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Media release

Greater Hunter on mission inviting New Zealanders to visit region with new direct flights

Wednesday 26 September 2018

Tourism industry leaders from Newcastle, Port Stephens and the Hunter Valley are today bound for New Zealand on a trade and tourism mission to showcase the region's beautiful sandy white beaches, award-winning food and wine, and world-famous coastal city, experiences and culture.

On 22 November 2018, the Greater Hunter Region will welcome the first international flight from Auckland opening up a new direct, in-demand, tourist destination to New Zealand.

Newcastle Airport, in partnership with City of Newcastle, Destination Port Stephens and Hunter Valley Wine & Tourism Association, Newcastle Tourism Industry Group and Destination Sydney Surrounds North, will meet with key tourism industry partners and travel agents in Auckland to promote three of the most desirable international destinations in New South Wales.

Newcastle Airport CEO, Dr Peter Cock, said, "We can't wait to welcome the influx of international visitors to our region and the innumerable benefits it will bring to the local community and regional economy."

The new international route, operated by Virgin Australia three times a week between 22 November 2018 and 17 February 2019, is set to drive significant community benefit, including \$6.1 million to the local economy, 60 additional jobs and over 9,000 visitors to the region over the 13 week seasonal service.

Destination Sydney Surrounds North General Manager, Glenn Caldwell, said the new international flights are a fantastic opportunity for the region and having a strong coordinated representation in the New Zealand market will certainly make the most of the opportunity.

"The collaborative spirit of the region has ensured continued and unified representation of the Greater Hunter Region on an international stage. We are extremely grateful to our destination partners, and for the ongoing support of Destination NSW and Destination Sydney Surrounds North, in providing our region with the international connectivity it deserves," added Peter.

"Whether for new global business connections, couples seeking a leisurely long weekend, or friends and family visiting loved ones, travellers can be enjoying the best of both countries in a little over 3 hours.

Our region has a strong passion for international travel and support of the new route has been extremely strong. New Zealand is our number one unserved market, so it is fitting that the first flight through our new international facilities service Auckland," said Peter.



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In addition to several official meetings, the trade mission will host a function for New Zealand travel agents and wholesaler, and an exhibit at the Flight Centre Travel Expo on Saturday 29 September, which attracts over 10,000 consumers to promote the new services and travel to the Greater Hunter Region.

Ends.

[Media contact](#)

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Notes for the Editor:

Newcastle Airport <https://www.newcastleairport.com.au/>

Newcastle Airport Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/ntlairport/>

Newcastle Airport Twitter Feed: <https://twitter.com/NTLairport>

Newcastle Airport Master Plan: <https://www.newcastleairport.com.au/corporate/about/masterplan>

Astra Aerolab <https://astraerolab.com.au/>

About Newcastle Airport

- > Newcastle Airport is the second international gateway into New South Wales and the second busiest airport in the state.
- > Serviced by Jetstar, Virgin Australia, QantasLink, Regional Express, and FlyPelican to nine direct domestic destinations and onward to more than 65 worldwide destinations.
- > Direct international flights to Auckland New Zealand will operate 22 November 2018 - 17 February 2019. Operated by Virgin Australia, the 13-week seasonal service is the first international route in 16 years.
- > In March 2018, a direct service to Adelaide commenced operated by FlyPelican. Adelaide represents the first new major city route since the introduction of Gold coast in 2004.
- > In 2017, Newcastle Airport had a record number of passengers pass through the terminal - 1,276,463 passengers.
- > The record throughput is a result of 25-month consecutive year-on-year monthly passenger growth recorded up until December 2017.
- > A record-breaking 4,823 passengers travelled through Newcastle Airport on Thursday 24 November (the day before Newcastle Supercars). The same weekend (Thurs-Mon), saw more than 21,000 through the Airport.
- > In February 2018, Newcastle Airport welcomed its 17 millionth passenger through the terminal since 1995. 2018 will see the 18 millionth passenger.
- > Newcastle Airport is the gateway to Australia's largest regional economy, with more than \$43 billion annual output and 48,500 businesses.
- > A significant economic driver, Newcastle Airport contributes more than \$1.1 billion to the state's economy each year. Of this, \$300 million is direct to the visitor economy, supporting 3,300 jobs.
- > Newcastle Airport is internationally ready, the international arrivals and departures fit-out completed in August 2017.
- > In its 70th anniversary year, Newcastle Airport continues to work with its airline partners to increase the number of flights to our current destinations, to add direct flights to even more destinations, and to work tirelessly to secure more international destinations.
- > The more people that choose to fly from Newcastle Airport will provide evidence to the airlines that the demand truly exists and that our region deserves more.
- > On 22 March 2018, Newcastle Airport released its 60-year Master Plan, which includes a 20-year blueprint for growth, projections and business development of the Airport.
- > 30 minutes north of Newcastle, Newcastle Airport is located adjacent to RAAF Base Williamstown on land leased from Department of Defence.
- > Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd is jointly owned by Newcastle City Council and Port Stephens Council and is governed by an independent, skills-based Board of Directors.