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28 August 2023

Mike Moody

Email: [fyi-request-23650-7c8991aa@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-23650-7c8991aa@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Mike,

**OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982 (OIA) – REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION -  
CHRISTCHURCH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LIMITED (CIAL)**

1. We write further to our email of 2 August 2023, acknowledging receipt of your OIA request of 31 July 2023 seeking the following information (if held by CIAL) in relation to the proposed Central Otago airport project:

**Request: Received 31 July 2023 – Board papers and minutes relating to  
Tarras Airport**

*“Please provide all strategy documents, emails, memos and aide memoirs relating to engagement strategies with the Tarras community, individuals or groups that are Tarras based including the strategy document referred to at the Wanaka Ignite meeting and reported by ODT 28 June 2023.”*

2. The OIA permits an organisation to refuse to release requested information it holds if the withholding of such information is necessary to enable the organisation to carry out its commercial activities or negotiations without prejudice or disadvantage (s 9(i) and s9(j) OIA) provided that such withholding is not outweighed in the circumstances by the public interest in making the specific information available. For example, while it may be in the public interest to understand that CIAL is investigating the feasibility of establishing an airport in Central Otago that does not mean CIAL must share every detail of its analysis, work or negotiations within specific work streams.
3. CIAL is a council-controlled trading organisation that has been specifically established to operate and manage its business as an independent commercial undertaking for the purposes of making a profit, and to follow generally accepted commercial practices and disciplines. CIAL is not a public body collecting and spending public funds. It operates as a wholly commercial, standalone entity. Due to the size and scale of those activities it is one of only three major airports in New Zealand regulated under Part 4 of the Commerce Act.
4. As an airport CIAL has a further overriding obligation under the Airport Authorities Act to act as a commercial undertaking. It does so in a commercially competitive environment both domestically and internationally, where its competitors are not

under corresponding disclosure requirements. The proposed Central Otago airport project is a complex commercial activity, acknowledged as being in competition with the interests of other airports within New Zealand.

5. In respect of your request, we respond in two parts as follows:

**Request:**

- (a) *"Please provide all strategy documents, emails, memos and aide memoirs relating to engagement strategies with the Tarras community, individuals or groups that are Tarras based"*

Information on CIAL's approach to engagement can be found at its dedicated Project web-site at <https://www.centralotagoairport.co.nz/>. CIAL is under no legal obligation to consult in relation to the Project or otherwise publicly engage at present. To assist public understanding of the context of the Project and CIAL's decisions, CIAL has committed to respectfully engaging with the community and proactively publishing information as it completes pieces of work. To date, CIAL has also met with a number of different individuals and entities, including specific representatives of community groups, business groups, businesses, and local authorities. CIAL is confident that where there has been a reasonable request to meet, it has done so in line with its approach to engagement described above and its statutory requirements.

The release of CIAL's internal plans, strategies and methodologies may disadvantage CIAL's ability to carry out its commercial activities in relation to the Project. Accordingly, this information is withheld under Section 9(2)(i) of the OIA.

- (b) *"including the strategy document referred to at the Wanaka Ignite meeting and reported by ODT 28 June 2023"*

CIAL is unaware of the 'strategy document' that you are referring to. Furthermore, we have been unable to find any report by Otago Daily Times dated 28 June 2023 that refers to the same. We note that Mr Boswell did attend a Wanaka Chamber of Commerce event on 27 July 2023 and we attach a copy of the article that was reported in the Otago Daily Times on 28 July 2023. You will note that no such document is referred to in this article and therefore we now conclude your query.

6. We trust we have answered your requests for information. If you require any further information or we have in some way misinterpreted your requests, please let us know.
7. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the decisions contained in this letter. Information about how to contact the Ombudsman or make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

**CIAL LEGAL TEAM**

Email: [legal@cial.co.nz](mailto:legal@cial.co.nz)



28 JUL, 2023

## Public meetings over airport stopped as not 'productive'

Otago Daily Times, Dunedin

# Public meetings over airport stopped as not 'productive'

**REGAN HARRIS**

**PUBLIC** meetings about the proposed Tarras Airport — where tempers flare and voices rise — have been grounded by the project's backer, which has labelled them as being "not especially productive".

At a Wānaka Chamber of Commerce event yesterday morning, Christchurch International Airport Ltd Central Otago airport project director Rhys Boswell said the company was reluctant to host a town hall-style meeting with the public.

"We made the decision early on after the first session that a town hall-style meeting is not especially productive.

"We listened to people give us views on how they wanted to be engaged with on this project and it was not in a town hall environment."

When an audience member said there was in fact demand for such a meeting, Mr Boswell said he was happy to meet individual groups to hear their concerns in a respectful manner.

"We're not happy to engage in an environment where tempers flare,

voices are raised."

He had spoken to attendees about the need to address the inevitable growth in demand for air travel in the region.

"Queenstown has always understood that the capacity of Frankton was finite and would at some point be reached."

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**Rhys Boswell**

# Airport public meetings stopped

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"Doing the work to provide for necessary infrastructure you can anticipate 10 and 20 years down the track means that we need to be having the conversation and doing the analysis now," Mr Boswell said.

While he acknowledged it was important to address the pressures placed on the region by the return of tourism, this had to be balanced with the benefits such demand brought to the region.

"The level of service you enjoy in this part of the world far exceeds Oamaru, Timaru, Ashburton, but that only exists because of the visitor economy."

The project was now three years into its data-gathering phase, and Christchurch Airport would consider beginning the approvals process, "possibly as soon as the start of next year", he said.

"There are very high bars, and rightly so, for any planning approval to be obtained for a new airport at Tarras."

One attendee pressed Mr Boswell on previous comments he had made about not funding roading infrastructure to the airport.

"It's not on us to provide that

road network," Mr Boswell said.

"We're providing infrastructure for a portion of the transport solution for this region.

"Others are responsible for the roading component, others again for the rail component."

Another attendee questioned Christchurch Airport's commitment to achieving a net-zero

carbon footprint by 2050, suggesting the company was inducing demand without the technology to achieve this sustainably.

Mr Boswell said while it was not his desire "to increase aviation activity", growing demand in the sector made it necessary for them to come up with solutions.

"It's people's desire to move and do stuff, and move things, that drives the demand for transport."

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