

15th November

New Zealand Infrastructure Commission

Kia Ora Tautou,

We read with interest your request for submissions regarding infrastructure projects in New Zealand.

We believe the Commission should include in its studies investigating a system whereby it is possible to efficiently resolve complex interlinking infrastructure issues that span a number of local authorities, agencies and/or companies.

Our submission is an illustrative example of the problems that arise when individual projects are considered in isolation rather than being assessed in a more holistic way where there are a number of interlinking infrastructure problems to resolve.

We submit that the Commission should be able to take a wider view, rather than being restricted to considering individual projects in isolation. While an individual project approach may often be appropriate, we submit there will be numerous instances where when consideration of a wider, holistic perspective is warranted.

This is particularly important as the Commission is in a better position to consider the impacts in cases where infrastructure issues involve competing councils and/or competing companies.

Decisions made in the individual interests of one entity can often result in inefficient/wrong infrastructure decisions had they been considered holistically in terms of the region/country. In addition, it is questionable whether small councils have the necessary competencies to be evaluating and planning for such complex situations.

Please refer to the attached document that sets out our position in relation to such an example. This document is the result of thousands of hours of research over a number of years.

Our example shows that one large, proposed infrastructure project proceeding could then enable resolution of a series of other significant infrastructure problems in one particular region. In particular, our example looks at the Central Otago Lakes District and considers;-

That the Christchurch International Airport Ltd (CIAL) development of a new international airport at Tarras would then enable; -

- The closure of Queenstown Airport.
- Which then enables the conversion of Queenstown Airport land, (c160Ha), to a high-density mixed use urban development.
- Consequently, this reduces the need for satellite development within the Whakatipu basin where such development is causing infrastructure issues with community facilities, schools, health, roading, bridges and services.

Queenstown and the Whakatipu basin are facing significant infrastructure problems caused by geographic issues and the current and projected increases in population, (the current basin population is projected to grow from 35000 to 75000 by 2053).

The region is consistently one of the fastest growing in the country and regularly exceeds high level growth forecasts. This growth causes infrastructure problems that are not best resolved by individual fixes.

Infrastructure that is affected by this growth includes hospital, schools, bridges, roading, and services.

There are also capacity constraints within the basin in the supply of land for residential expansion. (We note the Infrastructure Commission took the unusual step of submitting to QLDC, stating that their proposals to increase density were woefully inadequate and that council needed to find a large block of land for future residential development).

Currently, the only apparent plan for the region is to continue to expand residential areas linearly through the countryside, with the consequent inefficiencies in the supply, and cost of, infrastructure. Roding is at capacity as are all main bridges. Continuing satellite development will create the demand for inefficient and costly infrastructure.

What infrastructure will be necessary for the region looks very different depending on whether or not a new airport is built at Tarras. If Tarras is built, many infrastructure problems will disappear or become significantly easier to resolve. Should the airport not be built, the regional infrastructure build costs will be significantly higher, and will lock the region into much higher, and continuing, running costs and carbon emissions.

The Commission correctly identifies that New Zealand has significant issues with the efficiency of our infrastructure spending. One source of that inefficiency is siloed thinking that arises from individual councils and companies, (who are also often prevented from collaboration by the Commerce Act), making decisions based purely within their own regional boundary.

In this instance decisions are being made in silos by the 'owners' of two airport companies, (Christchurch City Council and Queenstown Lakes District Council), and two airport companies (Christchurch International Airport Ltd and Queenstown Airport Corporation). Their decisions will also significantly affect Cromwell in particular, (Central Otago District Council), and the Otago Regional Council who effectively have no say in the outcome despite being affected.

We believe the Infrastructure Commission is best placed to take the lead on such holistic studies. In this example, this would bridge competing councils and airport companies and enable recommendations that would resolve a series of interlinked infrastructure problems for the Central Otago region.

We would be interested to see how our example informs the Commission as to how best to handle such complex planning to ensure the efficient and correct provision of infrastructure. We would also be interested in any feedback about how we could best influence achieving the efficient outcomes that our example demonstrates.

We would be happy to supply further information and/or meet at any stage to discuss this further. We look forward to your feedback and suggestions.

Ngā mihi nui



Co chair Flightplan5050 Inc.

(attached. Structural Response to Climate Change -Queenstown Lakes District)