

The start of a conversation

October 2020

Kia ora,

Welcome to the first edition of what will be a regular newsletter to keep you in the loop as we explore the possibility of building a new airport in Central Otago.

Thank you for sharing your contact details with us.

I understand that Christchurch Airport's ownership of land in Tarras means there are a lot of questions for us. Since our announcement, we've spent a lot of time around kitchen tables in the district meeting people, listening to thoughts, dispelling rumours and answering questions.

Thanks to those of you I've had the pleasure of meeting already. I appreciate your honesty and your understanding that, because we're in the very early days of a long-term project, we don't have all of the answers (yet!).

It's important to us that we hear all of your views.

One of the things we are hearing is that people want greater certainty around the project. We understand that and, rest assured, we will communicate details as we develop our plans. However, we have a fair bit of work to do before we can address the many things (such as runway location, flight paths, terminal size, passenger and aircraft movements, noise impacts etc) that we need to get right.

What we can offer is some certainty around the approach we intend to take and the timeframes we hope to work to.

Our first focus is on exploring the case for the airport - that involves having conversations with locals, iwi, industry and government and, from next year, investigating what this airport might look like and how it might operate. We expect that will take up to three years and it's important we don't rush.



The approvals processes would likely take another three years (and involve more formal consultation), with another 2-3 years in construction.

The recovery from COVID19 will influence the project's timeframes so our current thinking is that, if the case for an airport stacks up, it's likely to be around 10 years before any airport could open. A lot of the processes, like planning approvals, will be outside our direct control (as they should be).

This is not a short term project. It is about potentially creating a piece of infrastructure that will last for generations and benefit many regions of the South Island. Any airport that we're involved with must be world-class so it's critical we take the time to get this right.

We still have A LOT of conversations to have and we're looking forward to having them.

You can contact the project team at any stage via central@christchurchairport.co.nz

Kind regards,
Michael Singleton
Project Director



A New Approach

Normally companies proceed with detailed design, planning and process work before unveiling a fully-formed proposal.

Christchurch Airport is taking a slightly different approach to this project.

We've worked with communities for the past 80 years and that experience tells us it's better to talk to the community before any formal plans are created.

If we decide an airport on our site would be commercially viable, listening now will help us create a formal proposal that addresses as many concerns and creates as many opportunities as possible.

We know we won't be able to solve every issue for everybody, but we'd like to give it our best shot.

So feel free to get in touch - let us know what concerns you most, what you think we should be considering and any opportunities you think we might not have on our radar.

Rest assured, if we decide to proceed, we still need to pass through the planning gateways before any soil is turned and there will be plenty of opportunities for your feedback.



Some of the questions you've been asking ...

Why is Christchurch Airport doing this?

We work across the South Island and have been aware for some time that, based on pre-COVID assumptions, there would be a shortage of airline capacity in the near future.

The last census showed the Otago* region's population is the fastest growing in the South Island. We need to plan for that growth or we will find that people and businesses in the lower South Island won't be able to connect to other places easily.

Christchurch Airport has the skills to help solve that shortfall through providing sustainable new infrastructure.

We've always focused on planning for the future - some of the land that we're developing in Christchurch today was bought 80 years ago.

*Based on the Otago Regional Council area.

Doesn't the impact of COVID-19 make this project less feasible?

There's no doubt the pandemic is creating uncertainty for us all but we're confident that when we look to the future, demand to travel to and from the mid to lower South Island will continue to grow.

Why Tarras?

Its location. Tarras is really well-situated.

From Tarras you can connect to multiple districts - Queenstown Lakes, Mackenzie, Waitaki, Central Otago, West Coast and Upper Clutha.

That means an airport on our site can serve residents from a large swathe of the South Island. It also means that visitors who fly into our site can disperse across a very wide area - lessening their impact and encouraging them to explore more of the South Island.

When will you have more detail about the project?

We've heard that many of you want details about things like runway layout, flight paths, noise, light and water use.

We recognise these are important and are moving ahead with some of the early work we need to do on these fronts so we can bring some more information to you during 2021.

Prior to that, we'll update you (in early 2021) on the feedback we've received to that point.

It's important to us that, as we go through this journey, the community is able to share their ideas and concerns so we can work together to make any airport the very best it can be.

Wouldn't this put strain on roads?

Airports work best when they are safely and well-connected to the communities around them.

We have a lot of work to do with various agencies about how people would access any airport.

We will also investigate sustainable transport options as there is a lot of emerging technology to explore, something we are already doing at Christchurch Airport.

This is an opportunity to think outside the square. We won't be afraid to be the first or do things differently.

Please feel free to share this newsletter with others
so they can sign up for future updates.

