

Market Release | 18 March 2025

Auckland Airport lands new long-term partnership with global duty-free operator

Auckland Airport announced today it has selected global travel retailer Lagardère as its future duty-free partner following a worldwide Request For Proposal (RFP) process.

With the French company successfully winning an eight-year contract to operate the airport's four duty-free stores, international passengers can expect to see the next evolution of duty-free shopping at Auckland Airport, bringing more magic to the traveller journey and delivering some of the best value to consumers seen in travel retail across Australasia.

Chief Commercial Officer Mark Thomson said Lagardère is set to transform the duty-free experience over the coming years, bringing an extensive suite of top global brands and undertaking a full refurbishment of all duty-free stores, including a major transformation of departures. The new partnership, which remains subject to Overseas Investment Office approval, is expected to begin on 1 July 2025.

"Over nine million international travellers flow through Auckland Airport every year and we know they're looking for great prices, world-class brands, and quality retail experiences as part of their journey.

"While we were impressed with the quality of all the proposals we received, Lagardère stood out with the most compelling offer that aligns with Auckland Airport's commitment to offer travellers an exceptional customer experience, and celebrate the best of Aotearoa New Zealand and the world.

"In selecting Lagardère, we are confident we have a partner that is a world-leader in duty-free shopping, which understands the New Zealand and trans-Tasman duty-free proposition. They have over 10 years' experience at AKL, most recently as part of the joint venture company LagardèreAWPL, trading as Aelia Duty Free. They also have global retail pedigree, operating in some of the largest airports in the Asia-Pacific region and in other locations around the world. As part of our new partnership, the duty-free offer will transition from LAWPL's Aelia and become a bespoke proposition for Auckland, operated by the separate entity Lagardère Travel Retail."

Mr Thomson said Lagardère and AKL are committed to delivering competitive prices to consumers and a wide range of product offerings to cater to all traveller segments.

"Ensuring a competitive proposition that delivers both customer value and growth was a key consideration in our evaluation process", said Mr Thomson.

More than 400 people currently work across duty-free stores at Auckland Airport under the LagardèreAWPL joint venture, and it's understood employees will transition to the new duty-free operator from July 2025.

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In 2023, Auckland Airport transitioned to a single-duty-free operator, following the global shift to online shopping and an evolution of aviation industry norms where airports have moved away from duplicated duty-free offers. Prior to the transition, a benchmark study in 2023 found only two of 112 other international airports of a similar size to Auckland Airport currently operate dual full-duplication models.

“We’ve had a new single operator model in place for almost two years and we’re thrilled with how it’s performed so far, despite economic challenges and the limited investment made in these stores over the period.

“The double up of products we saw in a dual model has now been removed, and this has enabled a 40 per cent increase in the number of brands on offer to customers over this period. Local New Zealand products also grew by 30 per cent, providing customers with a much-improved product offering,” he said.

Notes:

- Lagardère has been successful in its tender to operate Auckland Airport’s duty-free stores from July 2025 in both arrivals and departures. Lagardère’s duty-free offer compliments the international terminal retail experience with 30 other retail operators across more than 80+ international retail sites.
- Headquartered in Paris, France, Lagardère is one of the largest global duty-free operators with duty-free operations across 28 countries and in 105 airports.
- Auckland Airport communicated its intention and rationale for moving towards a single duty-free operator to the Commerce Commission, which made no objections to the proposed change. The single operator model has been operating since June 2023.
- At Auckland Airport, retailers are obliged to ensure their pricing is fair and competitive. Auckland Airport uses a third party to actively monitor prices against those of similar off-airport retailers or outlets at other airports, where appropriate.
- As well as the long trading obligations – often 20-24 hour trading days – Auckland Airport also considers factors such as the increased compliance and operating costs unique to the airport environment, including security, biosecurity, staffing and logistics.
- Duty-free is also available online for when travellers fly in or out of Auckland via The Mall.
- Lagardère is a separate entity to the current duty-free operator, Lagardère AWPL.

ENDS

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