

Before an Independent Hearings Panel of Wellington

City Council

In the matter of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the **Act**)

And

In the matter of hearing of submissions and further submissions on the Wellington City Proposed District Plan (**PDP**)

**Summary Statement of Evidence of
Jo Lester for Wellington International Airport Limited**

Dated: 7 August 2023

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1. My name is Jo Lester. I am the Airport Planning Manager at Wellington International Airport Limited (WIAL) and have been employed at the Airport for 4 years. My qualifications and experience are provided in my statement of evidence dated 18 July 2023.

2. I have had the benefit of listening to the evidence presented by Wellington City Council and various submitters during the past week. In light of those presentations and some of the questions that followed, I would like to make the following comments:

3. The Airport company is deeply conscious of its responsibilities to the community and to the environment. The Airport has a strong track record of working with its neighbours in an effort to enable the airport's operations to co-exist alongside its community as much as possible. This includes the following measures:
 - Community Relations Officer so that members of the community have an easy and consistent way of contacting and communicating with the airport;
 - Site wide construction noise management plan (including mitigation measures and communication with potentially affected noise receivers).
 - Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Noise) which is being prepared as required by the newly certified updated Airport Noise Management Plan – this provides for various channels of communication with the community (although I note many are already existing)
 - Notified submission period on draft Airport Noise Management Plan (15 substantial submissions).
 - Air Noise Management Committee
 - Working with members of GOTB and SPRA to set up a Community and Environment Fund in accordance with Condition 39 of our Main Site Area Designation
 - Quieter Homes Programme.

Quieter Homes Programme

4. The Guardians of the Bays and Strathmore Park Residents Association have indicated that they believe that the Airport has taken a very long time to implement the programme, and that it has fallen behind in its delivery. For information purposes, I have provided the history/background to this programme outlining the amount of research and development that was required prior to its implementation as Appendix A. The Programme is rolled out area by area, starting with the properties that experience the highest exposure to aircraft noise (refer Appendix B for rollout map). It is tailored to the individual needs of each property based on the proximity to the airport, the dwelling construction, and the level of noise exposure. Each house therefore requires a bespoke acoustic engineered design. As noted in my evidence, this programme did slow down during Covid-19 due to the lockdowns, resourcing and lack of building materials, however, is now back to previous rate of installation (1 property every three weeks). It is also expected that the process will speed up the further out from the airport property as less construction works will be required.

Noise Complaints

5. Kainga Ora have been critical that the Airport have not provided noise complaints data to show that outdoor amenity is an issue for people living in proximity to the airport, and that the Airport has not proven that there will be future reverse sensitivity effects.
6. I am happy to make the Airport's noise complaints register available with respect to past noise complaints but note that complaints do not make this distinction. I note here that the WCC Noise team are advised of each noise complaint received by WIAL (and how WIAL responded). These complaints and WIALs Responses are then discussed at the Air Noise Management Committee meeting and the minutes of these meetings along with the complaint register is subsequently published on the WIAL website. From my knowledge of the complaints and from discussions with complainants, it is clear that complaints are more often than not made about the lawful and usual operations of the Airport ranging from medical emergency flights within the curfew period to the air conditioning of the carparking building. It also appears that complaints can stem from changes in operations or unexpected

events from the perspective of the complainant (for example a particularly noisy aircraft, or different flight path) irrespective of whether they are inside or outside their house. We continue to have complaints about aircraft noise at night by homeowners wishing to have their windows open.

