

## **Media Release | 22 February 2017**

# **Auckland Airport welcomes Sichuan Airlines**

Auckland Airport welcomes the announcement that Sichuan Airlines will start flying between Auckland and Chengdu in China from June this year.

The service will operate three times a week on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday using an A330-200 aircraft with direct flights taking 13 hours.

Acting Aeronautical Commercial General Manager Scott Tasker, says Sichuan Airlines is expected to add 81,000 seats a year to and from China and deliver an estimated \$102 million annual boost to the New Zealand economy.

“Sichuan Airlines will provide the first direct flight from Chengdu to New Zealand and will cater for the growing numbers of Chinese visiting our country. On average each Chinese visitor spends approximately \$4,300\* while here and they are increasingly travelling more widely around the country.”

“For New Zealand travellers, Sichuan Airlines offers the opportunity to fly direct to Chengdu, the thriving capital of the Sichuan Province which is home to the World renowned Giant Panda Research Base, home of the panda.”

Mr Tasker says Sichuan Airlines decision to fly to Auckland comes at a time when Auckland Airport is investing more than \$1 million every working day on its core aeronautical infrastructure.

“The major upgrade of our international departure area is well underway, as is the expansion of Pier B of the international terminal which will add two more gates that can each accommodate an A380 or two smaller aircraft.

We are also progressing the design of the new domestic section of our combined domestic and international terminal, and undertaking further improvements to our roads and public transport infrastructure. This level of infrastructure investment will likely continue into the near future,” says Mr Tasker.

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For further information, please contact:

Lisa Mulitalo

+64 27 801 9377

[lisa.mulitalo@aucklandairport.co.nz](mailto:lisa.mulitalo@aucklandairport.co.nz)