

# OIA 20240908

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**From:** Michael Singleton s9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Monday, 29 January 2024 5:37 pm  
**To:** Ben XU [TSY]; Juston Anderson [TSY]  
**Cc:** Duncan Small; Justin Watson  
**Subject:** RE: Media Release: Groundbreaking Central Otago study maps lifestyle, issues and concerns

You don't often get email from s9(2)(a). [Learn why this is important](#)

Kia ora,

As was the case with previous communications you may well have been on the circulation list on Friday for the below media release from the Informed Leaders group.

The academics have shown a particular interest in our project and have been clear in the position they hold. The initial feedback we have received points to a number of flaws in their work however we will continue our work to investigate and understand all aspects of the project with an open mind during this initial phase. As is always the case we remain interested in feedback and insights however don't intend commenting further than the following response given to media outlets on Friday;

*"We're always interested and curious in what people say about our project so will read the report and those that come afterwards in more detail. That said, we'll do so with caution. These academics have shown a particular interest in our project and have been clear in the position they hold."*

*"Only 302 people chose to respond to a tailored piece of research which claims to represent the opinions of the more than 75,000 people who live in the Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago districts. Opponents often cite our project as being a 'hot topic' that has people 'outraged'. If that was the case, we'd have expected more than 11% of those who were asked to respond to have done so."*

*"We're open minded in our thinking and will continue our work to investigate and understand all aspects of the project during this initial phase."*

You will see this release was the first in a series of three intended releases of their findings and we will continue to monitor these.

Ngā mihi  
Michael

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Informed Leaders** <[informedleaders@gmail.com](mailto:informedleaders@gmail.com)>  
Date: Thu, 25 Jan 2024 at 15:27  
Subject: Media Release: Groundbreaking Central Otago study maps lifestyle, issues and concerns  
To: <[informedleaders@gmail.com](mailto:informedleaders@gmail.com)>

Kia ora

Please see below a media release for your attention from professors Robert McLachlan, James Higham and James Renwick. Please note that the media release is embargoed until 5am tomorrow morning.

We are attaching a copy of the report for you in advance. If it doesn't make it through your email filters, please let us know by return email. Please also email if you have media requests.

Ngā mihi  
The team at Informed Leaders

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Informed Leaders  
[informedleaders@gmail.com](mailto:informedleaders@gmail.com)

**MEDIA RELEASE embargoed until 0500 Friday 26 January 2024**

### **Groundbreaking Central Otago study maps lifestyle, issues and concerns**

A study involving researchers from four universities has been hailed as “the most extensive research of its kind” ever conducted in Central Otago. The first of three reports was released today, making available key findings about Central Otago residents’ views on a number of topics.

The research, conducted late last year, covers five topics: Central Otago lifestyle, climate change, infrastructure and growth, tourism, and air travel and airports. Respondents chosen at random from right throughout the Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago districts were asked over 70 questions, and were also given the opportunity to comment openly on all topics.

The survey revealed a strongly unified population sharing many values, beliefs and concerns. 89% of respondents lived in or visited the region for its ‘lifestyle’; other natural factors, such as climate and landscape, also figured extremely highly. Other factors, such as ease of travel and work opportunities, were regarded as less important. There was a high level of concern about climate change and environmental sustainability in the region, and strong support for a greater focus on the value of visitors rather than the volume.

63% of respondents were opposed to the proposed Central Otago Airport (and 51%, strongly opposed) compared to 22% in favour. This level of opposition was found right across the Central Otago and Queenstown Lakes districts.

Professor Robert McLachlan of Massey University, one of the three researchers leading the study, said the proposal to build an international airport at Tarras is “not just a local issue” as it is significant for New Zealand as a whole. “It’s a national issue that can only be resolved by a national plan for aviation emissions that meets our international agreements. With the sixth largest per capita aviation emissions in the world, and as a country that relies on aviation for so many things, New Zealand has to take action.”

Professor James Higham of Griffith University and the University of Otago commented that there were strong themes running through the responses. “There is no doubt that people choose to live in Central Otago for the same reasons that tourists want to visit. It is a superbly beautiful, unspoilt and tranquil place. It’s clear from our research that sustainability is now a very high priority for the people of Central Otago, and they also very clearly understand the impact of tourism that the region benefits from. This study shows that they want better tourism with less impact, rather than more tourists.”

