

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# AIR NEW ZEALAND INCREASES FLIGHTS TO TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

Air New Zealand has reaffirmed its commitment to trans-Tasman services from Auckland to Cairns by announcing an increase in its services from three to four a week from November 2008.

The additional seat capacity follows a meeting over the weekend in Auckland between senior executives from the airline's commercial and network planning divisions, and David Rose, Tourism Tropical North Queensland's Group Director for Marketing.

"As a major network carrier Air New Zealand was at the top of our list of international airlines to speak to following the decision by Qantas Group to reduce flights into Cairns. We've traditionally enjoyed a very close working relationship with Air New Zealand, and as part of TTNQ's four point plan we wanted to meet with their key decision makers as quickly as possible to protect and if possible grow existing seat capacity," said Mr Rose.

The region's tourism operators will further benefit from a major rescheduling of all of Air New Zealand's services into Cairns. Flights from Auckland will all depart at either 6.45am or 10am on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, providing daylight service in both directions. Additionally, the new timings will provide better connectivity for Air New Zealand's North American services along with Asian and domestic routes.

In previous high seasons, Air New Zealand has operated a mixed range of aircraft on the Auckland – Cairns route, and at various departure times. The carrier believes that a more streamlined approach will improve the profitability of the route, and increase its appeal to passengers.

While frequency will reduce again to the current three per week service from February 2009, Air New Zealand's confidence in Tropical North Queensland as a preferred tourism destination for Kiwis has been applauded by TTNQ Chief Executive, Rob Giason.

"The additional seat capacity, combined with the re-timed departures, will have a practical and positive benefit for our region and its tourism operators," Mr Giason said.



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“New Zealand remains one of our most important markets. It has been reliable and steady and the opportunity now exists for us to focus on growing it much further.

“We will continue to work with our partners at Tourism Queensland to further develop a joint marketing strategy with Air New Zealand to ensure those seats are filled not only with Kiwis, but Canadians, Americans – and even Japanese, considering Air New Zealand’s services into western Japan.”

Mr Giason added that, like Tropical North Queensland, Air New Zealand was experiencing significant growth in the China market, and had expressed an interest in working with the destination to develop joint Auckland/Cairns combinations for Chinese visitors.

**ENDS...**

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