7. It is not possible to provide evidence of potential future reverse sensitivity effects. The introduction of new residents into an area affected by aircraft noise has the potential to increase the risk of reverse sensitivity effects on the airport despite internal acoustic treatment to new/altered buildings. WIAL's concerns relate not only to the reverse sensitivity effects resulting from the potential for complaints from the new residential occupants to curtail existing operations, but the impact on WIAL's ability to cater for changing operational requirements and future growth requirements (enabled by the Designations) without opposition from additional residential occupants within the Noise Overlay which could lead to pressure for further operational constraints at the Airport.
8. This concern is demonstrated by the reaction (and number of complaints) by some residents in the northern suburbs to a change in aircraft noise resulting from the Airways NZ recently implemented altered departure flight path out of Wellington Airport (discussed in my primary evidence).
9. It is perhaps important to also reiterate as outlined by Mr Humpheson, that the aircraft noise currently being experienced is not the noise that is predicted to be in the future. This is why the Airport has agreed to provide mechanical ventilation within the Outer Air Noise Overlay for buildings associated with existing noise sensitive activities in order to go some way to mitigate the effects of aircraft noise.

WIAL as an Affected Party – Notification Clause

10. Prior to Plan Change 72/73 of the Operative District Plan, Wellington Airport was not specifically noted in the District Plan to be notified of any resource consents for noise sensitive activities within the ANB. Unfortunately, this meant that there were a number of occasions where the Council inadvertently forgot to notify the Airport. It is pleasing that this has continued to be proposed for the Inner Air Noise Overlay,

however WIAL considers that this is also necessary in relation to the Outer Air Noise Overlay to ensure that where resource consents are required, effects from airport operations are properly considered and managed.

11. This is discussed by Ms O’Sullivan in her evidence, but I can confirm that WIAL has been involved in a number of resource consent applications in the past and has provided written approval for residential development. It has also opposed large scale multi-unit residential development where insufficient thought has been given to the location and design of the development in terms of aircraft operational noise including for example the provision of outdoor balcony areas facing the runway.

Obstacle Limitation Surface – Mapping in the PDP E-Plan

12. As mentioned by Kainga Ora on Friday, on 27 July, an additional data layer in relation to the Airports Airspace (OLS) Designation (WIAL 1) was uploaded to the Proposed District Planning Maps. This appeared to have taken Kainga Ora by surprise that the OLS covers much of the city which could potentially affect intensification enablement, even though WIAL has had an Airspace (OLS) designation in the WCC Operative District Plan since 1999, which has been rolled over into the PDP.
13. It is important to note that a 2D overlay of the WIAL 1 (OLS) designation was contained in the PDP Maps when notified, so the extent of it should not be considered as a surprise.
14. The primary reason for this additional data layer which essentially enables a parcel-by-parcel data search is to make it easier for all plan users to understand the OLS designation requirements in relation to any particular site. I note that Kainga Ora are very aware of these requirements as I have been in ongoing discussions with some of their team members with respect of their proposed developments in Strathmore Park that will penetrate the OLS. In these cases, it was found that the proposed developments would be shielded by the surrounding hills and therefore would have no impact on aircraft safety. WIAL was therefore able to provide written consent under section 176(1)(b).

15. WIAL (and its GIS Consultants, BECA) have been in ongoing discussions with the WCC District Plan and GIS teams for more than a year regarding this mapping. The timing of its upload into the District Plan Maps was not within WIAL's control, however all parties agreed that it would be a very helpful planning tool.

Dated 7 August 2023

Jo Lester

Airport Planning Manager

LUMINS – Land Use Management and Insulation for Airport Noise Study

History

The Land Use Management and Insulation for Airport Noise Study (LUMINS) finds its origins in the 1997 Consent Order which inserted into the District Plan a requirement for a Noise Management Plan for the Airport to be prepared. This plan is non statutory but sits alongside and complements the District Plan and its package of mechanisms, and aims to encourage the co-existence of the airport and the surrounding community. The Noise Management Plan requires:

- Consideration of land use measures which may mitigate adverse effects through changes to controls (Stage 1).
- Consideration of any need for insulation of existing houses within the ANB; the extent to which such insulation is appropriate, and the ultimate responsibility for cost (Stage 2).

