

Media Release | 9 August 2021

Auckland Airport resets precinct-wide infrastructure plan

- **Priority development: domestic travel to be merged into international terminal**
- **Demolition to get underway to enable the integrated domestic/international development**
- **Infrastructure development strongly matched to international aviation recovery**
- **Four major projects remain on hold until demand returns**

The groundwork is being laid for a new purpose-built domestic facility to be merged into the eastern end of the existing international terminal as Auckland Airport resets its post-COVID infrastructure plans.

Site preparation early next year will kick off the first stages of a project to move jet flights arriving and departing for major New Zealand towns and cities into a new domestic hub merged into the current international terminal.

“We haven’t wasted a day since the outbreak of COVID-19, using the time to plan ahead and develop a refreshed pathway for future infrastructure that is realistic, prioritises the right projects and is carefully aligned with aviation’s recovery,” said Auckland Airport Chief Executive Adrian Littlewood.

“The construction of a new domestic facility closely integrated with our international safe travel zone operations will provide a seamless journey between major New Zealand destinations and our global air connections. For Auckland-based travellers, a new transport hub with upgraded pedestrian, transport links, and car parking will offer a smooth connection into the terminal building,” said Mr Littlewood.

Auckland Airport had advanced design work and signed construction contracts for a new domestic jet hub prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, featuring a new pier, apron and airside dwell, food and beverage and retail spaces. It was one of the major infrastructure projects that were cancelled or deferred at Auckland Airport when the pandemic arrived.

“Even though international passenger numbers are currently at historic lows it is important to set the wheels in motion now in preparation for aviation’s recovery. Kiwis want a better domestic travel experience at Auckland Airport and that’s what we’re focused on delivering.”

The first stage of the project is expected to get underway in early 2022, relocating important back-of-house infrastructure that lies in the footprint of the planned domestic hub.

“We previously had around 30,000 people arriving and departing at the international terminal every day. That’s fallen by around 97% to just a thousand or so a day currently. We’re taking advantage of the downturn where we can, demolishing and relocating operations and services to clear the domestic hub site, while bringing forward upgrades of core utilities critical to the functioning of the airport while passenger numbers are low.

“The low-traffic environment has also allowed us to re-look at and refine the original design and construction phasing to arrive at what we think will be an even better end result,” said Mr Littlewood.

The first stage of work scheduled for early 2022 and costing around \$30 million will include:

- Demolishing and relocating the legacy eastern baggage hall, livestock holding area, and waste disposal facilities
- Relocating key utilities, including the international terminal power centre and truck dock
- Relocating the operations control centre and emergency operations centre
- Carrying out ground, services, and technical investigations.

Mr Littlewood said beyond demolition and enabling works the next major phase of development for the \$1 billion-plus domestic hub would be determined by a range of factors including the speed of aviation’s recovery.

“While our aeronautical development will be matched to the recovery of air travel, we are encouraged by the ramp up in New Zealand’s COVID-19 vaccination programme. It means that we can begin to look through the current situation and start to anticipate the recovery in air travel, and that is important for big infrastructure programmes, which are costly and take time to deliver. We probably have more certainty in our ability to plan now than we have had in the last 18 months since the pandemic began.

“We will be working closely with our key partners on the new domestic facility, everyone from the airlines to the government agencies operating at the airport. Our developments are very much built around other organisations also being able to deliver their services effectively and successfully, so they will be alongside us as we continue to advance the project.”

Air New Zealand Chief Operating Officer Carrie Hurihanganui said: “We have seen a lot of changes to the way people travel in the last 18 months and we are looking forward to working alongside Auckland Airport to ensure a more seamless travel experience for our customers.

“While the return of international travel is still some way off, it’s important to continue to invest in improvements in infrastructure and services. By integrating a new domestic terminal into the existing international terminal, it will be easier for our customers to connect from domestic jet services to international flights, taking some of the stress out of international travel once borders open.”

BARNZ Executive Director Justin Tighe-Umbers said: “Having their passengers transiting seamlessly between international and domestic flights all under the one roof will be warmly welcomed by international airlines. This will be a major leap forward for travellers and the airport alike, and it is going to be well timed with the recovery of air travel into Auckland. We’re looking forward to working with Auckland Airport on making this vision a reality.”

The new domestic operation will be around three times the size of the current domestic terminal, when accounting for shared check-in (kiosk-based) for both international and domestic travellers. It will include large, light-filled dwell spaces with views across the airfield to the Manukau Harbour and expanded contiguous security screening.

“The programme is intentionally phased to allow us to align development with aviation’s recovery. Auckland Airport’s performance is strongly linked to international departures and arrivals, so the sustained recovery of trans-Tasman travel will be a key milestone to

guide the timing of the major construction stages. We've always expected construction will take five years to complete, and that view hasn't changed," said Mr Littlewood.

A new transport hub is also planned for outside the existing international terminal, providing a new covered pick-up / drop-off area, valet services, and covered car parks connected to the terminal by an enclosed pedestrian bridge. The transport hub will accommodate both commercial and public transport options for travellers.

"We are really focussed on making the journey for people travelling both within New Zealand and linking with international flights as efficient, fast and seamless as possible. This is a key factor in all our thinking."

Mr Littlewood said the domestic hub will initially accommodate jet operations (aircraft flying to the main centres). Regional services would continue operating from the existing domestic terminal building and move across to the main terminal building later.

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, Auckland Airport had begun delivering on over \$2 billion of core aeronautical infrastructure projects with all eight "anchor projects" in either construction or feasibility and design.

As part of its reset, Auckland Airport is continuing to advance four anchor projects as part of its wider infrastructure programme:

- \$160 million in upgrades to roading and new transit system (Northern Network and SH20B improvements)
- \$1 billion-plus new domestic hub
- Approximately \$200 million transport hub
- Around \$75 million in ongoing upgrades to the existing domestic terminal.

Anchor projects that remain on hold are:

- Expanded international airfield and taxiway capacity
- New cargo precinct
- New international arrivals area
- Second runway.

ENDS

Notes to editor

Since the outbreak of the pandemic Auckland Airport has continued to progress more than \$222 million in core resilience and maintenance projects and to limit disruption to travellers. These include:

- \$160 million in upgrades to the core roading network and to create a new transit system
- \$37 million replacement of runway slabs and pavement renewal
- \$7 million renewal of airfield fuel lines.

Project video available for [download](#)

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