

# media release

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## **Hunter delegation to explore trade and tourism links with Auckland**

A regional delegation of business and civic leaders will travel to Auckland next week to explore opportunities in trade, tourism and collaboration.

The delegation, hosted by the Hunter Business Chamber and Newcastle Airport, will highlight the enhanced opportunities for business exchange offered by direct flights between Newcastle and Auckland. Virgin Australia began a seasonal service between the two cities in November.

The delegation includes Newcastle Lord Mayor, Cr Nuatali Nelmes, Port Stephens Mayor, Cr Ryan Palmer, and representatives from the tourism, business and industry sectors.

Hunter Business Chamber CEO Bob Hawes said there was much untapped potential for business and community interaction between Auckland and the Hunter.

“There are many similarities in the economic profiles of our regions that potentially provide good synergy for business, as well as parallels in our journeys of post-industrial revitalisation, diversification and urban renewal,” he said.

Newcastle Airport CEO Peter Cock said the purpose of the trip is to promote the significant business and economic benefits provided by the direct flights between Newcastle and New Zealand.

“The Newcastle to Auckland seasonal route has been well received by the community since its launch in December, with Christmas/New Year loads particularly strong; this trip will further strengthen ties between the two cities and establish business relationships to drive demand for this connection to continue,” he said.

The delegation will leave Newcastle on Sunday night and spend two days in Auckland. They will participate in a forum with business leaders from Auckland on Monday 4 February, hosted by Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development.

Delegates will tour the revitalised Wynyard waterfront precinct, now a community and innovation hub, and meet with business and civic leaders, including the Mayor of Auckland, Phil Goff, and former NSW government minister Craig Knowles, Austrade’s Senior Trade Commissioner in Auckland.

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