

MEDIA RELEASE

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Life cannot exist with zero risk

The NZ Society for Risk Management says that last Friday's alleged aircraft hijack hasn't changed the level of risk for other flights, and a knee-jerk reaction is therefore unwarranted.

"The fact that an unwanted event has occurred is certainly a reason to review security. However, it is not in itself a reason to implement additional major controls to prevent a similar event. What must be considered is both the potential consequences of the event and the likelihood of such consequences," said Mike Wood, Chairman of the Society.

The Society says that the issue of whether any changes to airport security are needed should be determined through a considered and competent application of conventional risk management methods, such as those set out in the joint Australian/New Zealand standard on Risk Management (AS/NZS 4360:2004).

The Society points out that 'safety' is not absolute. "When something is said to be 'safe', what this actually means is that it is 'sufficiently safe' - in other words, the risk is low enough to allow people and organisations to still achieve their objectives with sufficient certainty," said Mr Wood.

"The question to be considered is whether the overall objective of affordable air travel can be achieved with sufficiently low risk. The connection between affordability and risk level must also be carefully considered in the overall context."

The Society points out that New Zealanders would not be better off if increased air travel costs arising from more intense security measures had the effect of more people travelling on roads, which may be even more risky.

"It is also important to look very carefully at the extent that any additional safety measure actually changes the level of risk - particularly when the risk is already very low. For example, an Australian aircraft crew was attacked with a non-metallic weapon that had passed through a security screening process" Mr Wood added.

ENDS

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