

**PLAN CHANGE 23 – RURAL AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

**SUBMISSION ON PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE 23 TO THE MACKENZIE DISTRICT PLAN**

**FORM 5**

**UNDER CLAUSE 6 OF THE FIRST SCHEDULE OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
ACT 1991**

**Details of Submitter**

Full Name: Wanaka Helicopters Ltd

*(Required)*

Contact Person: Michael Prosser

*(If different from above)*

Email Address: mike.prosser@wanakahelicopters.co.nz

*(Required)*

Postal Address:

*(Optional)*

Telephone Number: 0272211077

*(Required)*

Fax

*(Optional)*

**Trade Competition**

I could not *(delete one)* gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.

If you have selected could, please answer the question below:

I am directly affected by an effect of the subject matter that: a. adversely affect  
the environment; and  
b. does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition.

**Submission Details**

The specific provisions of the proposal that my submission relates to are as follows:

Aerial Agricultural Aviation/Aircraft movements

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I support/oppose these provisions:  
(include whether you support or oppose in full or in part)

*I fully support the submission of the NZAAA*

The reason(s) for my submission are:  
(state in summary your reasons, and whether you seek any amendments)

*Support of NZAAA as they act in interests of Agricultural Aviation*

I seek the following decision from the Mackenzie District Council\_

☐ **I wish to be heard** in support of my submission.  
=I do not wish to be heard in support of my submission.  
(Tick one box)

If others make a similar submission I **would / would not** (*circle one*) be prepared to consider presenting a joint case with them at any hearing.

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Signature of submitter or person authorised to sign on behalf of submitter (A signature is not required if you make your submission by electronic means.)

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Date:

Please note that your submission (or part of your submission) may be struck out if the authority is satisfied that at least one of the following applies to the submission (or part of the submission):

- it is frivolous or vexatious;
- it discloses no reasonable or relevant case;
- it would be an abuse of the hearing process to allow the submission (or the part) to be taken further;
- it contains offensive language; or
- it is supported only by material that purports to be independent expert evidence, but

has been prepared by a person who is not independent or who does not have sufficient specialised knowledge or skill to give expert advice on the matter.

Once the closing date for submissions has passed, Council will publicly notify all submissions received, prepare a summary of submissions, and will allow a period for further submissions in support of, or in opposition to, those submissions already made.

Council hearings for Plan Changes 23 to 27 will then be arranged to consider all submissions. Anyone who has made a submission and indicated that they wish to be heard will have the right to attend the hearings and present their submission.

If you have any questions regarding Plan Change 23 or the submission process, please do not hesitate to contact the Planning Department at 03 685 9010 or via email [districtplan@mackenzie.govt.nz](mailto:districtplan@mackenzie.govt.nz)

