To: Hon Andrew Little

Minister of Health

Dear Minister,

We are writing to you on behalf of Save Kāpiti Airport, a community group seeking to keep Kāpiti Coast Airport in operation.

As you may be aware, Kāpiti Coast Airport is an important resource for aeromedical flights to Wellington Hospital. It is used for refuelling helicopters and as an alternative landing site on the frequent occasions when weather prevents the use of Rongotai Airport by fixed-wing aeromedical aircraft.

You may also be aware that the current private owners of Kāpiti Coast Airport wish to close the airport and redevelop the land (although they state no plans have yet been formalised).

We wish to draw to your attention comments of Wellington Hospital Intensive Care Specialist Dr Alex Psirides on the risks if this happens:

Psirides also raised concerns that Kāpiti Airport was "facing an uncertain future”. For months, locals had been speculating the airport was to close permanently, but its owners said no such plans had been made.

If Kāpiti Airport did close, when Wellington was inaccessible because of poor weather or maintenance, district health boards in the lower North Island or upper South Island would have no access to tertiary care hospitals, which had "significant clinical risk for time-critical conditions, Psirides said.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/125651304/patients-lives-at-risk-seven-people-on-medical-flights-harmed-due-to-wellington-airport-runway-closure>

If Kāpiti Coast Airport is lost, the only paved other runway within 100km of Wellington will be Hood Aerodrome at Masterton, 80km from Wellington and requiring a long land journey over the Remutaka road. The nearest practical alternatives would be Ohakea and Palmerston North Airport, 130km away from Wellington.

Kāpiti Coast Airport is an important resource for the community, for Wellington disaster relief, and for aeromedical services. We are working with the Kāpiti Coast District Council and other community stakeholders towards an alternative that will see unneeded land developed while retaining the core airport and runway.

We hope that, as Minister of Health, you will support these efforts to retain an important medical resource.

We respectfully request that you seek further advice from your officials on the risks to the public’s health and safety in the event of Kāpiti Coast Airport’s closure, and that you raise this issue with the Minister of Transport, Hon Michael Wood.

Yours sincerely,

Save Kāpiti Airport