

Media release

Air New Zealand and Contact Energy announce cornerstone support for NZ-based international leadership college

Air New Zealand and Contact Energy today announced an agreement in principle to provide \$100,000 each to the New Zealand United World College (NZUWC) Trust, becoming the first two corporations to help underwrite the establishment of an innovative campus dedicated to the education of tomorrow's global leaders.

The Rt Hon Jim Bolger, founding patron of the trust, welcomed the significant commitment to the project and said it opens the door to participation by other major corporations in New Zealand.

NZUWC is seeking a family of corporate sponsors to help finance a \$750,000 feasibility phase leading to a major international fundraising for construction and operation of the college.

"This is an outstanding opportunity for New Zealand to play an important role on the world stage where it really counts – with our next generation of international leaders", Mr Bolger said at the Wellington launch of the project last night (March 19).

Air New Zealand and Contact Energy executives hailed the United World College concept as a unique initiative marking New Zealand's commitment to leadership development in the world.

"We see our involvement in the NZUWC project as a long-term investment in our future leaders", said Contact Energy CEO David Baldwin. "We're delighted to be part of a family of like-minded companies that share our sense of what this could achieve for New Zealand and for the global community."

"Air New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to help the NZUWC move forward in creating this educational opportunity for students from around the world," Air New Zealand CEO Rob Fyfe said. "This concept aligns closely with the values, outlook and approach Air New Zealand seeks to establish within its own organization."

There are currently 12 United World Colleges across the globe, with Nelson Mandela as the international honorary president. The two-year, pre-university curriculum promotes academic excellence, personal challenge, global perspective and an ethos of service to society.

Health Minister David Cunliffe, an alumnus of the United World College campus in Wales, briefed an audience of government, industry and community leaders at the Wellington launch event today about his personal UWC experiences, and the opportunities a New Zealand-based UWC campus could offer to young people from around the world.

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Background on New Zealand United World College

United World Colleges seek to educate the leaders of tomorrow by identifying talented youth between the ages of 16 and 19 who possess a passion to make a difference. Successful candidates are granted two-year scholarships to study in an inspirational setting under a curriculum that fosters curiosity, teamwork, intellectual rigor, creativity, understanding of complex global issues and diversity of cultures.

The first United World College was established in Wales in 1962 by German education pioneer Kurt Hahn, who also founded the Outward Bound movement. There are currently 12 United World Colleges, with Nelson Mandela as the honorary international president.

United World College enrollment cuts across economic, religious, ethnic and political divides. The New Zealand campus will accommodate about 240 students drawn from 85 countries. A key component of the curriculum is an emphasis on service to society.

New Zealand United World College is a not-for-profit group. The project depends on the generosity of corporate and private donors. It is seeking to raise \$750,000 for Stage Two feasibility studies. A tentative site for the campus is expected to be announced by mid-2008 after a nationwide search.

A successful feasibility phase will allow the project to be marketed to international philanthropic organisations and private donors, with the goal of opening the campus by 2012.