

**Before the Hearings Panel on the Proposed Waimakariri District Plan**

In the matter of: The Resource Management Act

And

In the matter of: of the hearing of submissions and further  
submissions on the Proposed  
Waimakariri District Plan – Stream 12:  
Rezoning of land

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF GRANT NORMAN MACLEOD  
ON BEHALF OF WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE PROPOSAL BY DANIEL SMITH**

**DATED: 11 MARCH 2024**

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## **Introduction**

1. My full name is Grant Norman MacLeod. I am the Greenspace Manager at Waimakariri District Council.
2. As part of my role, I am responsible for asset operations for the Rangiora Airfield. As part of this the Airfield Manager and Safety Officer (one role) reports to my position. Within this role I am responsible for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of the Airfield via the Airfield Manager and Safety Officer.
3. I hold a Bachelor of Recreation Management from Lincoln University, and Arpro accreditation through Recreation Aotearoa.
4. In my evidence I will provide an outline of how the Waimakariri District Council (the Council) manages the Airfield on a day-to-day basis. For the purpose of this evidence, Council refers to the asset operator of the airfield, this being part of the Greenspace Unit activity.

## **Airfield Manager Role**

5. The Airfield Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of the maintenance and operation of the Airfield as a physical asset. The Manager works alongside the Airfield Advisory Group to ensure contracted activities are delivered and works with lease holders and users to ensure applicable rules and airfield operating procedures are adhered to.
6. The Airfield Manager is required to represent Council at regular Airfield Advisory Group meetings, to provide a point of escalation for operational matters or concerns that are raised at these meetings and provide feedback to the Group on matters raised. Administration support for the monthly meetings is also provided. The Chair of the Advisory Group engages with the Airfield Manager should any points of clarity be required, or to inform of any incidents or issues that need Council input.

## **Operations and maintenance**

7. As owner and operator of the Rangiora Airfield, the Council is responsible for all general maintenance of the Airfield, excluding leased sites. The Council has a routine maintenance plan, and undertakes this work on a regular basis through its contractors, including:
  - Mowing of the runway, taxiways and around hangars.
  - Spraying of runway demarcation lines and runway numbers and then application of lime to numbers as necessary
  - Spraying around bollards and carparks
  - Control of invasive weeds
  - Pest control
  - Fertiliser application
  - Toilet cleaning
  - Rolling of the airfield runways and taxiways
  - Runway marker board painting
  - Topdressing around new hangar aprons and formation of grassed taxiways

- Windsock checks and liming of base
- Maintaining access gates
- Tree assessments
- Carpark maintenance.

The Council is also the owner of the Rangiora Airfield Safety Manual. The responsibility for amending and re-issuing the manual lies with the Airfield Manager and Safety Officer.

Part of the weekly and regular safety checks involve the following:

- Weekly runway checks, this is normally conducted up to three times per week
- Rabbit culls, this is done to reduce the number of holes or burrow entrances as this can cause issues for aircraft
- Safety updates at monthly advisory group meetings

### **Leasing, landing fees and operational budget**

8. The Council is responsible for leasing certain defined areas of the airfield for the erection of hangers, and other spaces for fuel tanks. This is administered by the Council Property team who oversee the management of existing leases, transfer of leases and enforcement of lease terms as required. Leases are set based on the ground rental rate agreed by Council, in consultation with the airfield Advisory Group. Currently there are around 90 hangers at the airfield, 107 total lease spaces and approximately 150 aircraft.
9. The Council administer landing fees for any aircraft using the airfield. Aircraft movements are monitored using the Automated Intelligent Movement Monitoring (AIMM) system, and users are invoiced based on the number of landings (with some agreements in place for multiple use charge limits) at the airfield, on a monthly basis. The Council also manage the operational budget for the airfield which covers the following key areas:
  - Operations
  - Insurance
  - Health & Safety
  - Mowing
  - Electricity
  - Rates
  - IT Services (AIMM System)
  - Runway renovations
  - Phone connection
10. This budget has been set to cover the costs that have been identified as being required to operate the airfield. Some of the operational costs for the airfield are covered by the income received from ground rental and landing fees, however this does not fund the entire budget so additional community rates funding is required.
11. The Waimakariri District Council is also responsible for capital developments and improvements to the airfield (excluding private hangars and non-publicly owned facilities e.g. fuel pumps). This

would include the provision of any development plan that would support the continued use of the airfield.

