

Media | Release

Tuesday, 19 June 2012

Totem pole removed for conservation work

The Totem Pole which has stood on the roundabout by Christchurch Airport for more than 30 years has this morning been removed to undergo conservation work.

The Totem Pole was carved in 1959 by Chief Lelooska, a descendant of a long line of chiefs of the Cherokee Nation. It is a smaller replica of a similar pole in Portland Oregon and was a gift to the people of Christchurch from the Oregon Centennial Commission and the Portland Zoological Society, in appreciation of hospitality given to personnel of Operation Deep Freeze.

It was shifted from Hagley Park to its current location in 1980. The totem pole has not undergone any maintenance during its three decades at the airport and recent inspection by a timber conservator indicated the paint work and wood require some maintenance.

Christchurch Airport CEO Jim Boulton says CIAL staff have been in contact with the descendants of Chief Lelooska and had their approval for a Maori (Waitaha Whanau) powhiri to be carried out prior to the removal.

He says the airport company will also provide a transcript and photos of the ceremony to the appropriate First Nations representative and notify the Oregon Centennial Commission and Portland Zoological Society progress of the conservation work.

The totem pole will eventually be re-positioned closer to the International Antarctic Centre and the base of the American Antarctic Programme, which has had strong links with Christchurch Airport for more than 50 years.

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Christchurch International Airport – New Zealand’s Tourism Gateway

Christchurch International Airport welcomes almost six million passengers a 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 5000 people.

Christchurch International 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 International 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.

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