

## **Aviation industry aims high at annual conference**

New Zealand's aviation industry will come together next week to celebrate excellence and chart a path to grow the industry to \$16bn industry by 2016.

Currently worth \$10billion, the industry is looking to increase exports from \$3.8bn to \$6bn and increase domestic efficiencies by \$3.8bn. Over 100 speakers and 70 companies will be in Rotorua for the Aviation Industry Association (AIA) annual conference between 4 – 10 August.

Irene King, Chief Executive of the AIA, said "We are confident we can reach \$16bn which will bring \$24bn of downstream economic benefit to the economy. That's a lot of productive wealth - and the good thing about aviation is that we are connected throughout the regional economies."

New Zealand's aviation industry is a global leader in all aspect of the business including precision engineering; advance IT applications in tracking and monitoring; engineering; and aircraft performance.

The path to success will see the industry target key markets such as China, India, Indonesia and the South Pacific; promote education and training; and work collaboratively with government to improve the industry's safety performance and productivity.

Irene continued: "Most New Zealanders are surprised at the size and diversity of the sector. It creates high value-add jobs with the average salary around \$80k and in terms of size and contribution, matches parts of the agri/food industry.

"This is backed by excellence and professionalism from our engineers engaged in repair maintenance or overhaul to those who supply products and services to the industry."

The industry will also recognise its global leaders in Rotorua by awarding the Richard Pearse trophy for innovation and excellence at the Rotorua Events Centre on Thursday night at its awards dinner.

Last year's winner was Altitude Air New Zealand's interior design and outfit company who are building a world class reputation as the most innovative design/fit out company for the B777 and Boeing Business Jet (BBJ) markets. Altitude provides a full range of services to the commercial airline and VIP jet interior markets. These services include customised interior products, interior reconfigurations and VIP completions and refurbishments.