

Media | Release

Monday, 30 September 2013

Totem Pole restored and repositioned

Christchurch's Totem Pole is again standing on Memorial Avenue.

The totem pole had stood at the roundabout outside Christchurch Airport for more than 30 years, until it was removed in June last year for conservation work recommended by a timber conservator.

Christchurch Airport CEO Jim Boulton says over the past year the totem pole has had considerable preservation work on both the timber and the paintwork, with permission from descendants of the Cherokee Chief who carved it in 1959.

"The totem pole was a gift from the Oregon Centennial Commission and the Portland Zoological Society in appreciation of hospitality shown to Operation Deep Freeze personnel," says Mr Boulton.

"It originally stood in Little Hagley Park and moved to the airport in 1980. CIAL has maintained contact with Chief Lelooska's descendants and had their permission to remove the totem pole to do the work we have done.

"We have the descendants updated on the conservation work and will send them photos of the totem pole in its new position."

That new position is on Memorial Avenue, overlooking what will be the airport's Spitfire Square retail development.

BACKGROUND FACTS:

The Totem Pole of Friendship was carved in 1959 by Indian Chief Lelooska, a descendant of a long line of chiefs of the Cherokee Nation. It is a smaller replica of a similar pole in the zoological gardens in Portland, Oregon. It stands 9m high and weighs 545 kg. Each of the figures on it are symbolic, with the Thunderbird at the top honouring airmen who made the first supply drop at the South Pole in October 1956.

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Christchurch Airport – bringing the world South

Christchurch Airport welcomed 5.5 million passengers in the past year, ranking as New Zealand's second largest airport. The airport occupies a unique position economically, as the South Island's busiest and most strategic air connection to the world's trade and tourism markets. 85% of international visitors to the South Island are welcomed and farewelled at Christchurch Airport.

In addition, the airport plays an important role as the South Island's major domestic hub servicing all New Zealanders, enabling passengers to connect to a full spectrum of destinations throughout New Zealand. Christchurch International Airport is a major driver of the regional Canterbury economy, generating airport precinct related jobs for nearly 6000 people.

Government policy currently offers 'Open Skies' over Christchurch until 2017, giving favourable consideration to airlines offering new services to and from the city.

Christchurch Airport is owned and operated by Christchurch International Airport Limited (CIAL). CIAL was established as a limited liability company in 1988, and ownership of CIAL is now shared by Christchurch City Holdings Limited with 75% and the New Zealand Government with 25%. The company's vision is to be recognised as New Zealand's leading tourist gateway.

Christchurch Airport is a carbon neutral company and has received carboNZero certification from Landcare Research following a detailed measurement and analysis process. CIAL is the first airport company in the Southern Hemisphere to attain certified carbon neutral status and is the second carbon neutral certified airport company in the world.

Visit christchurchairport.co.nz for more information.