AIR NZ BOOSTING HOUSTON TO DAILY OVER SUMMER

News / Airports / Routes

Air New Zealand's three-month old Auckland-Houston service is expanding from five times a week to daily over the upcoming summer holidays.

The nonstop service, which launched just before Christmas and is served with Boeing 777-200ERs, will run every day over a two-month period from December 5 2016 to February 5 2017, Air NZ said in a statement on Thursday.

Air NZ chief sales and commercial officer Cam Wallace said the decision to fly daily over the peak of summer highlighted the popularity of the route, which links Auckland with its Star Alliance partner United's largest hub, offering plenty of connection opportunities to the rest of the US.

"Sales are strong with Kiwi and Australian customers loving the fact they can now access the US midwest and south as well as key destinations such as Chicago and New York via Houston," Wallace said in a statement.

"We're also seeing good growth in the number of American travellers using this service to visit New Zealand and Australia. We look forward to offering even more options for customers through increased frequency on this route."

At the company's 2015/16 first half results presentation on February 25, Air NZ chief executive

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Christopher Luxon said Houston had made a positive contribution to the airline's network "from Day One".

Houston is one of Air NZ's five points in North America alongside Honolulu, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Vancouver. The NZ flag carrier also flies to Buenos Aires in Argentina. The airline has been making a big push in recent times to encourage more Australians, particularly those living outside Sydney, to travel to the Americas via its Auckland hub.

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