LEITNER to build Oceania's first urban ropeway

Ropeway manufacturer awarded contract for new link between the airport and the center of Queenstown (New Zealand)

Preparations for a genuine mobility revolution are currently underway in Queenstown, on New Zealand's South Island. In a competitive tender process that began in May, LEITNER has now been officially selected to build Oceania's first urban ropeway. It will connect Queenstown Airport via the Frankton bus station to the city center. The anticipated travel time is around 20 minutes and offers a reliable alternative to the heavily congested Frankton Road, as well as panoramic views over Lake Wakatipu and the Remarkables. The 200 million euro Queenstown ropeway network is expected to be operational by 2029.

Queenstown's unique geography, as well as high property prices, make expanding roads or constructing dedicated bus lanes extremely costly and slow. "For this specific urban transport application, ropeway technology stood clearly above the rest," says Ross Copland, CEO of Southern Infrastructure Limited. Southern Infrastructure is a privately owned company based in Queenstown, providing expertise, investment, and commitment to deliver the region's necessary infrastructure. The gondola lift plans are based on previous studies which found that a gondola lift from the airport to the city center would be the optimal transport solution for Queenstown. The project submitted by LEITNER envisages a gondola lift with five stations along three sections, with an hourly capacity of up to 3,000 people. Thanks to the route, the installation will not only create added value for tourism, but also contribute to the city's long-term infrastructure planning.

"Our first step with LEITNER is a pre-construction services agreement, which allows us to finalize the detailed engineering," Copland said. "That work will underpin a design-and-build contract when the project is ready to proceed to construction."

With the transition to the next project phase, both the substantive and technical foundations will now be further developed. This phase includes detailed planning and construction of the ropeway, as well as the preparation of comprehensive environmental and technical assessments. In parallel, structured consultations with property owners and the local

population are planned to develop the project transparently and to consider regional concerns at an early stage. Subject to the determination of the appropriate approval process and all necessary official permits, construction is scheduled to begin in 2027. The first section is currently planned to open in 2029.

LEITNER already has experience in New Zealand: The company has completed significant projects here such as the Coronet Express, the Sky Waka gondola lift, and the new 8-seater chairlift at Mount Hutt.

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