

26 September 2023

Suze Keith

Email: c/-fyi-request-23984-3c133810@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Keith

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

1. We write further to our email of 31 August 2023, acknowledging receipt of your email of 29 August 2023 (via the third party public platform fyi.org.nz) in which you requested the following information pursuant to the OIA:

“Could you please provide me with any correspondence or meeting notes in relation to any discussions or communication with the NZ Airline Pilots Association about the proposed airport in Tarras, or anything to do with Queenstown Airport..” (the “Request”)

2. CIAL will provide you with the requested information where it is able. However, you will note within this letter that it is occasionally unable to release requested information if it would prejudice or disadvantage CIAL’s commercial activities. Before we answer your specific query, it may be helpful to provide some context to this.
3. 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(2)(i) and s9(2)(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 plans, analysis, work or negotiations within specific work streams.
4. As you may be aware, 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 1986.
5. As an airport, CIAL has a further overriding obligation under the Airport Authorities Act 1966, and reinforced by the Civil Aviation Act 2023, to act as a commercial undertaking. It does so in a commercially competitive environment both domestically and internationally, where its competitors

6. are not under corresponding disclosure requirements. The proposed Central Otago airport Project (the Project) is a complex commercial activity, acknowledged as being in competition with the interests of other airports within New Zealand.
7. The Project is currently in the validation and planning phase which in and of itself is a complex commercial activity. At present, CIAL is under no legal obligation to consult in relation to the Project. To assist public understanding of the context of the Project and CIAL's decisions, CIAL has committed to, and does, proactively publish information as it completes pieces of work which is likely to be in the public interest to receive on its dedicated Project website at <https://www.centralotagoairport.co.nz/> (the Project Website). This information includes a document recently published in August 2023 titled "Unlocking Potential: Central Otago's runway to a future-focussed airport", which provides general information on the work and analysis CIAL has undertaken as at the date thereof in relation to the Project (<https://www.centralotagoairport.co.nz/uploads/images/Unlocking-potential-31-Aug2023.pdf>).
8. With respect to your Request, we have identified two emails that fall within the scope of your request. These emails have been released to you with some information withheld under Section 9(2)(a) of the OIA.
9. 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.
10. 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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

CIAL LEGAL TEAM

Email: legal@cial.co.nz

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@cial.co.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 21 September 2021 11:47 am
To: [REDACTED]@nzalpa.org.nz'
Cc: [REDACTED]@nzalpa.org.nz'
Subject: Central Otago Airport - Preliminary Aeronautical Assessment CONFIDENTIAL

Kia ora [REDACTED]

I am working as part of the Christchurch Airport team that is investigating the potential for an airport at Tarras, Central Otago.

On Friday we are planning to release a preliminary aeronautical assessment of the site. It includes our initial assessment of weather, terrain, airspace and runway lengths. It shows that the site is viable. The key findings are that;

- Weather conditions are consistent with benchmarks across New Zealand, with further meteorological data to be collected over time;
- The site is suitable for a runway of 2,200m in length on two possible runway alignment options. One alignment option may be suitable for a longer runway length between 2,500 – 3,000m;
- The site is suitable for the key types of aircraft expected to operate scheduled services within New Zealand and on likely international routes; and
- The site can integrate into surrounding airspace and flight tracks.

The two identified viable runway alignments create flight paths that use Lake Dunstan to the south and either the Hawea Valley to the North-west or the Lindis Valley to the North-east.

We are still at an early stage of the project, but this release is significant because it is the first time we will publicly release technical information. We will continue to work this up into a full proposal over the next two-three years. We know that this will be interesting to you, and your members. If you would like, we could walk you through the information on Thursday, or send it through to you before it is released. Please let me know what would be help for you as a heads-up.

I've cc'ed [REDACTED] as I have previously mentioned to him that this work is in the pipeline.

Best regards

[REDACTED]
Christchurch Airport

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@cial.co.nz>
Sent: Monday, 21 August 2023 10:42 am
To: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: Central Otago Airport project

Dear [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Next week, Christchurch Airport will publicly release some more information about our Central Otago Airport project. It will include some information that is of specific interest to pilots and the pilot community; including our work to date on runway alignments, meteorological info and flight tracks as well as more general work we have been doing to scope the project.

You will both receive an email copy of the work when it is released. We are also very happy to organise a briefing with you if you would like to go into it in more detail. We have previously talked with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] an NZALPA and are very happy to keep that line open with you if that is helpful.

Best regards
[REDACTED]
Christchurch Airport