

## Media release

### Successful Newcastle to Auckland season comes to an end

Monday, 18 February 2019

The final flight from Auckland touched down in Newcastle on Sunday, marking an end to Newcastle Airport's current 13 week international season.

The service, which launched on 22 November 2018, was the first international route in 16 years for Newcastle Airport operating three days a week over the summer months.

Speaking today, Newcastle Airport CEO, Dr Peter Cock was buoyed by the public's response and way the staff had managed the new international capability.

"From our perspective, the Newcastle-Auckland service was a great success across a range of measures.

"Passenger numbers grew strongly throughout the season and the airport has proven itself to be a capable international facility. We are currently in negotiations to continue the service next season and are confident of continuing to fly to our close neighbour," he said.

"Ideally we want to grow that international presence and are hopeful that political support will allow for upgrades to the runway we access from RAAF Base Williamstown. We could then provide our region with the airport they truly deserve. An airport that can fly, not just to New Zealand, but to LA, Seoul and Tokyo," he added.

The seasonal route was well received by the local community, with many taking the opportunity to visit Auckland for the first time. Surveys undertaken at Newcastle Airport showed that most people flying the route were making only their first or second visit to New Zealand.

"These direct flights have been instrumental in enhancing opportunities for business exchange and building connections with our neighbours across the Tasman," said Dr Cock.

"We recently partnered with the Hunter Business Chamber to send a regional delegation of business leaders to Auckland to strengthen ties between the two cities and establish business opportunities. We hope it's the start of a prosperous relationship."

Tourism industry leaders from the Newcastle, Port Stephens and the Hunter Valley also collaborated to provide a unified representation of the Greater Hunter Region in the New Zealand market.

"New Zealand is Australia's second largest inbound international market and the direct flights allowed the region to capture a greater share of this significant market," said Dr Cock.

**Ends.**

**Further information**

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#### Notes for the Editor:

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

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

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

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

#### About Newcastle Airport

- > Named 'Major Airport of the Year' at the 2018 Australian Airports Association Industry Awards.
- > 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.
- > FY17/18 passenger results saw Newcastle Airport break its all-time FY record with 1,272,634 travellers passing through the terminal.
- > 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 December 2018, Newcastle Airport welcomed its 18 millionth passenger through the terminal since 1995.
- > 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 70<sup>th</sup> 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 Williamtown on land leased from Department of Defence.
- > Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd is jointly owned by City of Newcastle and Port Stephens Council and is governed by an independent, skills-based Board of Directors.