

Media | Release

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Christchurch Airport responds to Air New Zealand flights changes

Christchurch International Airport (CIAL) Chief Executive Jim Boulton has said he understands the reasoning behind Air New Zealand's decision to cancel or reschedule some of its trans-Tasman and domestic flights in the wake of the Christchurch earthquake.

In total, twenty seven trans-Tasman flights have been cancelled for several weeks from April to July 2011. The flights are between Christchurch and Sydney, Christchurch and Melbourne, and Christchurch and Coolangatta.

"While it's disappointing to lose any services, we fully understand the position the airline is in," said Jim Boulton. "Air New Zealand is also rescheduling many of the remaining trans-Tasman flights to Christchurch which previously arrived in the late evening to now arrive in daylight hours. We welcome this move as it will be helpful for passengers wanting to transit to other centres and find accommodation outside Christchurch."

Over the next three months, seventy three flights between Sydney and Christchurch will have new departure and arrival times, as well as 54 flights from Brisbane and 62 flights from Melbourne.

"While Christchurch Airport is fully functional, the central city is just beginning its rebuilding work, and the accommodation capacity of the city has been seriously impacted," said Jim Boulton. "However, there are still over 6000 hotel and motel beds in Christchurch, and that number will only grow in the coming months."

"Our focus remains on aeronautical business," he stated. "We still want to grow the services into Christchurch and to retain all the flights we have."

Christchurch Airport is currently working with the tourism industry to develop a new strategy to ensure tourists continue to fly in and out of Christchurch Airport to travel in the South Island. The strategy includes having a central bank of available rooms in Christchurch, as well as transporting travellers to other centres to be accommodated.

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For further comment, please contact:

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Christchurch International Airport – New Zealand’s Tourism Gateway

Christchurch International Airport welcomed over 6 million passengers in 2009/2010, 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. 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.

Visit christchurchairport.co.nz for more information.