

MEDIA RELEASE

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Wellington Airport to commence with resource consent for runway extension

Wellington Airport will now apply for resource consent to extend the runway for long haul flights following Wellington City Council's vote of support this evening.

"The runway extension is one of the most significant developments Wellington can do to boost its economy," said Steve Sanderson, Wellington Airport's Chief Executive.

"We are thrilled with the Council's decision to support the resource consent process. The economic benefit for the region is substantial with over 1,000 people flying long haul to and from Wellington every day."

Mr Sanderson said that a runway extension of around 300 metres to the north is the best way to ensure the airport can enable viable long haul services.

The tourism generated by a long haul service is estimated to contribute \$44m per year and provide over 300 jobs. An expected increase in international students would also contribute around \$70m a year.

"The resource consent process will take around two years, with Wellington Airport and Wellington City Council each committing \$1m to the extensive process. It will cover all aspects involved with the extension, especially the environmental and economic impact and will ensure the community is consulted," said Mr Sanderson.

The estimated cost of the extension is \$300m. To put this figure in context, the new Christchurch Terminal cost over \$200m, long haul aircraft are over \$320m and the Auckland Convention Centre is around \$400m.

The strong demand for long haul is supported by a highly mobile and affluent Wellington market. Wellington has the highest GDP per capita in New Zealand, higher wages and a lower cost of living. These factors, coupled with the highest proportion of business travellers, are a compelling proposition for long haul flights.

"Even the time saving for travellers from significantly improved connections to the rest of the world is estimated at \$40m each year," said Mr Sanderson.

The runway extension is likely to take 5-7 years from the consent process to full operation. The extension would enable twin aisle jets such as the B787, A350 and B777 to fly direct to Asia.

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