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Adrian Littlewood to step down as Chief Executive of Auckland Airport

Auckland Airport Chief Executive Adrian Littlewood has advised the Board of his intention to step down towards the end of this year after nearly nine years in the role.

Auckland Airport Chair, Patrick Strange, said that during a period of tremendous change, Mr Littlewood has made an exceptional contribution to the business.

“From his appointment as Chief Executive in 2012 up to the emergence of COVID-19 early last year, Adrian has led the organisation through a period of significant growth and development across all areas of the business while delivering strong shareholder returns,” said Mr Strange.

“Over the past year, Adrian has shown his considerable leadership skills through some of the most challenging times the business has ever faced. With the sudden and highly disruptive impact of COVID-19 on the company’s core business, Adrian has led a business response that has not only ensured the health, safety and wellbeing of Auckland Airport staff and travellers, but has also ensured the business is well placed for the future.

“The Board would like to thank Adrian for his ongoing outstanding work for both Auckland Airport and his contribution to the wider New Zealand business community.”

Mr Littlewood said he is proud of what Auckland Airport has achieved in his time as Chief Executive and although he has remained in the role longer than he planned, he said it was important to see the company through the COVID-19 response and subsequent focus on safely re-opening borders.

The restart of travel to Australia and the Cook Islands has marked a key milestone and he said the company is now well-placed for recovery. Working with the Government and other partners on future planning for border re-opening and resetting the airport infrastructure development plan will continue to be his focus in his remaining time with the company.

“It is a great privilege to lead one of New Zealand’s major companies and the team at Auckland Airport. All our people work incredibly hard and they have demonstrated remarkable resilience and commitment to the company and our customers during both times of significant growth and the uncertainty brought on by the pandemic. I am particularly proud of the role they have all played in both the immediate response and the gradual recovery since COVID-19 hit our shores, ensuring New Zealand’s critical air connections remain open.

“It is difficult to pick out highlights but there are a few that are worthy of mention. While COVID-19 up-ended our multi-billion dollar airport infrastructure development, the reset of our 30 year master plan and the start on its eight anchor projects and the hundreds of enabling projects is an ambitious but important programme that has set the path for restarting as the recovery builds. Our commercial property and retail businesses are also stand-outs, going from strength to strength and are now recognised as sector leaders among their peers.

“Finally, the creation of the Auckland Airport Ara Job and Skills Hub programme in partnership with government agencies, schools, and employers is a real highlight. The opportunity to use the airport’s influence and the scale of our major development programme to help local people get quality local jobs is something I hope has a lasting impact on our community.”

After finishing at Auckland Airport Mr Littlewood plans to take an extended break before making any decisions about future roles.

Chair Patrick Strange says the Board will commence a search for a replacement for Mr Littlewood, with both internal and external candidates considered for the role.

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