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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Commerce Commission releases draft report on Wellington Airport information disclosure**

The New Zealand Airports Association is fully behind information disclosure as the right approach for major airports, said Association chief executive Kevin Ward.

The Commerce Commission’s draft report on Wellington Airport’s information disclosure has been released today, the first step in an overall assessment of information disclosure for airports. Mr Ward said it should be regarded as ”an early progress report”.

Under the Information Disclosure approach, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch airports are required to release very full reports every year and each time airport charges are reviewed.

Mr Ward said the new Information Disclosure approach would provide more comprehensive information to all parties, including airline customers and the public.

“The airports are putting considerable time and effort into the information disclosures to ensure there is transparency about the basis for charges and annual results, and whether airports are investing appropriately for the future,” he said.

Mr Ward said the information shared with airlines has always been very full, but is now extremely comprehensive and open to public scrutiny – and airports agree this is the right thing to do.

Airport charges in New Zealand compare very favourably on an international basis. Charges for domestic flights in New Zealand are generally between 75% and 50% less than the Australian equivalents. Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch charges for international flights are in the mid to lower range of world-wide comparisons. This is supported by an independent report by Airbiz, reviewing an analysis of New Zealand airport charges provided by the Board of Airline Representatives New Zealand to the New Zealand Commerce Commission.

Mr Ward said while they’re only a fraction of airline costs, airport charges help provide essential tourism infrastructure for New Zealand

“It is critical for New Zealand that airports can make a return sufficient to justify on-going investment in tourism infrastructure.  If they couldn’t, airports would not be able to keep up with future growth in passenger numbers, larger aircraft coming on the scene, or new safety requirements,” he said.

The Commerce Commission is reviewing the whole information disclosure system, with Wellington’s draft report first because its five-year cycle of price-setting is a few months ahead of Auckland and Christchurch airports. The Commerce Commission will look at those airports in coming months.

Mr Ward said the picture needs to be fleshed out with those other two airports before it will tell much and needs to run for a period of time before any clear conclusions can be drawn.

“A key part of the information cycle will be the analysis the Commission does each year on airport performance. None of those analyses and summaries has been done yet. That’s where you will get the trends and highlight any opportunities for improvement,” Mr Ward added.

Kevin Ward

Chief Executive

New Zealand Airports Association

Note: Mr Ward is on leave and not available for further comment until Monday 5 November.

NZA chairman Jim Boult is available for comment, via 021 450 202.