

## Media | Release

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### **New Horizons for regional South Island**

A new fund has been announced this morning to help regional South Island tourism operators capture the tsunami of opportunities from the growing China market.

The 'New Horizons Fund' is a regional economic development programme initiated by Christchurch Airport, as part of the "South" initiative, which sees all 15 South Island regional tourism organisations working collaboratively in tourist markets.

The programme kicks off with a budget of \$100,000 and aims to support a minimum of two South Island tourism operators into the China market each year.

The airport's Chief Commercial Officer – Aeronautical, Justin Watson, says The 'New Horizons Fund' is a natural extension of the regional development work "South" has been doing through its 'China Ready' workshops.

"The aim is to grow the capabilities within the regions of the South Island, both helping local operators into this key market and building local capability to enhance the visitor experience for our Chinese visitors," he says.

"The programme will improve our product offering over time and will expand the economic benefits from this growth, beyond the main centres and into the regions. It will grow regional and seasonal spread across the South Island.

"We want to develop short and medium term business opportunities outside the high traffic tourism areas of the South Island and to ensure all regions derive economic benefit from China, so over the coming years we want to see increasing numbers of Chinese visitors reaching those places."

Mr Watson says applications for interested operators will open in July. The fund's support includes such areas as translating marketing material into Chinese, website, social media and signage, plus taking the operator on a 'Kia Ora South' trade mission to China.

"We've developed a lot of experience and expertise over the years we've been operating in China and we want to use this to help lift others into this market.

"The complete support package for the successful operators will also include the chance to operate with and be guided by Swallow Wang, our Shanghai-based Director of Sales. Swallow's connections and reputation in China are invaluable to

us and to South Island tourism operators and she has worked extensively with many of them over recent years to help them develop their footprint in China.”

Further details and application information will be available in coming weeks.

For further comment, please contact:

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### **Christchurch Airport – bringing the world South**

Christchurch Airport is the natural gateway to the South Island, which has long been the brand engine room of New Zealand.

It is the busiest and most strategic southern air connection to the world's trade and tourism markets, having welcomed almost six million passengers in 2014.

The airport is a major driver of the South Island regional economy, with some 6000 personnel working on the airport campus making it the largest site of employment in the South Island. It is one of the partners in the “South” initiative, which sees all 15 regional tourism organisations working collegially to promote the South Island.

Christchurch Airport’s new integrated terminal was completed in April 2013 and is a factor in the airport consistently being rated by an independent international quarterly travellers’ survey as the best airport in Australia and New Zealand.

Visit [christchurchairport.co.nz](http://christchurchairport.co.nz) for more information.