LUMINS Stage 1

Stage 1 of LUMINS considered:

- The extent to which residential and other noise sensitive activities are likely and able to intensify within the ANB;
- Whether people's health would be affected by airport generated noise and if so what the extent of that effect was; and
- Whether, based on the findings of Stage 1, LUMINS should proceed with Stage 2.

In its conclusion, Stage 1 identified that there was a need to proceed to Stage 2 of LUMINS because:

- Residential and other noise sensitive development could significantly intensify within the ANB under the existing District Plan provisions.
- The extent of the effect of aircraft noise on the future population likely to be residing inside the ANB could be significant.

Consequently, it was recommended to the ANMC in August 2007 to progress to Stage 2 of the LUMINS Study.

Refer *Land Use Management and Insulation for Airport Noise Study (LUMINS) 2006*

LUMINS Stage 2

The purpose of the LUMINS Stage 2 Land Use was to:

- Examine the land uses within the ANB that are incompatible with the prevailing and forecast noise environment
- Determine the effectiveness of existing planning instruments in promoting compatible land uses and minimising incompatible land uses
- Determine the changes required to planning instruments to promote more compatible land uses within the ANB.

The LUMINS study made the following recommendations for land use change and management:

Appendix A

1. The existing land use measures within the Air Noise Boundary (ANB) of the District Plan were inadequate and required amendment
2. That where the sound exposure exceeds L_{dn} 75dB residential properties should be purchased over time and residential (noise-sensitive) use be terminated
3. There is a need to insulate existing noise-sensitive activities (residential and educational facilities) within the ANB.

Refer *Land Use Management and Insulation for Airport Noise Study (LUMINS) Stage 2, 2009*

LUMINS Actions

WCC District Plan land use controls

The majority of the identified planning issues were addressed through Plan Changes 72 and 73 to the District Plan and review of the Airport and Golf Course Precinct provisions.

WIAL are identified as an affected party to any resource consent application for subdivision or residential activity within the ANB. WIAL actively engages with WCC on such applications and enquiries with respect to residential activity (new or intensification) are forwarded to the Airport Planner.

Purchase and removal of residential dwellings located within the L_{dn} 75dB contour

LUMINS Stage 2 identified a total of 44 residential properties on Bridge Street, Cairns Street and Calabar Road within the L_{dn} 75 dB contour to be acquired and decommissioned from residential use.

All WIAL-owned dwellings were removed following the LUMINS recommendation, and WIAL's Fair Valuation and Purchase Programme has been offered to home owners since 2009. The Quieter Homes noise mitigation package are not offered to these properties.

Acoustic mitigation (insulation) project

The Acoustic Mitigation Implementation Report (Impact Project Management 2013) scoped the LUMINS implementation project, identifying a number of principles to guide the implementation, procedural requirements and recommendations for a Trial of the implementation project. These recommendations were adopted by ANMC on 11 November 2013.

The Trial Phase was implemented on six Airport owned houses that best represented building construction types within the ANB. The acoustic mitigation works trialled different products and construction techniques to identify which performed best with respect to noise reduction, aesthetic and cost. The Trial Phase was completed in October 2014.

A comprehensive review of the Trial Phase findings and project costings was undertaken in early 2015. Consideration of the alternative acoustic treatment products installed in the Trial Phase was undertaken and the preferred acoustic treatment options, based on an assessment of quality, performance and cost, identified. This informed a Certified Standard Package of Acoustic Treatment – a priority order of acoustic treatments options, including an initial assessment of risks to consider prior to commencing design and construction (pre-design).

An Audit Phase was proposed to test and refine the acoustic treatment options and installation process under “real life” conditions prior to the programme roll out across the ANB.

The acoustic treatment package was successfully installed in three privately owned homes in early 2016.

Appendix A

Quieter Homes

The phased roll out of the “Quieter Homes” acoustic mitigation project commenced in April 2016. The phased roll out is managed by area, starting with those properties that experience the highest exposure to aircraft noise.

ANMC is regularly updated as to the progress of the Quieter Homes roll out.

Quieter Homes Roll-Out Map

