**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Air Capacity Agreement with China is Hugely Positive**

The New Zealand Airports Association congratulates the Chinese and New Zealand governments on the doubling of air service capacity announced today by Transport Minister Hon Simon Bridges.

The increase in capacity to 42 services per week for the airlines of each country comes on top of the trebling of capacity agreed in 2012, said NZ Airports Chief Executive Kevin Ward.

Seasonal peaks in flights during the New Zealand summer will take up the existing rights for Chinese airlines, and some or all of these increases could become permanent.

“Air links between the two countries are the key to growing tourism, foreign students, business links and trade, all of which are hugely positive for New Zealand, said Mr Ward.

“The increase will provide the essential room for growth and more direct flights. Direct flights bring the potential for Chinese visitors to stay longer, and travel more around the regions. Spending by Chinese visitors in New Zealand is currently forecast to more than double to $1.7 billion by 2020.

New Zealand’s international airports welcome the potential to maintain their vigorous promotion of new and expanded services to China, and are committed to working with Government and Tourism agencies to ensure a coherent approach.

“The Minister and his negotiation team have served New Zealand very well,” said Mr Ward.

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