



Auckland International repeatedly crops up in lists of the world's top ten airports, and recently picked up two honours at the 2010 SkyTrax awards; it was named the top airport in the Asia-Pacific region for the second year running, and triumphed in the staff service excellence category. **Tony Gollin**, chief operating officer aeronautical, tells Mark Brierley how the airport plans to maintain its position.

**Tony Gollin**

Tony Gollin is chief operating officer aeronautical, responsible for providing a seamless service between Auckland International and its aeronautical customers. He also oversees the design, construction, operation and maintenance of airside and terminal buildings.



**Mark Brierley: Congratulations on your recent success at the SkyTrax awards. This has cemented your reputation for delivering a world-class passenger experience – how do you plan to build on it?**

**Tony Gollin:** We are very focused on delivering greater operational efficiencies and providing passengers with a greater range of choice. One of the continuous improvement initiatives at Auckland International is the rollout of an extensive Lean Six Sigma Service (LEAN) across the whole airport operation.

We are engaging all of the parties that influence the end-to-end passenger experience in a collaborative approach to efficiency. This initiative will be supported by the introduction of a continuous measurement system in the terminal buildings, which will be used to monitor the success and sustainability of improvements in passenger experiences that emerge from the LEAN process.

We are looking to use the “good-better-best” philosophy to expand passenger choice. The major redevelopment of our international departures area is well on target. Two new duty-free shops from JR/Duty-Free and DFS Galleria opened in May, forming what we believe is a world-class airport duty-free offering.

We have also expanded the parking options available to travellers and launched an online parking booking system. We see these initiatives as important platforms to build on our recent successes at the SkyTrax awards.

**What decisions are being made now to accommodate future increases in traffic?**

Our operational focus is on making use of existing airport infrastructure, using technology-based enhancements to improve passenger facilitation processes wherever appropriate.

We have just finished a major infrastructure investment programme that will accommodate foreseeable increases in traffic. We now want to make sure we optimise the use of this infrastructure in terms of processing efficiencies and avoiding wasteful capital and operating expenditure.

**Do your plans include associated infrastructure beyond the expansion and modernisation of the terminals themselves?**

Yes. Major road access improvements are being carried out by external agencies and supported by the airport; we're aiming for completion before New Zealand hosts the Rugby World Cup in October 2011. Two hotels within the airport precinct – serving different markets – will also be completed before the tournament.

**What physical benefits will the growth of the airport bring to Auckland, and New Zealand as a whole?**

Our latest economic impact study, completed in 2007, indicated that the airport makes significant contributions to employment and economic activity

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Around 70% New Zealand's international travellers enter or leave the country through Auckland International Airport.

within the Auckland region and nationally. Auckland International is also the second largest tourism infrastructure investor in New Zealand [topped only by Air New Zealand] and tourism is one of the country's largest foreign-exchange earning industry sectors.

### Passengers also rate airport staff as playing a key role in their experience; what differentiates your staff from other airports?

That's a good question. Airports are in the customer service industry, and although the quality of customer service provided is supported by physical infrastructure and technology enhancements, ultimately it is people who make the difference. The people that contribute to the end-to-end passenger journey experience represent many different organisations beyond the 310 staff employed by my company. More than 12,000 staff work within the total airport precinct.

I think what makes the difference at Auckland International is the working relationship and degree of collaboration between all organisations to enhance the overall passenger experience. The success of LEAN at Auckland is evidence of that.

Everyone involved in passenger services shares the common objective of minimising the amount of time it takes for a passenger to go through mandatory border and security processes. Time is a good proxy for service standards, and many things influence the real and perceived time taken to move through such a process – the general ambience of the processing environment, way-finding, process efficiency, self-processing opportunities, staff courtesy and so on. The staff aspect is a reflection of the New Zealand culture and authenticity. It is a factor which is central to Auckland International's branding as the first and last impression of New Zealand for international travellers.

### What are the other key drivers in terms of passenger handling?

Looking at a whole process solution, working from a detailed map of the passenger journey experience and using facts rather than conjecture. LEAN is an excellent tool to provide discipline in the review of process, and to generate improvement ideas from the very staff we rely on to interact with passengers.

### What can the industry learn from Auckland's success?

That the working relationship between the different organisations involved in the passenger journey experience doesn't have to be confrontational. With a tool like LEAN, collaborative outcomes can be arrived at. The passenger doesn't necessarily distinguish between the different organisations that contribute to their passenger experience. A bad experience in any part of the end-to-end process reflects badly on all of the organisations involved. ■

## Golden retriever



Each lost item is registered with a label and barcode.

Baggage service company bagport continues to develop its lost property services. The Swedish market leader operates in airports, train stations, bus terminals and within all sectors of public transport.

Using its unique web-based system, missingX.com, bagport offers a user-friendly software program, which helps the passenger retrieve their property as quickly as possible. Additionally, it records all the details related to the found items, i.e. receiving, registering, storage and delivery information, and, if appropriate, auction details.

The data is electronically captured, which enables printed receipts and barcoded labels to be tagged to each item, as well as statistical analyses and a snapshot overview of stored items for management review.

"Our system connects finders and owners to lost items," says Thorsten Meyer, sales manager for bagport. "It also helps secure passengers belongings.

"The bagport concept combines professional expertise and international experience," continues Meyer. "An additional benefit is that our range of products are effectively and economically offered in the form of one-stop shopping."

For bagport customers, the result is a comprehensive product and service package, and custom-made solutions for facilities in locations worldwide for all areas of terminal baggage service management.

In an increasingly competitive environment, airports need to reduce costs and generate a higher income. With the bagport system, airports can reduce costs or even turn costs into profits.

bagport offers a complete passenger service range without capital expenditure for its partners as the concept entails offering all solutions under one concession model.

Further information: bagport Website: [www.bagport.com](http://www.bagport.com)