**MACKENZIE DISTRICT COUNCIL DISTRICT PLAN**

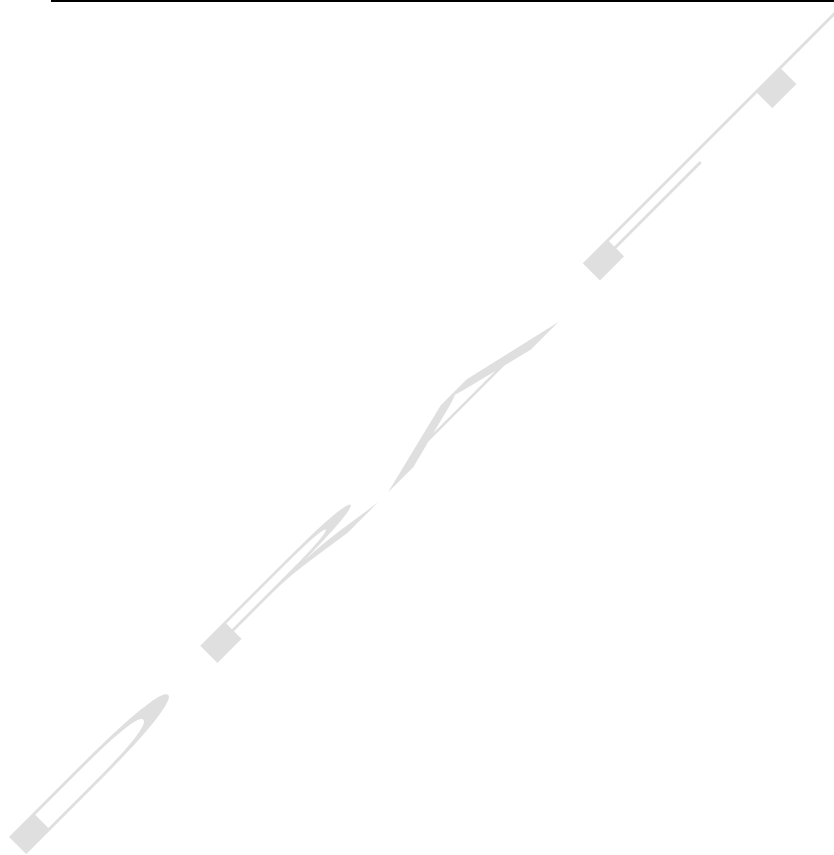
**IN THE MATTER**

of the Proposed Plan Change 23

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**STATEMENT BY TONY MICHELLE (EXECUTIVE OFFICER)  
FOR THE NEW ZEALAND AGRICULTURAL AVIATION ASSOCIATION  
22/01/2024**

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To: Mackenzie District Council - Proposed Plan Change 23  
[districtplan@mackenzie.govt.nz](mailto:districtplan@mackenzie.govt.nz)

Submission from: NZ Agricultural Aviation Association (NZAAA)

Submitter contact details:

Tony Michelle  
Executive Officer  
NZ Agricultural Aviation Association

Phone: 0274 325 085

Email: [enzaaaa@aviationnz.co.nz](mailto:enzaaaa@aviationnz.co.nz)

Postal address:

NZ Agricultural Aviation Association  
PO Box 2096, Wellington, 6140

Submissions due: 5.00pm Friday 26 January 2024

NZAAA would not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.

NZAAA wishes to speak to this submission.

If others make a similar submission, we will not consider presenting a joint case.

NZAAA's submissions are set out in the attached table.

Signature:



Date: 22/01/2024

## **1. ABOUT NZAAA**

1.1 The New Zealand Agricultural Aviation Association (NZAAA), a division of Aviation New Zealand (AvNZ), represents fixed-wing and helicopter operators engaged in applying fertilisers, agrichemicals, and vertebrate toxic agents (VTA's) for the purposes of:

- Primary production
  - Forestry production
  - Crop protection and disease control
  - Weed and pest control
  - Biosecurity threats
  - Biodiversity and conservation values
  - Frost control
- a. The industry is made up of circa 109 Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) certificated organisations operating circa 76 fixed-wing aircraft and 248 helicopters. Services provided by our industry add an estimated \$2.7BN annually to primary production for the NZ economy alone.
- b. Agricultural aircraft activities are deemed to be an essential service that is crucial in maintaining and enhancing primary sector production, ensuring animal welfare, responding to biosecurity threats, and protecting biodiversity values.
- c. An in-depth description of agricultural aviation activity can be found on the Quality Planning website at <https://www.qualityplanning.org.nz/index.php/node/709>

## **2. EXECUTIVE OFFICER QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

### **Tony Michelle, Executive Officer (EO) NZAAA**

My name is Tony Michelle, and I am the EO of NZAAA. I have been in the agricultural aviation industry since 1983 completing 11,000+ hours of flying as a helicopter pilot. I have recently sold my interests in a Company that I owned and managed for 33 years specializing in agricultural aviation activities including land and aquatic weed control, crop protection, fertiliser application, and pest eradication (including International and NZ offshore islands).

## **3. AGRICULTURAL AVIATION ACTIVITIES - THE USE OF RURAL AIRSTRIPS AND HELICOPTER LANDING AREAS**

NZAAA supports agricultural aviation activities as a permitted activity – Rationale:

