

Full Council

14 November 2025

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [4]

Department: Community Services

Title | Taitara: Recommendation to adopt the final Glenorchy Aerodrome Reserve Management Plan

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

The purpose of this report is to present the Glenorchy Aerodrome Reserve Management Plan 2025 to the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) and seek its adoption in accordance with the Reserves Act 1977.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohu

That the Council:

1. **Note** the contents of this report; and
2. **Adopt** the final Glenorchy Aerodrome Reserve Management Plan.

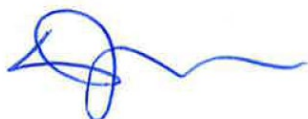
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Context | Horopaki

1. The Glenorchy Aerodrome Reserve (the Reserve) is located approximately two kilometres southeast of the Glenorchy township on the edge of Lake Whakatipu. The two hectare reserve contains a grass airstrip that provides for commercial and recreation aviation activities that predominantly service farming, tourism, conservation and emergency services.
2. The aerodrome¹ was established in 1953 to service the Glenorchy area. The Reserve is owned by the crown and was previously administered by the Department of Conservation (DOC). It was vested in Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) in 2013 following a request from the Glenorchy community.
3. The Reserve is gazetted as Local Purpose (Airport) Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 (the Act). Preparation of Reserve Management Plans (RMP) for Local Purpose Reserves is not mandatory under the Act but is at the discretion of the Council. At the time of accepting the Reserve from DOC, QLDC resolved to prepare an RMP.
4. The current RMP was adopted in 2016 and enabled the establishment of QLDC management of the aerodrome.
5. The 2016 RMP established the Glenorchy Airstrip Consultative Governance Committee (GACGC). The GACGC is made up of representatives from the Glenorchy Community Association, Wyuna Preserve, Blanket Bay, aerodrome operators, Queenstown Airport Corporation (QAC) and QLDC. The GACGC meets quarterly and has provided input into the operations and management of the Reserve.
6. The part of the Reserve that contains the grass airstrip is designated in the QLDC Proposed District Plan (the PDP) for 'Aerodrome Purposes' (Designation #239). Designation #239 authorises the take offs and landings at the aerodrome and QLDC is the Requiring Authority, meaning that it is the Aerodrome Operator. Operational functions are delivered for QLDC by QAC by agreement.
7. In 2019 an appeal on the PDP relating to the aerodrome was lodged by Wyuna Preserve Residents Association, who were seeking significant controls on aerodrome use. QLDC's position was that the designation authorised takes offs and landings at the aerodrome and that the RMP, prepared in consultation with the community, was the appropriate mechanism to control use.
8. The decision on the PDP appeal on Designation #239 was released by the Environment Court in November 2021 with several conditions pertaining to use and establishment of a noise contour that caps flight numbers to 2019 levels. The conditions also require a Noise Management Plan to ensure compliance with the noise contour and emphasised the role of the GACGC. The decision also emphasised the importance of the RMP as the guiding document to manage the Reserve.
9. Council is required to keep the management plan under continuous review to ensure the plan adapts to changing circumstances and increased knowledge. Given the 2021 Environment Court

¹ The correct Civil Aviation term is aerodrome, the Reserves Act classification is airport and the reserve has historically been referred to as Glenorchy airstrip.

decision on the appeal, complexities of managing a small aerodrome in a sensitive location and the high level of local and aviation use, it was considered appropriate to prepare an updated RMP in 2025.

10. The review of the 2016 RMP recommenced in early 2023 and a comprehensive engagement survey was developed in consultation with the GACGC. A Let's Talk online campaign was open for four weeks in August-September 2023 seeking input into the draft plan. The campaign included the survey and an education package on Designation #239 and the RMP process. Over 100 responses were received from the Glenorchy and aviation community.
11. A summary of this early engagement was developed and shared back with the community (**Attachment B**). A range of views were expressed on the future flight numbers and limits, level of development including hangars, the purpose of the Reserve and commercial use. The direction in the draft RMP has been informed by this engagement.
12. The Draft RMP was approved for public notification by Council on 29 May 2025. The submission period was open for two months (30 May – 8 August 2025) in accordance with the Reserves Act 1977.
13. The Final Glenorchy Aerodrome Reserve Management Plan 2025 (the RMP) sets out the direction for the use and development of the aerodrome reserve, through a vision and a series of objectives and policies. These will act as a guide for Council officers in making both day-to-day and long-term decisions about how the reserve will be used, managed, or developed.
14. The review of the Glenorchy Aerodrome RMP commenced in April 2019. A summary of the key dates in the review process is set out in the table below.

