

## **Wānaka Airport Liaison Committee**

**7 April 2025**

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**Minutes of a meeting of the Wānaka Airport Liaison Committee held on Monday 7 April 2025 in the Wānaka Airport Alpine Helicopters Boardroom, beginning at 11.00am**

### **Present**

Mr Rob Phillips (Independent Chair), Mr Simon Telfer (Wānaka-Upper Clutha Community Board Chair), Mr Tony Avery (General Manager, Property & Infrastructure, QLDC), Mr Juliet Breen (Queenstown Airport Corporation), Mr Andy Wilton (Wānaka Airport Users Group), Andrew Crawford (Sounds Air).

### **In Attendance**

Mr Matthew Hulscher (Democracy Services Advisor, QLDC), Jon Winterbottom (Democracy Services Team Leader, QLDC), Mr Paul Speedy (Strategic Project Manager, QLDC), and one member of the public.

### **Acknowledgement of Mr Don Grant**

Mr Phillips acknowledged the accident that Mr Grant was recently involved in and passed on the thoughts and best wishes of the Wānaka Airport Liaison Committee to Mr Grant and his family. Mr Phillips also acknowledged that Mr Wilton is attending on Mr Grant's behalf to represent the Wānaka Airport Users Group.

### **Opening Karakia**

An opening karakia was presented by Mr Phillips.

### **Apologies**

Mr Don Grant (Wānaka Airport Users Group) and Mr Jon Brooks (Airways New Zealand) were in apology.

### **Confirmation of Agenda**

Mr Phillips confirmed the agenda, with the addition of two items to be discussed in 'Other matters' following questions received from the public: Financial Statements for Wānaka Airport and Meeting Information and Accessibility.

### **Confirmation of minutes**

On the motion of Mr Telfer and Mr Avery it was agreed that the minutes of a meeting of the Wānaka Airport Liaison Committee held on 18 November 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record subject to the following amendments:

### Future direction of the WALC

There was discussion about how members considered the WALC was going and ways of adding value to meetings. There was general agreement that meetings had been of limited value to date but this meeting had considered more meaningful matters and members were excited that QLDC ~~QAC~~ seemed to be preparing to engage with the Upper Clutha community on the future of Wānaka Airport.

Motion was **carried** unanimously.

### **1. Wānaka Airport Manager's Report**

The report was presented by Ms Breen.

Discussion was held around the forecasted and actual airport usage, and the drivers of the predicted increase in demand. Drivers noted included weather conditions, events (e.g. Warbirds), increased commercial activity, and an increase in tourism numbers.

Mr Crawford noted that Sounds Air recorded their largest number of flights ever in March 2025, with an increase of over 70 flights compared to March 2024 and only a marginal decrease in the occupancy rate per flight.

Ms Breen noted that NASA declared readiness for two balloon flights last week, and that (weather pending) they will take place in the coming weeks. Discussion was also held regarding firewater capacity, with Mr Telfer requesting that the firewater storage capacity numbers be confirmed. It was confirmed by Ms Breen after the meeting that Phase 2 will see an additional 4 x 30,000l tanks installed taking the total firewater capacity to 300,000l.

On the motion of Mr Avery and Mr Crawford it was resolved that the Wānaka Airport Liaison Committee **note** the report.

Motion was **carried** unanimously.

### **2. Wānaka Airport Projects Update**

The report was presented by Mr Avery.

Mr Avery provided an update on several key projects at the airport and noted concerns that have been raised about the long-term durability of the replacement seal on the main runway.

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It was confirmed that the original sealing of the runway was conducted in 2022, and that there is a warranty period for the service.

Members discussed the upcoming recruitment of a dedicated Wānaka Airport Manager from Queenstown Airport Corporation (QAC). It was noted that having a dedicated manager is a requirement to achieve CAA Qualifying Status, and that it is hoped the manager will be recruited by July 2025. It was also clarified that QLDC will not be involved in the recruitment process.

On the matter of the Wānaka Airport Masterplan Mr Speedy outlined that a consultant has been selected, following a competitive and comprehensive application process, to lead the process. Mr Speedy also noted that this will be discussed further at an upcoming Full Council workshop on Tuesday 15 January 2025 which is open to the public.

Mr Telfer requested that QLDC consider holding Full Council workshops in the Upper-Clutha more regularly, particularly when the agenda items concern matters of the Upper-Clutha region.

Discussion was also held around the proposed landing and parking fee charges. Mr Avery noted that this is part of an annual review of user fees and charges across the district for a range of services, and that public feedback can be submitted on the proposed changes.

On the motion of Mr Telfer and Ms Breen it was resolved that the Wānaka Airport Liaison Committee **note** the report.

Motion was **carried** unanimously.

### **3. Other matters**

#### **Financial Statements for Wānaka Airport**

Mr Phillips noted that he has received several questions recently regarding the lack of transparency and visibility over the financial position of Wānaka Airport. It was agreed that Mr Avery would follow up on this matter with the QLDC Finance team.

#### **Meeting Information and Accessibility**

Mr Philips also noted the lack of readily available information to the public about meetings of Wānaka Airport Liaison Committee, notably information on the date/time/location of meetings and the accessibility of agendas. Mr Telfer requested that changes be made to allow for this information to be more readily accessible to the public. Mr Winterbottom confirmed that the Democracy Services Team at QLDC will follow up on this.

### **4. Confirming date and location of next meeting**

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The next meeting of the Wānaka Airport Liaison Committee was confirmed to be held at 11.00am on Monday 29 September 2025, in the Alpine Helicopters Boardroom at Wānaka Airport.

**Closing Karakia**

Ms Breen presented a closing karakia.

*The meeting concluded at 12.04pm.*

**Confirmed as a true and correct record:**

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**