Professor James Renwick of Victoria University of Wellington said that the impacts of climate change are clearly on Central Otago residents’ radar, which is consistent with research conducted elsewhere. “People are conscious that we have to do everything we can to get New Zealand to net-zero, and that we all have to play our part. We’re seeing people do that in numerous ways including solar energy, reducing waste to landfill and reducing unnecessary travel. Aviation can be a significant portion of people’s footprints - especially where flights are medium to long haul.”

The researchers are releasing findings in three parts. Today’s report reveals the preliminary insights. A second report, due out next month, will present an analysis of all detailed written responses, which were described as “extensive” and “showing very high levels of engagement and understanding of the issues as seen by Central Otago residents themselves.” A third report, scheduled for April 2024 will represent the results of bivariate analyses to uncover the relationships between responses to different questions.

The report can be downloaded at <https://informedleaders.com/central-otago-study/> from 26 January 2024.

[Ends]

For media interviews with **Professor Robert McLachlan**, please email [r.mclachlan@massey.ac.nz](mailto:r.mclachlan@massey.ac.nz)

For media interviews with **Professor James Higham** or **Professor James Renwick**, or any other general requests for information, please email [informedleaders@gmail.com](mailto:informedleaders@gmail.com)

**Paul Yandall**

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**From:** Tim May s9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 13 February 2024 4:48 pm  
**To:** Ben XU [TSY]  
**Cc:** Juston Anderson [TSY]; Justin Watson  
**Subject:** Media about ASA complaint - No Surprises

Hi Ben – hope you well.

Just FYI on a ‘no surprises’ basis, as there may be some media on this.

In December last year a complaint was made to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) about our use of the phrase “climate positive” on our website and communications.

We responded to the ASA complaint by stating that although we stand by its accuracy as it is independently certified by Ekos Kāmahī Limited as being correct, we had already stopped using it (in August last year) as it needed explanation and was detracting from the emissions reduction work we were doing. By doing this, the claim was “settled” in January by the ASA with no further action to follow.

Stop Central Otago Airport has put out a release saying we have been forced to back down from using the phrase and that we are greenwashing (release at the bottom of this page). Both are incorrect and we have supplied the following response to enquiries from media (as per e-mail to RNZ below).

There is no longer any use of it on our website or social media channels, nor is it in our published policy <https://www.christchurchairport.co.nz/globalassets/about-us/sustainability/carbon/climate-policy.pdf>. If searched it does appear in some historical media releases that have been syndicated, however these are date stamped.

Any questions please let me know and we can chat about this when we catch up next week.

Many thanks  
Tim

**From:** Yvonne Densem s9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 13 February 2024 2:10 pm  
**To:** Eloise Gibson <Eloise.Gibson@rnz.co.nz>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] - RE: ASA complaint

*Hello Eloise*

*Thanks for approaching us re the ASA decision released last week.*

*As I said to you on the phone, we have not been “forced to back down”, but here is a statement you are welcome to use and attribute to a Christchurch Airport spokesperson:*

Christchurch Airport stands by the factual accuracy of using the term “climate positive” as independently certified, and our successes towards decarbonisation of both the airport and broader aviation sector. We started this work in 2006 by measuring our emissions and are focused on extensive decarbonisation actions.

However we have not used the phrase “climate positive” for several months. We don’t want use of the phrase relating to airport operations to detract from our extensive emissions reduction actions, nor what we are doing to reduce our own emissions and influence decarbonisation of the broader aviation sector.

We obtained independent certification of Net Climate Positive Business Operations from Ekos Kāmahī Limited. That certification involved us reducing our own operational emissions, demonstrating wider action across supply chain emissions, and offsetting at least 120% of the measured Scope 1, 2 and controllable Scope 3 emissions for the year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

We intend to maintain this certification in future, alongside our commitment to maintain our GHG reductions programme.

Regards  
Yvonne

Media release - 13 Feb 2023

### **Christchurch Airport forced to back down on “climate positive” claims; critics say greenwashing continues**

Christchurch Airport has agreed not to use the phrase “climate positive” in relation to its business any more, after a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority argued they were in breach of advertising standards. Rather than move to a formal ruling on the issue, airport executives chose to confirm that the phrase would not be used by the airport in future. A ruling on the complaint was released on Friday 8th February, announcing that it was “settled”. However, critics say the greenwashing continues.

The complaint was brought by an individual earlier this year. In the complaint summary they wrote: “I believe it is a prime example of corporate greenwashing, in that it is intended to influence opinion about Christchurch Airport and its business activities, with a wide audience (including people in industry, people in government, business decision makers and most importantly, a wide range of consumers). And it works, as it rolls over into areas that are probably outside of ASA’s scope, such as media reports, third party commentary and even awards that Christchurch Airport receives. It leads to enhanced reputation, and a sense that this company has a positive impact on the environment, while the opposite is the case according to common sense, best practice and science.”