Date	Activity
11 April 2019	Community & Services Committee approved the intention to notify the preparation of a Glenorchy Airstrip Reserve Management Plan (the 'Draft RMP').
Late 2019	Paused review
November 2021	Designation decision
February 2023	Review started
August 2023 to September 2023	Engagement with the community and stakeholders including targeted stakeholder meetings and a Let's Talk online campaign, to gather early insights.
3 April 2025	Draft RMP approved for public consultation by the Community & Services Committee.
29 May 2025	Council approved the draft RMP for public consultation.
30 May to 8 August 2025	Formal consultation period. 23 submissions received.
25 August 2025	Public hearing. Five submitters spoke to their submission.
25 August and 11 September 2025	Public deliberations by the Hearing Panel.

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

15. The Final RMP (**Attachment A**) sets out the vision, values and intended uses of the reserve through objectives and policies.
16. The Hearing Panel, made up of three members of the Community & Services Committee, directed changes be made to the draft RMP through the deliberations part of the process held on 25 August and 11 September 2025. This followed the Hearing Panel's consideration of the written submissions and comments from the five submitters who spoke at the public hearing on 25 August 2025.
17. A version of the Final RMP 2025 showing tracked changes made is **Attachment D**. The main changes after public submissions and deliberations are summarised below:

18. Principal Purpose and Vision

The principal purpose of the reserve and the vision statement have been revised to include reference to the film industry and local tourism.

19. History

The Glenorchy Community Association submitted that the plan should acknowledge that the Blanket Bay Peninsula Recreation Reserve (currently under grazing licence) is a preferred location for resettlement if required. This has been placed under 'History':

A workstream led by the Otago Regional Council in 2023-2025 called the Head of the Lake Adaptation realised that much of the current Glenorchy settlement may be uninhabitable following an alpine fault rupture. The community has identified the 50ha Blanket Bay recreation reserve adjacent to the airstrip as the preferred location in the event that the township has to be relocated and rebuilt.

20. General Objectives

A new objective has been included in response to submissions that the airstrip is an important asset to be maintained as it will be critical to the Glenorchy community in the event of a natural disaster and is used for emergency response such as fire and search and rescue:

- 6.4. *To recognise the importance of the airstrip as a strategic asset that the community will rely upon in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.*

21. Aviation Policies

The main operator at the reserve is Action Helicopters/Heli Glenorchy who sought substantive changes including removal of reference to flight limits and the designation conditions. Many of these changes were not agreed to by the hearings panel however several policies have been updated as follows:

Amend policy 7.2.4:

7.2.4. *Maintain and implement a site layout plan that shows:*

- *Approximate location for two potential new hangars.*

7.2.6. *Enable storage of fuel at the airstrip, subject to prior agreement from QLDC -recognising that it remains the responsibility of the operator.*

22. Use Policies

Several submitters requested that the flight limits be removed or increased. Specifically submitters from the film industry sought that exemptions could be applied to hours of operation and flight limits to accommodate increased demand during a major film production. A new policy has been included to consider seeking approval to change the designation conditions and Noise Management Plan to accommodate the film industry.

8.2.6. *Consider applying (as the aerodrome land owner and requiring authority) to the QLDC planning department (the regulatory authority and District Plan decision makers) for an amendment to the Designation #239 conditions and the Noise Management Plan (refer to policy 8.2.8) to include one off curfew exemptions for flights servicing the film industry. Should this occur, one-off curfew exemptions for flights servicing the film industry must be agreed with the GACGC.*

Note to policy 8.2.6: Curfew exemptions under consideration would only apply to the hours of operation and not to the aircraft movement limits.

Throughout the consultation process the majority of the community feedback supported flight limits, and the hearing panel agreed. A new policy has been included to consider possible reviews in future to ensure the RMP remains relevant:

8.3.3.2 *Consider a review of this management plan once the 80% threshold of annual aircraft movement limits in the Designation #239 Conditions are reached to ensure the plan remains relevant and fit for purpose.*

23. Funding and user charges

A range of submissions were received on the funding and user charges, from that it should be user paid to the fees are too expensive for recreation use. The panel agreed that the aerodrome should be acknowledged as a community asset as it will be critical in the event of an emergency response. The following policies were included/updated:

9.1.2. *Recognise that the airstrip is a critical emergency response asset and should be maintained for the community in the event of a natural disaster.*

9.1.3 Set *fair and reasonable* landing fees taking into account:

- Market rates
- The grass airstrip and limited facilities
- The unique location
- *That the airstrip is a strategic community asset for emergency response*
- The sensitivity of the receiving environment.