12. At present there are no more hanger spaces or land to develop hangers available on the main part of the airfield. The Council presently has a waiting list of nearly 40 people seeking hanger space. While some development could currently be enabled on the Priors Road frontage via the Airfield Purposes designation within land owned by the Council as part of the airfield this would necessitate some considerable expenditure, including servicing and the upgrading of Priors Road which is currently a shingle surface. The opportunity cost for the airfield community would bring into question the ability to support the likes of community-based groups such as Canterbury Aero Club versus additional hangar space. The airfield community is restricted in its ability to participate with no further hangar space and only limited space on Priors Road that the Council administers. The Daniel Smith development would help in this regard and allow for the backlog of demand to be addressed in the most cost-effective way for the district. Without this development, there will likely continue to be a disconnect between demand and supply of facilities at the airfield as well as increasing future costs should the Council look to develop the Priors Road land.

### **Economic impact**

13. The airfield is noted as having a positive impact on the local North Canterbury economy. The airfield itself provides a base for what is considered General Aviation. It is utilised locally by recreational flyers, general aviation pilots and some commercial operators whose operations supports airfield activities or wider North Canterbury industries. The industry support is focussed on those providing services to agricultural land as well as maintenance and supply operators to support aircraft owners and operators.
14. There are a number of people who have employment as a result of the airfield and other businesses within the Rangiora community who benefit from the presence of the airfield. Despite existing constraints there is potential for a greater level of development at the airfield which could increase employment opportunities and provide greater economic benefits for the local North Canterbury community.

### **Service provision**

15. The Council is also responsible for service provision at the airfield. Currently the airfield has its own water supply bore and septic tank systems are utilised for wastewater disposal.
16. In 2022 the Council made a decision that the airfield water supply be deemed to be public. This has led to Council needing to upgrade both the potable water supply to the airfield to meet the relevant standards as well as providing for a reticulated wastewater network linking back to the Rangiora wastewater system. Both water and wastewater networks will need to come from Lehman's Road, a distance of approximately 1.4km to get to the top of Merton Road and the entrance to the airfield.

### **Civil Aviation Authority Request**

17. Rangiora Airfield has continued to grow in terms of flight movements with more than 42,000 aircraft movements in the 2023 calendar year. In response to this growth in April 2022 the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand wrote to the Waimakariri District Council requiring Council to conduct an Aeronautical Study and provide sufficient information to enable the Director Civil Aviation to identify and assess the risk to aviation safety of the operation of the aerodrome as

per requirements of Civil Aviation Rules 139.21(d)(1) & (2), so as to determine whether Rangiora Airfield should become a qualifying aerodrome. The details of what this means are discussed by Mr Groome.

18. The report was prepared in February 2023 and has been submitted to the Director Civil Aviation who has since sought written responses to the study. At this stage there has been no determination from the Director.

### **Daniel Smith Proposal**

19. The Council in its role as Airfield operator has been party to the proposal by Daniel Smith to establish a Special Purpose Airfield zone and enable the development of an airpark including residential development linked to the airfield.
20. In its role as Airfield operator the Council sees a number of benefits stemming from the proposal and an opportunity to future proof the airfield in the long-term should aircraft movements continue to increase, and regulations be necessary.
21. Firstly, it will facilitate the extension of two of the airfield runways through the provision of land not currently in the Council's ownership. This has potential safety benefits for the airfield which are further covered by Mr Groome.
22. Secondly, the proposal will help enable further growth in the airfield operation and facilitate some of the demand for space at the airfield. This includes enabling the Council owned airfield land on Priors Road to be opened up through the facilitation of services and road upgrading.
23. Finally, the proposal would assist significantly from a cost perspective in getting the servicing (water and wastewater) referred to above to the edge of the airfield and will likely reduce the overall cost to the Council. If this development was not to go ahead or if Council was unable to partner on this project, the costs would fall back to the asset operator to calculate for inclusion in either a future Annual Plan or Long Term Plan.
24. The realisation of an airpark would see greater numbers of people visiting the Waimakariri District for longer stop overs and could potentially open up overnight markets or weekend escapes, as well as providing more hangar space and businesses and associated commercial operators.

### **Conclusion**

25. The proposed Special Purpose Airfield zone provides for a number of opportunities to enhance and grow Rangiora Airfield. In its role as Airfield operator the Council is supportive of the proposal.