



New Zealand's Aluminium Smelter MEDIA RELEASE

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NZAS to step down after quarter of a century supporting Kākāpō Recovery

Following 25 years helping to save New Zealand's iconic Kākāpō from extinction, New Zealand's Aluminium Smelter (NZAS) has made the difficult decision to step down as major sponsor of the Kākāpō Recovery Programme at the end of 2015.

"We are sad to be stepping down, however we are very proud to have played our part in helping to save this critically endangered species. There were only 49 Kākāpō when we first started, now there are 125," says Gretta Stephens Chief Executive and GM of NZAS.

"We initially signalled to our partners in 2003 that market conditions and a changing external environment meant our continued sponsorship was unlikely. However, we managed to continue underpinning efforts to save this iconic New Zealand bird for another 12 years. We notified DoC in August 2012 of our intention to exit at the end of this contract and unfortunately the current commercial situation has forced us to finally withdraw."

Commercial conditions continue to be very difficult for NZAS with issues around electricity and transmission prices and a very low aluminium price. In 1990 the aluminium price was NZ\$4,545 per tonne. Today that price has halved to NZ\$2,250 per tonne.

DOC Director-General Lou Sanson says DOC sincerely thanks NZAS for their long standing support of the Kākāpō Recovery Programme:

"With NZAS' support over the last 25 years Kākāpō Recovery has become a highly successful programme recognised around the world," he says.

NZAS began funding the Kākāpō Recovery programme in 1990 and has contributed \$4.5 million and over 1,100 employee volunteer days over that time.

Ms Stephens said, *"I am very proud of the support offered by smelter employees, with many of them expressing that their time spent on the islands over the years has been life changing. Employees have carried out maintenance to island infrastructure, as well as assisting with Kākāpō supplementary feeding and nest minding."*

Ms Stephens said, *"NZAS' contribution has provided 25 years of certainty for Kākāpō Recovery and helped to make it into the world-leading conservation programme it is today. I urge other New Zealand organisations to now take up the challenge."*

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About NZAS

The Tiwai Point smelter is a world class facility which contributes \$525 million to the Southland economy annually (10.5% of Southland's GDP) and supports more than 3,200 direct and indirect jobs in the region. In 2014, NZAS made \$366 million in payments to New Zealand suppliers, including \$47 million to suppliers in Southland. It is one of two smelters in the world producing ultra-high purity aluminium and the only one producing this using electricity generated from renewable sources.