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### Wellington Airport Runway Extension Proposal feedback

We, Dr Anne MacLennan, Liz Springford, Dr Scott Metcalfe, and Dr Russell Tregonning, are making this submission on behalf of OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council.

OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council represents health professionals around NZ who are calling for urgent and fair climate action – with real health gains now and for our future.

#### OraTaiao strongly opposes

- the runway extension proposal
- Wellington City Council helping the airport finance a runway extension.

There is a growing international understanding of the links between climate changes and health. The Lancet Commission has described climate change as [a global medical emergency](#) – and potentially the greatest global health opportunity this century.

[There is also now a clear global climate path](#). For the first time (less than two months ago), the entire world agreed on a plan to reduce climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming to 2°C – and aspiring to 1.5°C.

The world has also agreed on a future trajectory that will see more and more ambitious emissions reductions – culminating in emissions neutrality in the second half of this century. The totality of emissions reductions plans add up to at least 2.7°C – which means we can already assume that the promised global emissions cuts will need to almost double (at least). As developed nations are expected to lead, we need to [plan for a zero emissions Wellington](#) in less than a generation.

The more Wellington region can rapidly reduce all corporate and city greenhouse gas emissions including investing in low/zero emissions infrastructure, the better our future prospects, health and well-being. [The bottom line is that all investments need to be considered within the context of climate change](#) – including the proposed Wellington Airport runway extension.

[Successful thriving cities will be those who invest in low/zero emissions](#) infrastructure for their residents, not high emissions white elephants. The Wellington region needs to rapidly reduce climate-damaging emissions. Our local economy must decarbonise for future success and jobs growth.

With the whole world headed in a low emissions direction, we also must increasingly consider all sources of emissions. Wellington needs to help [build the 'global fence at the top of the cliff'](#), before the increasing 'ambulance demands at the bottom' overwhelm us.

Climate changes are increasingly affecting the global economy and society. [Climate changes have much wider implications than local extreme weather events](#) – although we already know these can

be costly. Much bigger economic and societal impacts on the Wellington region are likely to result from the economic fall-out and heightened conflicts arising from a world struggling with extreme weather events, crop failures, water shortages, changes in disease patterns and resource shortages.

Aviation causes perhaps near 4%-5% of global warming (through both CO<sub>2</sub>, non-CO<sub>2</sub> greenhouse gas emissions, and altitude effects) and aviation GHG emissions will likely double or even quadruple by 2050.\* And it is but a minority of people in the world who can afford to fly.

Substantial funding appears to have been allocated to promoting the runway extension, before any real analysis of the viability of the extension. Climate change appears almost invisible – there is no mention of ‘climate change’ etc. in the summary document for this consultation.

Disturbingly, airport runway discussion to date seems to have assumed a world where our climate is not changing, and expensive promotion has preceded analysis of the business viability of extending the runway. We note that majority shareholder Infratil’s parent company Morrison & Co states on its website that it has a controlling stake in four airports and that the Airport Group “boasts a strong track record of driving airport growth...”

OraTaiao therefore strongly opposes both the runway extension proposal and minority shareholder Wellington City Council helping the airport finance a runway extension. Although we note that the international aviation industry appears to intend to continue to reduce aviation emission intensity over the coming decades, the bottom line is that, right now, each flight (especially international) adds enormously to each passenger’s overall emissions footprint.

Thank you for this submission opportunity – and we also welcome any opportunities to meet with Wellington Airport, Wellington city councillors and/or officials to discuss this submission.

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\* Analysis for the UN International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) indicates aviation currently contributes around 2.0-2.5% of current total annual global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but “discussions over such proportions are of limited value. What is important is the total of emissions over time”. It projects, in the absence of policy intervention, aviation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions alone increasing 2 to 4.5 times by 2050 (“aviation emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> are projected to increase over 2005 levels of 0,2 Gt C yr<sup>-1</sup> by 1.9 to 4.5 fold (0.37 to 0.89 Gt C yr<sup>-1</sup> ) by 2050”). In addition, high-altitude flights near or in the stratosphere means non-CO<sub>2</sub> altitude-sensitive effects may increase the total impact on human-made climate change significantly, perhaps close to a 4-5% cumulative effect (i.e. near 4-5% of radiative forcing). The IPCC has estimated that aviation’s total climate impact is some 2-4 times that of its direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions alone (excluding the potential impact of cirrus cloud enhancement).

Aviation’s contribution to climate change. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), 2010.

[http://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Documents/EnvironmentReport-2010/ICAO\\_EnvReport10-Ch1\\_en.pdf](http://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Documents/EnvironmentReport-2010/ICAO_EnvReport10-Ch1_en.pdf)

IPCC. Aviation and the Global Atmosphere: A Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge University Press, 1999. [http://www.grida.no/publications/other/ipcc\\_sr/?src=/climate/ipcc/aviation/index.htm](http://www.grida.no/publications/other/ipcc_sr/?src=/climate/ipcc/aviation/index.htm)

Jardine CN. Calculating the environmental impact of aviation emissions. Environmental Change Institute Oxford University Centre for the Environment, 2005. <http://climatecare.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Calculating-the-Environmental-Impact-of-Aviation-Emissions.pdf>