

Thursday April 18 – **STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 7PM**

Christchurch to Perth – direct

Direct flights between Christchurch and Perth will begin in December.

The Air New Zealand flights will operate twice a week from December 3 to April 26, and if they prove popular, they will become permanent.

Christchurch Airport CEO Jim Boulton says that's more than 19-thousand seats over 21 weeks and an outstanding boost for Christchurch and the South Island.

"This new service is the result of collaborative planning by two airlines and two airports – Air New Zealand, Virgin Australia, Christchurch and Perth airports," he says. "All four of us have long recognised the wisdom of offering these flights and have now found timing to suit everyone.

"We know South Islanders want to visit Perth for the warmth and stunning beaches, while Western Australians want to drive around our scenery they see in travel brochures. They also never get snow, so we know they're keen to come here to ski."

Perth Airport CEO Brad Geatches says "We have been working collaboratively for more than a year to establish this new service and we are delighted that Western Australians and South Islanders will have this exciting travel opportunity. We are confident this will be a successful route and are delighted with Air New Zealand's commitment to Perth. We look forward to welcoming the new service in December."

Tourism Holdings Limited CEO Grant Webster says "This is great news for the South Island and New Zealand tourism. As an operator in both Perth and Christchurch, we can see the opportunity in Western Australia both in-bound and out-bound. Perth is basically our largest Australian branch now and shows on-going growth."

John Thorburn, Chief Executive of Ngāi Tahu Tourism agrees. "Direct flights into Christchurch from Perth is great news. We believe Western Australian visitors will stay longer and do more activities, making this market an attractive opportunity for both Ngāi Tahu Tourism and the wider industry."

Mr Boulton says one of the attractions of the direct flights is time saved.

"Travellers can save more than three hours flying direct when compared to stopping over somewhere else, so that's very attractive to both business and leisure travellers," he says.

“The new direct flight between Christchurch and Perth will offer both economy and business class seats on a B767-300 and will offer the ‘seats to suit’ product. In other words, there’s something for every traveller going in either direction.”

Mr Boulton says more than 25,000 people travel between Christchurch and Perth every year and others have said they would make the trip if there were a direct flight. He says the new direct service offers another benefit for trans-Tasman travellers.

“At the same time Air New Zealand is commencing the direct 767 services to Perth, we will also benefit from capacity improvement on the AirNZ service to and from Sydney – with some of these also operated by B767 aircraft. It’s a win-win.”

The flights are likely to boost the airfreight between the two areas. According to Statistics New Zealand, last year, the total trading value of airfreight between Christchurch and Perth was NZD\$475 million, or in volume terms, 300 tonnes.

Background facts and figures re new Christchurch to Perth Alliance partners service

- Largest origin/destination market on the Tasman not served by direct services
- Volume between WA and NZ is nearly 300,000 -100,000 of it into CHC, South Island and WLG
- 6.6% annual growth since FY07
- Origin destination passengers between CHC and PER is more than 25,000 a year
- If successful, the service will be considered for year round schedule
- Period: 2013 December 4 to 26 April 2014 (21 weeks), twice a week

Flt No	Route	Dep	Arr	Day
NZ 161	CHC PER	1540	1800	Wed & Sat
NZ 162	PER CHC	1910	0620+1	Wed & Sat

- B767-300, 232 seats
- Total seats 19,488 in 21 weeks
- Configuration: dedicated Business Class cabin and Economy Seat to Suits products (excl Works Deluxe)
- Air New Zealand operated CHC-PER in April 1989 1x weekly

Air freight and business

- The total trading value of airfreight between CHC and PER in 2012 was NZD\$475 million
- The total trading weight of airfreight between CHC and PER in 2012 was almost 300 tonnes
- A recent business survey suggests 17% of international round trips between CHC & PER used first/business class

Source: Statistics New Zealand and CIAL data

About Perth, WA

- 2.4 million population, growth of 2.9%, more than double national growth of 1.4%
- 32.7% residents are born overseas
- More than half of all advanced mineral and energy projects are based in Western Australia
- 63 of top 300 companies in Australia have head offices in Perth – strong contributor to business travel
- WA has the national's highest rate of short-term overseas holidaymakers
- WA's gross state product per capital is the highest in Australia

Images of WA attractions available

For further comment or images, please contact:

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Christchurch Airport – bringing the world South

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 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 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.