They continued: “While the carbon reduction work undertaken by Christchurch Airport (and indeed any New Zealand business) should be encouraged, to claim that the airport is “climate positive” is grossly misleading, incorrect and frankly ridiculous.” They then provided detailed reasons, including that the “climate positive” claim ignores all flights and relies on controversial carbon offsetting.

Stop Central Otago Airport spokesperson Zella Downing commented: “Initially, on reading the complaint decision we applauded Christchurch Airport for backing down on their “climate positive” claim. But we are disappointed to note that a fortnight later, the wording has not been removed from their websites, their policy, their social media or their news feeds. So their retraction is only superficial and is therefore meaningless.”

Zella added: “Airport executives are no doubt aware of the recent law change in the EU. The term “climate positive” has been banned where companies are using carbon offsetting to make the claim, as the practice is seen as greenwashing caused by misleading marketing.” The European Parliament enacted the directive in January this year, and member states are now adopting it into law.

“However, what’s worse is that Christchurch Airport are not just using carbon offsetting to make this claim” she said. “They are also ignoring the very emissions they enable by operating an airport and encouraging air travel, especially international flights which cause massive emissions. And that’s before you start to think about the emissions that will be added by their proposed international airport at Tarras.”

“To claim that they are climate positive is just outrageous,” she said, “regardless of what consultancy they have paid to “certify” their claim.”

Stop Central Otago Airport is calling on Christchurch Airport to remove all reference to “climate positive” and to commit to end all greenwashing practices with immediate effect.

[Ends]

Further information:

- European Parliament information on the new regulations:  
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20240111STO16722/stopping-greenwashing-how-the-eu-regulates-green-claims>
- EU adopts new law banning greenwashing - Euronews - 17 January 2024:  
<https://www.euronews.com/2024/01/17/meps-adopt-new-law-banning-greenwashing-and-misleading-product-information>

Advertising Standards Authority complaint number 23227:  
<https://cdn.asa.co.nz/backend/documents/2024/02/08/23227.pdf>

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**Tim May**  
**Chief Financial Officer**



**T** s9(2)(a)  
**M**  
**F**  
**E**

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**P** PO Box 14001, Christchurch 8544, New Zealand



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**From:** Debbie Fantham s9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 February 2024 1:13 pm  
**To:** Juston Anderson [TSY]; Ben XU [TSY]  
**Cc:** Sarah Ottrey; Justin Watson; Tim May  
**Subject:** Central Otago Airport Project  
**Attachments:** Letter CCHL A Foote 27 Feb 2024.pdf; Letter CCHL A Foote 27 Feb 2024 Central Otago Airport.pdf

Dear Ben and Juston

Under no surprises, please find attached correspondence from Sarah Ottrey, Chair of Christchurch Airport to Abby Foote, Chair of CCHL.

Thanks  
Debbie

**Debbie Fantham**  
PA to CEO



**M** s9(2)(a)  
**F** [Redacted]  
**E** [Redacted]  
**W** christchurchairport.co.nz  
**P** PO Box 14001, Christchurch 8544, New Zealand




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**From:** Debbie Fantham  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 27, 2024 1:10 PM  
**To:** Abby Foote s9(2)(a)  
**Cc:** Silk, Paul s9(2)(a); Justin Watson s9(2)(a); Sarah Ottrey s9(2)(a)  
**Subject:** Central Otago Airport Project

Dear Abby

Please find attached two letters from Sarah Ottrey, Chair, Christchurch Airport regarding Central Otago Airport Project.

Kind regards  
Debbie

**Debbie Fantham**  
PA to CEO



**M** s9(2)(a)  
**F** [Redacted]



E s9(2)(a)

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27 February 2024

Abby Foote  
Chair  
Christchurch City Holdings Limited

Via email: s9(2)(a)

Dear Abby

### **CENTRAL OTAGO AIRPORT PROJECT**

Thank you for your support regarding the direction in which to manage Christchurch Airport's Central Otago Airport Project.

Following CIAL's Board meeting yesterday, the CIAL Board has determined to take further time on this project to understand significant national external factors.

I attach a letter for the Christchurch City Holdings Board and then directly for you to forward to the Christchurch City Councillors, to be tabled for reading and discussion in the public CCC Finance and Performance Committee meeting on 28 February 2024 discussion, on the CCHL Letter of Expectation and the specific mention of the long-term Central Otago Project.

