



## Generation Zero

This is Generation Zero's oral submission on Wellington International Airport's (WIAL) Notice of Requirement for the Wellington Airport East Site Project (Project)

Presented at Notice of Requirement hearing 20/05/21 by Arran Whiteford

Today I am representing a large chunk of people that are not in this room. I am representing Generation Zero, representing New Zealand's young people, the future. Generation Zero supporters made 285 submissions on this issue. These submissions showed that Wellingtonians really care about climate change and they really strongly believe that the Airport Expansion is completely against the direction Wellington is moving. These kinds of responses are commonplace nowadays—New Zealand's young people are fighting the fact that their future is being messed up, and they're asking for action on climate change now.

Action on climate change means stopping to build fossil fuels infrastructure, stopping our continuous growth in greenhouse gas emissions and that means stopping to expand Airports.

I have three main points in this submission.

The first, is climate change.

The second is, is climate change.

The third, is climate change.

Because climate change is the elephant in the room today. While climate change dominates policy making decisions in boardrooms round the country. The airport is wanting to extend without considering the effects of climate change. Which is absolutely ridiculous, because an airport extension will impact climate change, AND climate change will impact the airport. Climate change will continue to make flying less attractive, and will make the airport a burden on Wellington, a city that has committed to reducing emissions.

While Generation Zero recognises that the airport has taken positive steps towards reducing its operations emissions, the emissions which Wellington Airport counts are just 0.7% of the emissions from flights attributed to the airport. Wellington's greenhouse gas inventory includes a full 260,000 T CO<sub>2</sub>e from flights from this airport, and any increase in

emissions from more domestic flights will also be in Wellington's inventory. This matters because Wellington has pledged to reduce these emissions, which means Wellington will take steps to reduce these flights. Wellington has committed to mitigating climate change.

Climate change will change the world as we know it. Not just the natural world, sea level, temperature, biodiversity, weather. But the human world, migration, the economy, technology, culture.

Climate change has already changed our culture. Wellington and New Zealand are committed to climate action. Wellington City has declared a climate emergency and committed to net zero by 2050, the Greater Wellington Regional Council has declared a climate emergency and has a target to become carbon neutral by 2030. NZ as a whole has also declared climate emergency and announced a target of net zero by 2050. The public sector will be carbon neutral by 2025. This is matched by a lot of the private sector, who see that it is appealing to take climate action, for example the Warehouse Group has gone carbon neutral, Fonterra has set a target of reducing emissions by 30 per cent by 2030.

What these pledges and goals do in real terms, is first they make high emissions activities like flying very expensive, and secondly they make flying unpopular and inconsistent with the direction of the entity. Each time someone flies, companies or departments must pay cold hard cash to offset emissions, and they must justify why they're going against the direction of their charter.

We will continue to see more of these policies that are specifically designed to reduce demand for emissions heavy activities, like flying.

Generation Zero is EXTREMELY concerned that Wellington airport did not consider the impact of climate change policy or the direction the public is moving, when forecasting flight demand. Especially when flight demand is the entire reason why they want an airport expansion.

Just an example of how this should have been done - in the MBIE economic projections on another high emitting sector, energy usage in NZ. The forecasters take into account a price on carbon. They run scenarios with a price on carbon from 5 \$/T CO<sub>2</sub>e to 100 \$/T, this range is to cover a range of political scenarios. Whatever the outcome, we are expecting carbon emissions to get expensive, and this means that flying will get more expensive. It does not make sense that Wellington Airport is unaware of this, and expects unfettered growth.

In planning for its future, the airport didn't consider that the public sector is going carbon neutral in 4 years, that the country is going to be net carbon zero in 30 years, or the

hundreds of companies and individuals who are making their own pledges. And as a result, their demand model and their plans should not be taken seriously.

High emissions industries like flying are unpalatable to Kiwis, we're designing all sorts of policies to disincentivize flying, and as a result of the extra costs associated with flying industries like the Airport will become a drag on the economy.

And this is only the beginning. We see that consistently, the public wants to do more about reducing emissions. The next generation feel particularly strongly about climate action, and will have more of a voice as they age. 40,000 people marched on parliament demanding climate action in 2019, 40,000. 92% of Wellingtonians said in a survey said they want climate action now. Our culture has shifted, and it will keep shifting. Wellington wants to reduce its emissions. Wellington airport's expansion does not align with Wellington's directions.

Air travel contributed 11% of Wellington cities Greenhouse Gas emissions last year, and 45% of the growth since 2001. The airport plans to continue growth in the number of flights and emissions on the same trajectory. This kind of trajectory means not meeting Wellington's 2050 carbon zero goals. This kind of trajectory completely counters Wellington's climate ideology. This is definitely not palatable to modern Wellingtonians, remember the 92% who said climate action no matter what, and it definitely won't be acceptable in ten years time, as climate change becomes more of an issue for more people.

To summarise:

Wellington's airport expansion is based on flawed forecasts, it's contrary to the direction which Wellington people are moving in, and as a result is contrary to direction the economy is moving. Not only is the airport expansion unpopular it will become a burden on Wellington's economy. Wellington Airport Expansion will be Wellington's Tiwai point.

We are at the saddle between the two worlds, behind us is a world driven by energy from fossil fuels. In front is a world with emissions free energy.

The Airport expansion is a last ditch attempt to try to build fossil fuel infrastructure for the old Wellington. At this point, let's stop looking behind. Lets try and build a future for Aotearoa's rangatahi that's not completely shit. Please decline this designation.