement on standard airside transfer buses which usually prioritise standing room and offer minimal seating. The new buses also have ramp access and fold-up seats to make travel easier for customers who use wheelchairs or are travelling with baby strollers. Other customised features include: ambient lighting, an intercom facility to contact the driver, microphones for announcements

and flight information systems inside the buses that display the destination details to all on board. In addition, the bus fleet is managed from a control room by Emirates' airport services team together with its ground handling partner, dnata. Replacing manual processes, airside passenger deployment and driver assignments are now handled via resource planning software which Emirates said has improved deployment efficacy through reduced waiting times and more efficient routings at one of the world's busiest airports.

Environmental Initiative
Another initiative, launched by dnata, involves both of Dubai's major international airports, DXB and World Central (DWC). Robert Powell of dnata Technical

Services explained that back in 2017 dnata launched a refurbishment programme for selected categories across its 12,000-strong fleet of ground services equipment items. Since the start of the programme, more than 100 units have been zero-hour refurbished at the dnata Technical Services maintenance base, including aircraft lower and main deck loaders, towbar-less aircraft tractors, passenger stairs, conveyors belts and baggage tractors. Mr Powell said the extended life-cycle of the assets reduces waste generated from disposal and reduces engine emissions, whilst ensuring all are updated to the latest safety and quality standards.

Meanwhile dnata Cargo has replaced the majority of its diesel-powered forklifts

with electric alternatives. Mr Powell said this has reduced the carbon footprint of dnata's cargo operations in Dubai by 80%, saving 200,000 litres of fuel per year, and reducing CO₂ emissions by 47 tonnes per year. As for battery-powered items, dnata currently operates more than 150 pieces of electrically powered GSE items in the UAE, including fork-lifts, baggage tractors, conveyor belts and a conventional Push Back Tractor. A number of hybrid ramp cars have also been introduced, replacing diesel vehicles. To date, dnata has 50 of these Toyota Prius hybrids at the two Dubai airports and, looking forward, Mr Powell said that "green vehicles" whether they are electric or hybrid-powered, are a "prime consideration" in all dnata's fleet planning.

Emirates airside bus fleet renewal is on course to have 128 Cobus vehicles in service by 2020. (Emirates)

At least 50 Toyota Prius hybrid ramp cars are in use across the two main Dubai airports. (dnata)