9.1.4 Review landing fees regularly, *commencing with a review following the adoption of this management plan and at a minimum five yearly intervals.*

24. Development and Infrastructure Policies

Improved wording around ensuring the grass airstrip improvements are undertaken if recommended by Queenstown Airport Corporation (who operates the aerodrome on behalf of QLDC) and support for public toilets and a waiting area that could be constructed by a commercial operator and that this will be available for other operators.

25. Naming

The Panel agreed to update the name for the airstrip reserve to the Glenorchy Aerodrome Reserve as this is how it is referenced in the District Plan and by the CAA.

26. This report identifies and assesses the following reasonably practicable options for assessing the matter as required by section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002.

27. Option 1 Recommend to Council to adopt the final RMP 2025.

Advantages:

- Ensures there is a relevant plan for the future of the aerodrome reserve that provides a clear management framework for the use and development.
- Ensures community expectations to maintain a relevant RMP are met. It also acknowledges the community and stakeholder engagement through the submissions and hearings process.
- This will support Council's obligation under the Act to prepare and review reserve management plans.
- Ensures alignment with the Proposed District Plan.

Disadvantages:

- Some of the direction in the RMP may not be supported by all community members.

28. Option 2 Do not recommend to Council to adopt the Final RMP 2025.

Advantages:

- There will be no change and the Reserve will continue to be managed under the existing plan.

Disadvantages:

- The aerodrome Reserve will remain subject to the RMP 2016 which is out of date and no longer fit for purpose. This means there will be no updated direction for how the aerodrome and the aviation activities are to be managed.
- Council will not meet the community's expectations that a reviewed RMP for the reserve will be adopted.

29. This report recommends **Option 1** for addressing the matter because this will ensure a clear plan is in place to direct future use and development that is fit for purpose and will meet Council's obligations under the Act.

Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi i kā Whakaaro Hiraka

30. This matter is of medium significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy 2024 because of the high community interest in the Reserve and its development.
31. The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are users of the reserve, the aviation community, the residents/ratepayers of the Glenorchy township, the aviation community and the adjoining neighbours including Wyuna Preserve and Blanket Bay Lodge.
32. The Council undertook extensive engagement with the community and stakeholders in 2023 to inform the Draft RMP. Council officers have been working closely with the GACGC on the operation and management of the Reserve.
33. The Council undertook consultation on the draft RMP in line with the requirements of the Reserves Act 1977. The draft RMP was open for public submissions on QLDC's online platform Let's Talk from 30 May to 8 August 2025. The draft RMP was publicly notified and advertised through notices in local papers, QLDC's website, social media platforms and radio.

Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

34. The Council has not undertaken consultation with iwi on the draft RMP as officers have determined specific iwi consultation is not required due to the discrete function of the reserve.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

35. This matter relates to the Community & Wellbeing risk category. It is associated with RISK10005 Ineffective planning for community services or facilities within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a high residual risk rating.
36. The approval of the recommended option will allow Council to avoid the risk. This will be achieved by creating a clear plan for how Council intends to manage the use and development of the Glenorchy Aerodrome Reserve and comply with the PDP.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

37. Preparing and finalising the RMP is planned for within existing operational budgets.
38. The QLDC Long Term Plan 2024-2034 includes an annual operational budget to engage Queenstown Airport Corporation as the operator of the airstrip/aerodrome.

Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

39. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- Vision Beyond 2050: Our Vision and Mission - QLDC
- The Reserves Act 1977
- Local Government Act 2002
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021
- Significance and Engagement Policy 2024
- Proposed and Operative District Plan

40. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policies.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kiaka

41. Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. Approval of the report's recommendation will support these outcomes by having an approved plan that directs future decision making for the Reserve. As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act.

42. The recommended option:

- Can be implemented through current funding under the Long Term Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	Final Reserve Management Plan 2025 (clean)
B	Engagement Summary
C	Summary of Submissions received
D	Final Reserve Management Plan 2025 (showing tracked changes)