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13 September 2023

Tracy Mahy

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Tēnā koe Tracy

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

1. We write further to our email of 18 August 2023, acknowledging receipt of your OIA request of 16 August 2023 seeking information (if held by CIAL) in relation to the proposed Central Otago airport project:

**Request : Received 13 August – Tarras Airport. Engagement with local flying organisations**

*This is a request for all documentation (including emails and presentations) showing your Engagement with national, regional and local aviation/flying/GA organisations about the airport at Tarras. Last three years please.*

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 queries, 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(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.
4. 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 web-site at <https://www.centralotagoairport.co.nz/>. Until work is completed, it is not capable of being released. Over time this will see more information voluntarily released. In such instances the public interest test will have been considered and

weighed up as part of the decision whether to release information or not. Equally, each OIA query CIAL receives will be assessed on a case by case basis given the particular given facts and circumstances at play at that time.

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. In respect of your request, we respond as follows:

**Request:**

*“This is a request for all documentation (including emails and presentations) showing your Engagement with national, regional and local aviation/flying/GA organisations about the airport at Tarras. Last three years please.”*

8. We can confirm that we have met with Gliding New Zealand on 17 November 2022 and 28 August 2023. We do not hold documentation from these meetings as the purpose of meeting with this entity, was to have a general discussion of our plans for the airport, gauge their interest levels and open a line of direct communication with such operators as the project advances. It is also worth noting that during the recent community drop-in sessions hosted at Tarras, Cromwell and Wanaka, we welcomed and answered questions from individuals that identified with GA airspace users in the region (e.g. Cromwell Aerodrome, Wanaka Airport).
9. The disclosure of the identity of any commercial aviation organisations we may have met with and the contents of such discussions, is information that may impact on CIAL’s ability to carry out its commercial activities in relation to the Project without disadvantage. Accordingly, at this time, this information is withheld under Section 9(2)(i) of the OIA.
10. We trust we have answered your requests for information. If you require any further information or if we have in some way misinterpreted your requests, please let us know.
11. 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**

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