

12 August 2016

By email

Nigel Corry
General Manager Environment Management Group
Environmental Regulation
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
Wellington

Re: Wellington International Airport's proposed runway extension – application no WGN160274 & SR357837

Dear Nigel,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Wellington International Airport's proposed runway extension. Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA), the peak industry body representing the tourism industry, would like to provide a letter of support.

The tourism industry is New Zealand's largest export sector, earning \$11.8 billion (17.4%) of New Zealand's foreign exchange earnings (YE Mar 2015). Tourism in New Zealand is a \$81.6 million per day and \$29.8 billion a year industry. It directly and indirectly supports 12.1% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand. That means 295,908 people – one in eight – are working in the visitor economy. MBIE's New Zealand Tourism Forecasts 2016-2022 show that international visitor numbers are expected to grow by an annual 5.4% and total international spend is forecasted to grow by an annual 7.5% to 2022.

TIA recognises that significant investment in infrastructure is required to cater for strong tourism growth. We support major infrastructure developments (e.g. airports) where the investment decisions are made with due diligence and clear evidence of tangible benefits to the visitor economy.

Improved regional dispersal is a key goal of the tourism industry growth framework Tourism 2025. In this context, it would be useful to understand more about the 'pull' factors of having a direct service from an Asian or US hub to Wellington. More work and an understanding of itinerary building/ future visitor flows modelling is needed to clearly understand where leisure visitors will travel to after arrival in Wellington and what travel routes are likely (e.g. arrive Wellington – upper South Island, arrive Wellington – full South Island, arrive Wellington – lower North Island, arrive Wellington – full North Island, and a combination of these). Once this insight is available and clearly articulated, it will assist in building the picture of improved regional dispersal from the proposed runway extension.

Careful consideration needs to be given to the funding structure, especially as this relates to competition for other priority infrastructure projects. While the proposal potentially has significant air connectivity benefits, there is concern over the reliance on local and central government funding for the proposed runway extension. It would be valuable to have a deeper understanding of the range of other funding channels that may be available, e.g. Infratil and/or overseas investment channels (as per the drive by NZTE to seek these for infrastructure development projects).

TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

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We would welcome the opportunity to participate further in any follow-up process, including any formal meetings, to ensure that the potential impacts on tourism are adequately understood and constructive feedback is provided.

Thank you for providing TIA with the opportunity to provide feedback on this proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me for more information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris Roberts
Chief Executive