As we discussed, it could be useful to have this letter read out, however I leave it to you to decide how to best ensure City councillors effectively receive the information.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Ottrey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Sarah Ottrey  
**Chair**

cc: Paul Silk, CE, Christchurch City Holdings Limited  
Justin Watson, CE, Christchurch International Airport



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27 February 2024

Abby Foote  
Chair  
Christchurch City Holdings Limited

Via email: s9(2)(a)

Dear Abby

### **CENTRAL OTAGO AIRPORT PROJECT**

Christchurch Airport is relentlessly focused on driving value for the city. That has been reflected in rising and stable dividends over time and the more than doubling of the value of the company over the last 10 years. Ōtautahi Christchurch is our engine room and operating our business to create value for Christchurch now and in the future is always our priority. We are also clear that the best way we can create the most value and maximise profitability in the immediate future is to focus on the visitor opportunities and growth that exist in Christchurch. With the new investments that have been made in civic infrastructure and accommodation we see significant opportunities to welcome more people to Christchurch, the gateway for the South Island.

Christchurch Airport understands the challenges that Christchurch City Council, like many other councils in New Zealand, is facing with rising costs and pressure on the rating base. The Council is in an unenviable position. Christchurch Airport understands why the Council wants us to focus on maximising and prioritising returns and we are well positioned to play our part.

### **Central Otago Discussion**

In the longer term, the problem of resilience, sustainable transport, and infrastructure capacity for Te Wai Pounamu the South Island, that our Central Otago project seeks to resolve will remain. The exploratory work we have done to date gives confidence that this opportunity with its core purpose being to facilitate sustainable aviation and protect long term dividend flows and value growth for Christchurch also remains. Along with the financial challenges the City faces, the change in government means a change in a number of key areas that interplay with the project such as the Government's repeal of the Resource Management Act, the development of the National Infrastructure Resilience Plan, Three Waters legislative repeal, the focus on sustainable growth in tourism and next steps on funding and financing for Local Government and the Tourism sector. Along with this we continue to listen and onboard the feedback from the local region, which, as expected, contains a range of views including understanding what the best regional solution may be.

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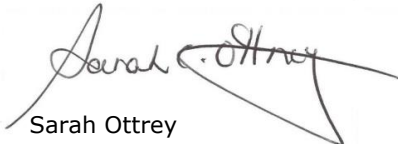
All these external moving parts support us taking further time to understand their impact and subsequently engage with local and national stakeholders.

In the meantime, the land held remains a strategic asset of Christchurch Airport and protects the long-term value that has been created in Christchurch Airport and the Christchurch visitor proposition.

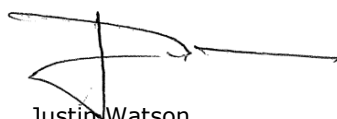
We are committed to keeping CCHL and the Council well informed as our understanding of these external factors grows. We are and will remain the gateway to Te Wai Pounamu the South Island.

We would like to reiterate our standing offer to present to both the CCHL Board and Christchurch City Council at any time on this subject or any matter relating to the Airport.

Kind regards



Sarah Ottrey  
**Chair**



Justin Watson  
**Chief Executive**

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**From:** Ben XU [TSY]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 February 2024 1:41 pm  
**To:** ^Parliament: Daniel Madley  
**Cc:** Juston Anderson [TSY]  
**Subject:** No Surprises: Central Otago Airport Project  
**Attachments:** Letter CCHL A Foote 27 Feb 2024.pdf; Letter CCHL A Foote 27 Feb 2024 Central Otago Airport.pdf

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Hi Daniel

Hope all is well with your new role.

CIAL has shared with us two letters from Sarah Ottrey, Chair of Christchurch Airport, directed to CCHL, highlighting the importance of the Central Otago Airport Project for the company's future value and dividend stability. Following CIAL's Board meeting yesterday, the CIAL Board has determined to take further time on this project to understand significant national external factors. CIAL remains dedicated to keeping CCHL and the Council informed as their understanding of these factors evolves.

We have included an expectation in our LOE this year to ask continued proactive engagement with shareholders on major developments and community engagement initiatives. Therefore, it is important that Ministers receive updates as CIAL informs the Council about its evolving understanding of these external factors. We will reinforce this expectation during our next quarterly meeting with the management.

Please let me know if any questions.

Kind regards

Ben



**TE TAI ŌHANGA  
THE TREASURY**

**Ben Xu | Senior Analyst, Commercial and Institutional Performance | Te Tai Ōhanga – The Treasury**

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