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PRESS RELEASE

OPENING THIS FRIDAY Auckland, May 27, 2011

Novotel launches pioneering hotel at Auckland Airport

New Zealand's "most strategic hotel of the 21st century" opened by the Maori King and New Zealand Prime Minister just over 100 days from the kick-off of the Rugby World Cup

Novotel Auckland Airport was officially opened today by Kiingi Tuheitia and New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key, in a traditional dawn ceremony. The launch of the innovative hotel – just 50 metres from the international terminal – comes just over 100 days from the kick-off of the World Cup, and will provide a huge confidence boost to New Zealand tourism after the devastating Christchurch earthquake earlier this year.

One of New Zealand's most significant new tourism assets

The \$65 million hotel project has been developed by one of New Zealand's largest Maori entities, Tainui Group Holdings, in partnership with Auckland Airport and Accor, who operate the hotel.

Auckland Airport handles over 13 million passengers annually, projected to grow to 24 million by 2025, with 73% of all international visitors to New Zealand arriving or departing from Auckland. That figure is expected to grow substantially in the wake of the Christchurch earthquake, making the opening of the Novotel highly strategic for the country's short-term and long-term tourism needs.



A contemporary, stylish hotel that pays homage to New Zealand's heritage and traditional culture

"For the majority of visitors to New Zealand, the Novotel is the first and last impression they have of the country, so the design of the Novotel has been infused with subtle references to New Zealand's natural environment, culture, art and heritage," says General Manager, Paul Columbus. "We believe it will be a showcase for the best New Zealand has to offer,

"Part of the New Zealand experience is the close encounter with nature, so the hotel has been surrounded with distinctive indigenous plants, including Pohutakawa (NZ Christmas) trees, while the triangular architectural features of the building are designed to reflect the bows of traditional Maori 'waka' canoes."



There is a distinct green theme in the hotel's lobby where guests are greeted by a 'living wall' of indigenous plants that are nurtured by a hydroponic system. All the timbers used in the Novotel are 100% FSC-accredited Southland maple beech, which are harvested on a sustainably-managed basis, and are part of the hotel's commitment to become a fully certified Earthcheck (formerly Green Globe) hotel. Major effort has also been made to reduce energy and water usage in the

hotel's daily operations.

The design of the hotel has been undertaken by leading New Zealand architect and designer, Warren & Mahoney. Some of New Zealand's most promising designers and artists have been commissioned to work on the hotel's fit-out, and the locally-produced

items range from a vast, self-supporting spiral steel staircase in the lobby to a Maori patterned 'Patiki' screen in the restaurant, designed to represent abundance and 'manaakitanga' (caring for people).

While paying homage to the past and to Maori heritage, the Novotel is also very much a reflection of contemporary New Zealand, with the latest in communication technologies, including full arrival and departure monitors in the lobby to ensure that guests are kept fully informed of the latest plane movements.

A room that features the latest interior design trends and anticipates new ones

Novotel Auckland Airport is the first hotel in the Pacific region to have Novotel's new NEXT concept room. The room has been designed to give a maximum impression of spaciousness and freedom of movement. The bathroom is a key design feature and marks a significant shift from traditional hotel rooms. It is separated from the rest of the room by a transparent glass partition that can be covered by an internal privacy screen.



Windows are larger than standard and are double glazed so that there is no noise even from an Airbus A380 taking off. The lighting systems provide light where guests most need it. The bed is one of the new room's fundamental and most striking features and central to all guest activities: sleeping, working or reading. The bed is raised and framed by an upholstered headboard that follows the contours of the back perfectly, while providing another opportunity for New Zealand theming, images of the graceful, undulating indigenous *toi toi* grasses

"We offer the most innovative connectivity with a proper working desk and communications panel that can help convert a room into a mobile office," says Columbus. "We will also eventually be able to introduce room access via mobile phone – the first in New Zealand – so that a guest will be able to get off the plane and go straight into their room.

"A key to an airport hotel is its flexibility. Hence our 263 rooms offer everything from deluxe suites to superbly designed accessible rooms, which have been designed in consultation with experts rather than being just after-thoughts

"Fitness is an important part of an airport hotel experience, so our in-Balance Fitness gym has the most sophisticated equipment and we will also have special facilities for airline crews."

A comprehensive meetings hub

A major feature of the hotel is its conference centre, with 12 meeting rooms, capable of hosting conferences for up to 315 delegates theatre style. The conference centre is supported by a business centre.

An international restaurant offering the finest in local cuisine and wines

The Square restaurant offers all-day dining, with a menu featuring the finest in local produce. The Novotel is just a short drive from one of New Zealand's most famous vineyards, Villa Maria, and the wine list contains many Auckland-based premium wines.. There is also a separate private dining area for small groups.

Special Opening Deal

Rates start from NZ\$179 per night, but until the end of June, a 25% discount is offered on all rates. Bookings: www.novotel.com or via Accor Reservations Service or through travel agents.

The Novotel Auckland Airport is managed by Accor, New Zealand's largest hotel group with over 30 hotels in operation. Accor will open a second hotel at Auckland Airport later in the year – Formule 1 Auckland Airport. Hotel brands operated by Accor in New Zealand include Sofitel, Pullman, MGallery, Grand Mercure, Novotel, Mercure, All Seasons and Ibis.

About Novotel

As the mid-scale hotel brand within the Accor group portfolio, **Novotel** offers close to 400 hotels and resorts in 60 countries, situated in the centre of major international cities from business districts to tourist destinations. Novotel's consistently high standard of service contributes to the wellbeing of both business and leisure travellers: think spacious, modular-design guestrooms, balanced cuisine available 24/7, excellent meeting facilities, attentive staff, dedicated children's areas and rejuvenating wellness facilities. The Novotel group is a pioneer in sustainable development and all Novotel hotels participate in the EarthCheck worldwide environmental certification programme.

More information at Novotel.com

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