

Before an Independent Hearings Panel
appointed by the Waimakariri District Council

under: the Resource Management Act 1991

in the matter of: Submissions and further submissions in relation to the proposed Waimakariri District Plan, Variation 1 and Variation 2

and: Hearing Stream 10A: Future Development Areas, Airport Noise Contour, Bird Strike and Growth policies

and: **Christchurch International Airport Limited**
Submitter 254

Speaking notes of Felicity Hayman (Company)

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SPEAKING NOTES OF FELICITY HAYMAN

Christchurch International Airport as a "slot-taker"

- 1 The impact of operational constraints on Christchurch International Airport (*Christchurch Airport*) is more significant than commonly talked about.
- 2 Because New Zealand is geographically located at the bottom of the world, and because Christchurch Airport is relatively small in the context of the global aviation network, Christchurch Airport is a "slot taker" airport. This means that we have to accommodate certain aircraft into and out of Christchurch when and if it fits into the global aviation network.
- 3 Christchurch Airport has to work with the "slot maker" airports. These are the constrained airports such as Sydney, Singapore, Los Angeles and Heathrow, as they determine the global aviation schedule. The team at CIAL do a significant amount of work to get routes, services and airlines into Christchurch - it is a significant investment from those airlines to send their aircraft to Christchurch given our geographical location.
- 4 It is challenging for CIAL to get those airlines to fly to Christchurch and it is therefore critical that we fit in with the global aviation network. This would be incredibly difficult, if not impossible, if Christchurch Airport was subject to operational constraints. In short, if we are unable to accept aircraft at a time that suits the global aviation schedule, certain airlines simply would not come to Christchurch.

The need for 24/7 operations

- 5 As well as the "slot taker" function outlined above, there are other reasons why Christchurch Airport must retain its ability to operate 24/7.
- 6 New Zealand needs two 24/7 international airports; these are Christchurch and Auckland airports. This is necessary in the event of an emergency and also to enable maintenance works on the runways (Auckland airport only has one runway). The operational teams of both airports work closely to ensure maintenance works can occur when required.
- 7 Air New Zealand also operates a significant amount of maintenance work out of Christchurch International Airport. Aircraft fly in at the end of the day, engineers work on the aircraft overnight, and it is then put back out into the aviation network. If Christchurch Airport was not operating 24/7, that maintenance work would be in jeopardy.

- 8 The importance of having two 24/7 international airports in emergency situations was highlighted in the Auckland floods. Christchurch Airport accommodated 2,000 displaced passengers as a result of the closure of Auckland Airport operations.
- 9 The ability for Christchurch Airport to operate 24/7 is also critical in the context of freight - some of the critical freight services arrive and/or depart during the night.
- 10 The wide body international services that fly into Christchurch provide freight movements that account for a significant portion of the economic benefits that Christchurch Airport enables. Without these services, the freight opportunities would disappear. This is what happened during the Covid-19 pandemic, with the New Zealand government working with the airlines to establish special freight-only flights due to the importance of airfreight for the movement of goods and therefore the economy.

Noise management approach in the Christchurch District Plan

- 11 There is a comprehensive noise management framework in the Christchurch District Plan. All of the relevant information outlining what CIAL does is available on our website.¹
- 12 In relation to complaints:
 - 12.1 There is an online form on our website which includes information such as the time that the noise event was experienced, the type of noise and other information. We typically respond within 12 hours. CIAL then works with Airways to understand the movement that resulted in the complaint and we feed this back to the complainant. This is usually sufficient, but if not the complaint is escalated to the airport noise liaison committee. This has only been required twice and was post-covid.
 - 12.2 In general, people that lodge a complaint have experienced a change in noise level, or change in the environment that they have come to expect. The complaints we receive are often in relation to helicopters (usually emergency), engine testing, GA night flights (training pilots). These people are generally located really close to Christchurch Airport, or really far away including outside the noise contours.
 - 12.3 In my experience, the number of complaints is not a good indicator of the number of people that are highly annoyed. Complainants are often a specific type of person, and often

¹ <https://www.christchurchairport.co.nz/about-us/sustainability/noise/>

have other non-acoustical factors influencing their lives. Complaining about noise becomes an outlet for some people.

- 12.4 Relating to this, I recently visited Texas where it was explained that North American airports have to deal with hundreds of noise complaints. More recently, these airports are having issues with Artificial Intelligence where one person will get a bot that constantly lodges complaints. This demonstrates that the number of complaints is not broadly indicative of community annoyance.
- 12.5 CIAL receives a relatively low number of complaints as there are very few people living in close proximity to Christchurch Airport. Through our success in the planning framework, we have reduced the number of people living in areas subject to 50dB Ldn and therefore the number of people receiving the effects.
- 12.6 We have attempted to re-do the Taylor Baines Study in order to understand how annoyed the residents of Christchurch are by aircraft noise. However, at the time we realised that we were not making enough noise to generate sufficient annoyance. We are reasonably close to pre-covid levels of aircraft movements at Christchurch Airport, but we aren't quite there yet.
- 13 The airport noise liaison committee used to have representation from all three districts. The Christchurch District Plan contains explicit direction as to who must be on the committee and this does not include representatives from Waimakariri or Selwyn Districts. This is an ongoing workstream for CIAL.
- 14 CIAL has an acoustic treatment programme for dwellings within the 65dB Ldn compliance contour. Each year, when the annual compliance contour is measured to show how noisy Christchurch Airport was in the previous year, properties exposed to 65dB Ldn are offered acoustic attenuation. Because we have done such a good job keeping people away from Christchurch Airport, there are very few properties exposed to 65dB Ldn at this time. There are currently 13 properties – we have delivered acoustic treatment to two and we are in the process of doing so for another two.
- 15 Other management techniques that we adopt include the agreement with Airways that no aircraft depart on the north-west runway (i.e. they only land on it) as that covers existing residential areas. Furthermore, we have a good neighbourhood policy to try and manage night-time training operations to ensure that this is done away from populated areas.

Conclusion

- 16 The reason that CIAL puts so much effort into these processes, with the goal of avoiding amenity and reverse sensitivity effects in the first place, is because operational constraints would have a major impact.

- 17 CIAL undertakes a significant amount of work in the noise management space to ensure we are doing as much as possible to reduce the effects that our operations have on the community.

21 February 2024

Felicity Hayman