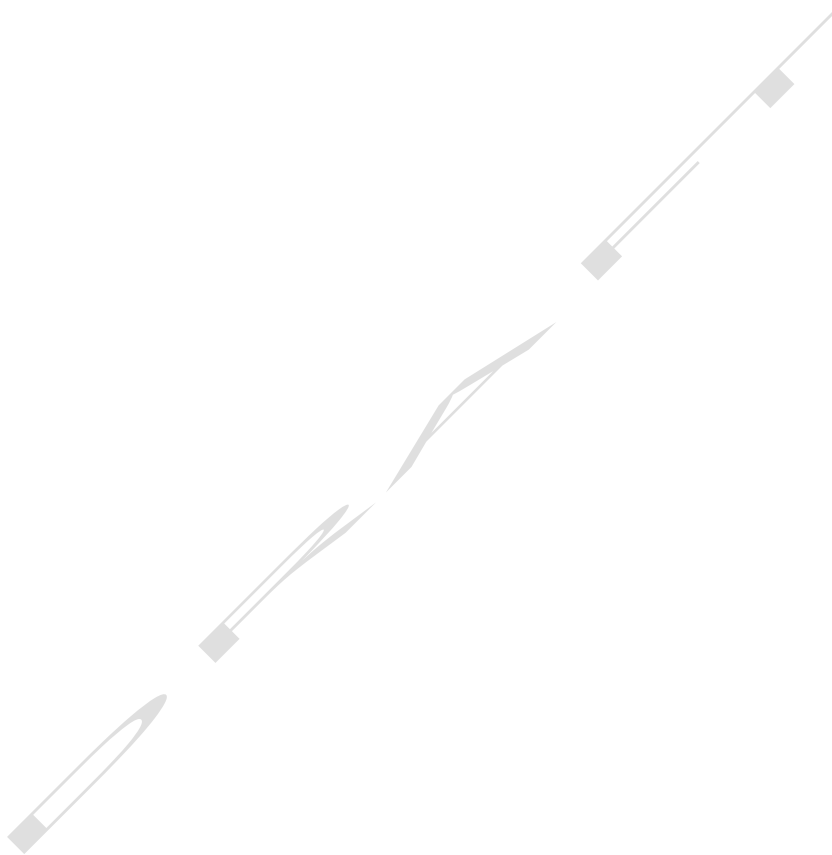
- a. Agricultural aviation adds significant value to farming and primary production for the NZ economy.
- b. Animal welfare is dependent on timely applications of fertiliser at critical seasonal feed deficit crunch points.

- c. Aircraft are used for application of fertilisers and agrichemicals in areas where the safety risks are too high for ground application.
- d. Rapid responses to biosecurity threats are critical.
- e. Pest and disease outbreaks cannot always be forecast.
- f. Agricultural aviation is critical in maintaining and enhancing NZ's biodiversity values.
- g. Helicopters are a critical tool in protecting horticultural crops from frost damage.
- h. Suitable weather conditions for the application of agrichemicals, fertilisers, and vertebrate toxic agents (VTA's) are variable and often unpredictable. Safe and effective applications require operational flexibility to optimise suitable conditions.
- i. Agricultural aircraft operate in a highly regulated environment and additional regulation will have a detrimental effect on primary production, ability to respond to biosecurity threats, and enhancing NZ's biodiversity values.
- j. Agricultural aviation activities are part of the rural character of the rural environment and an ancillary activity to primary production activities.
- k. Agricultural aircraft activity is intermittent or infrequent – multiple flights are usually undertaken over a relatively short period with no subsequent activity over long periods, therefore, the overall effects are limited and minor.
- l. NOTE: submissions relate to rural airstrips and helicopter landing areas used on an intermittent basis. Aircraft depots/bases that are used on a regular basis are not part of the permitted activity that is sought.

#### **4. SPECIFIC FEEDBACK TO THE PDP**

- a. The PDP recognises the importance of the General Rural Zone to the district by providing for agricultural aviation activities as an ancillary activity supporting primary production and conservation activities.
- b. GRUZ-R15 is titled 'Aircraft and Helicopter Movements'. There is no definition of 'movements' therefore it is unclear whether this applies to the landing and take-off of aircraft and/or aircraft in flight (noting that council cannot manage aircraft in flight – that is managed by the Civil Aviation Authority).
- c. NZAAA seeks to have the importance of agricultural aviation further recognised by including specific definitions that include Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's).
- d. Agricultural UAV's (drones) are rapidly increasing in capacity that will soon have capacity comparable to conventional manned aircraft.
- e. UAV's, are becoming increasingly important to support primary production and conservation.

- f. The addition of agricultural aviation specific definitions will future proof the plan to ensure that technology advances in agricultural aviation are enabled to maintain and enhance primary production and conservation.





## 7. SPECIFIC FEEDBACK RELATING TO THE PROPOSED DRAFT PLAN

Plan section	Plan provision	Support / Oppose	Reason	Decision sought
Definitions	AGRICULTURAL AVIATION ACTIVITIES  New	n/a	NZAAA seeks to have agricultural aviation defined to include primary production, biosecurity, and conservation activities undertaken by agricultural aviation	<b><u>Add a new definition:</u></b>  <b><u>Agricultural aviation activities; means the intermittent operation of an aircraft from a rural airstrip or helicopter landing area for primary production activities, and; conservation activities for biosecurity, or biodiversity purposes; including stock management, and the application of fertiliser, agrichemicals, or vertebrate toxic agents (VTA's). For clarity, aircraft includes fixed-wing aeroplanes, helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's).</u></b>
Definitions	Airfield	Support in part	NZAAA seeks to have a specific definition for rural airstrips that recognises the intermittent nature of use by agricultural aircraft.	<b><u>Add to the definition:</u></b>  means any area of land intended or designed to be used, whether wholly or partly, for aircraft movement or servicing, excluding helicopters and rural airstrips.
Definitions	AIRCRAFT MOVEMENT  New	n/a	NZAAA seeks to have an aircraft movement defined to ensure clarity. Definition sought is from the Proposed Selwyn District Plan Partially Operative Selwyn District Plan (Appeals Version).	<b><u>Add a new definition:</u></b>  <b><u>A single flight operation (landing or departure) of any aircraft, excluding helicopters.</u></b>
Definitions	CONSERVATION ACTIVITY	Support	NZAAA supports the definition of Conservation activities.	Retain the definition.

