



## Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage

### AIDE MEMOIRE: EREBUS MEMORIAL: UPDATE ON MEETINGS WITH AIR NEW ZEALAND AND EREBUS NATIONAL MEMORIAL ADVOCACY GROUP

Date:	16 February 2018	Deadline:	19 February 2018
Reference:	AM2018/084	Priority:	High
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#### Purpose

- 1 On 15 February Ministry officials met, separately, with representatives of Air New Zealand and of the Erebus National Memorial advocacy group. Both meetings were positive and constructive, and will inform the detailed advice we will provide you about the memorial's development. In the meantime, this aide memoire gives you a flavour of the meetings and signals some of the key matters for future consideration, and indicates our likely recommendations about next steps.

#### Air New Zealand

- 2 Present from Air New Zealand were Captain David Morgan, Chief Operations Integrity and Standards, Mike Tod, Chief Marketing and Customer Service and Duncan Small, head of Government Relations. CE Christopher Luxton joined the meeting briefly at the end.
- 3 Air New Zealand representatives welcomed the government taking the lead on this project and confirmed their emphatic support, while also acknowledging that there are sensitivities, and that any consultation process would inevitably be delicate. They were keen to be assured that the process of developing the memorial will be consistent with Air New Zealand's own efforts to acknowledge and address the pain of the Erebus families, which the airline accepts was deepened by the way it dealt with the tragedy at the time. We confirmed the government's intent to work constructively and inclusively, and to respect the good work of Air New Zealand to-date.
- 4 Based on their experience working with family members they offered some suggestions for your proposed meeting with the families, including providing sensible advice about defining 'family member' and managing likely numbers. Their initial thought is that you consider holding a relatively informal gathering at Premier House in Wellington or at Government House in Auckland, where family members could have the opportunity to meet with you in small groups. Air New Zealand would be willing to attend the meeting, or to not attend, based on your preference. In either event, the company would provide assistance in making contact with the families, and other support as discussed and agreed.

- 5 In light of the likely delicacy of the consultation, we tested with Air New Zealand some thinking we had been doing around the desirability of a high profile individual being asked by you to work with government and stakeholders to ensure the integrity of the memorial development process. This was floated as a possibility only and no names were raised; Air New Zealand's initial response to the idea was enthusiastic, and we can expect that they will think further on this, and perhaps provide some recommendations.
- 6 We talked very provisionally with Air New Zealand about the potential nature and location of the memorial. Representatives expressed personal opinions that coincide with our own sense that Auckland would be a strong contender with respect to location. We confirmed to Air New Zealand that site selection was an early issue to address, because the site will determine the design parameters for the memorial.
- 7 We have more work to do to develop options for you to consider on the range of elements touched on above (and more), but are at this stage grateful for Air New Zealand's clear willingness to work constructively with us, and to give us in-kind support. (The issue of financial support or a contribution to the construction costs of the memorial was not raised by either party at the meeting.)

### **Erebus National Memorial Advocacy Group**

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- 8 Officials also met with members of the Erebus National Memorial advocacy group Rev Dr Richard Waugh and 9 (2) (a)
- 9 This too was a very positive engagement, and the members are clearly delighted by the decision to proceed with the memorial. We explicitly acknowledged the group's work in keeping the importance of Erebus in the public mind, but reinforced to its members that government is leading the memorial development project. Notwithstanding any disappointment that any of them may have felt that the group would not be contracted to manage the project, they were all very keen to play a positive role and look forward to learning how they can contribute.
- 10 This group does not speak for all Erebus families. It is clear there is a core of family members actively involved in this group and they are working to involve more. They advised that about 100 family members have now registered through their website. The number the group represents, and the number Air New Zealand considers it represents, are quite different. Neither does it claim association with all Erebus stakeholders – the recovery teams, for example, fall outside its purview. We will need to ensure, therefore, that our stakeholder engagement gives it due but not undue weight. But there is no doubt that the sincerity and commitment of its members and the participation of the 9 (2) (a) it has standing in the memorial development process.

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13 The issue of location of the memorial was raised by this group too, again with a preference for Auckland, and particularly for Auckland Domain (a site that Air New Zealand suggested would be ideal too). We confirmed to them that it was a priority to determine the site as soon as possible. The Domain has a number of advantages:

- TE901 departed from Auckland
- The majority of passengers on the flight were from Auckland
- Many of the family members still live in Auckland
- It is publicly owned land
- It is accessible for visitors, both local and from overseas.

We will meet with Auckland City Council to investigate this option further as well as look to other sites which would be suitable.

14 Since the meeting, an article has appeared in the media reporting Richard Waugh's criticism of Air New Zealand for their latest safety video (which features their support for climate change research in Antarctica) and their unwillingness to engage with his group regarding the memorial proposal. Dr Waugh is also critical of there not being a date set yet for your meeting with family members. No doubt the contact with media took place before the meeting with MCH officials and does not reflect the sentiments expressed in the meeting.

## Next steps

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15 We will:

- Continue to work with Air New Zealand and the Erebus National Memorial advocacy group on options for arranging a meeting with the families;
- Work with Auckland City Council to investigate site options;
- Follow up with Air New Zealand on eminent New Zealanders who could act as figurehead for this project;
- Report back to you on progress in early March.

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Heather Baggott  
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