Plan section	Plan provision	Support / Oppose	Reason	Decision sought
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Definitions	HELICOPTER LANDING AREA	Support	NZAAA supports the definition of a Helicopter Landing Area	Retain the definition.
Definitions	HELICOPTER MOVEMENT  New	n/a	NZAAA seeks to have a helicopter movement defined to ensure clarity. Definition sought is from the Proposed Selwyn District Plan Partially Operative Selwyn District Plan (Appeals Version).	<b><u>Add a new definition:</u></b>  <b><u>A single helicopter flight operation (landing or departure) of any helicopter. Maintenance procedures are excluded.</u></b>
Definitions	PRIMARY PRODUCTION	Support	NZAAA supports the definition that is consistent with the NPS definition	Retain the definition
Definitions	REVERSE SENSITIVITY	Support	A definition for reverse sensitivity is important	Retain the definition
Definitions	RURAL AIRSTRIp  New	n/a	NZAAA seeks to have a definition of a Rural Airstrip included in the plan to recognise the intermittent nature of use by agricultural aircraft.	<b><u>Add a new definition:</u></b>  <b><u>Rural airstrip; means any defined area of land intended or designed to be used, whether wholly or partly, for the landing, departure, movement, or servicing of aircraft in the rural area.</u></b>
Natural Character	NATC-P1	Support	NZAAA supports policies that recognise the natural state of wetlands, lakes, and rivers	Retain the policy
Natural Character	NATC-P2	Support	NZAAA supports the preservation of wetlands, lakes and rivers particularly the removal of weeds and pests	Retain the policy
Natural Character	NATC-R	Support in part	There should be provision for pumps sheds adjacent to water bodies as they need to be located near the water source.	<b><u>Amend NATC-R1:</u></b>  Buildings and structures (excluding fences, water troughs and <b><u>pump sheds</u></b> )

Plan section	Plan provision	Support / Oppose	Reason	Decision sought
Natural Character	NATC-S1	Support in part	It should be clear that NATC-S1 only applies to activities specified in rules NATC-R1-R4	<b><u>Amend NATC-S1:</u></b> 1. Activities <b><u>in NATC-R1-R4</u></b> shall be located outside the setback distance specified in Table NATC-1
General Rural Zone	GRUZ-O1	Support	NZAAA supports objectives that prioritise primary production and supporting activities	Retain the objective
General Rural Zone	GRUZ-O2	Support	NZAAA supports objectives recognising activities that have a functional need within the zone and that allows primary production and supporting activities without being compromised by the risks of reverse sensitivities.	Retain the objective
General Rural Zone	GRUZ-P1	Support in part	NZAAA supports policies that enable primary production and seek to have supporting activities enabled consistent with the heading for the policy. It should also be clear that points 1 and 2 don't limit the policy intent	<b><u>Add to the policy statement:</u></b>  Enable a range of primary production activities <b><u>and supporting activities</u></b> to occur in the General Rural Zone, while maintaining the character and amenity of the Zone, <b><u>including by:</u></b>
General Rural Zone	GRUZ-P2	Support	NZAAA supports recognition of the importance of primary production and activities which support it.	Retain the policy
General Rural Zone	GRUZ-P3	Support	NZAAA supports policies that protect primary production and supporting activities from reverse sensitivities.	Retain the policy
General Rural Zone	GRUZ-P8	Support	NZAAA supports policies that enable agricultural aircraft activities to support primary production and conservation.	Retain the policy

Plan section	Plan provision	Support / Oppose	Reason	Decision sought
General Rural Zone	GRUZ-R15	Support in part	NZAAA supports part 1. of the rule that enables agricultural aviation to support primary production and conservation but a definition for aircraft and helicopter movements is sought so that the rule only applies to the take-off and landing of aircraft and helicopters.	Retain rule part 1. a. to g.

