



# WELLINGTON AIRPORT INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL

## Summary of Initial Findings

*Finalisation of the Master Plan for the Wellington Airport development is proving to be a drawn-out process. This was not originally envisaged when the Airport Company's draft Master Plan was released in December 1991. The Wellington Airport Independent Review Panel, established by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, recently reported on its actions over the past 18 months. This pamphlet summarises the Panel's initial findings.*

Office of the  
**PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**  
Te Kaitiaki Taiao a Te Whare Pāremata

PO Box 10-241, WELLINGTON

November 1993



# SUMMARY OF INITIAL FINDINGS

---

## Background

- On 10 December 1991 Wellington International Airport Ltd (WIAL) released a draft Master Plan which outlined proposed future developments.
- In January 1992 the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment advised WIAL, Wellington City Council (WCC), and the Ministers of Finance, Environment and Civil Aviation that an environmental impact assessment should be carried out on the overall plan for the future development of Wellington Airport.
- On 7 February 1992 WIAL agreed to bring forward the environmental effects assessment of the Wellington Airport Master Plan. Public submissions would be sent for independent analysis. The independent review panel was established to ensure that the process followed in the production of a Master Plan for the development of the Wellington Airport was, and could be seen by the public to be, honest, effective and credible.

funded by WIAL

## Environmental Effects Assessment

- The environmental effects assessment included a number of specialist studies. The Panel has ensured the terms of reference for all the studies were appropriate. Advice was based on public comment and possible environmental effects.
- Studies included reviews of passenger and aircraft movement forecasts and development plans for consequential facilities and the financial forecasts in the draft Master Plan. Other proposed studies included:
  - » Operational Studies
  - » Civil Engineering
  - » Airport Noise
  - » Commercial Area Studies
  - » Air Travel
  - » Tangata Whenua
  - » Alternative Airport Layouts
  - » Alternative Airport Locations
  - » Road Traffic and Transportation
  - » Landscape and Visual Effects
  - » Air Quality and Emissions
  - » Regional and Local Economic Effects
  - » Community Consultation and Social Impact Assessment.

15 April 1994

The Chairperson  
Environment Committee  
Wellington City Council  
PO Box 2199  
WELLINGTON

Att: Lloyd Pallesen

Dear Sir

I request that you place the enclosed letter from the Wellington Airport Independent Review Panel on the agenda for your 6 May 1994 Environment Committee meeting.

I set up the Wellington Airport Independent Review Panel in 1992 after adverse public reaction to Wellington International Airport Ltd's (WIAL) release of its draft Master Plan in December 1991. The Independent Review Panel has been required to review the adequacy of the investigation, information-gathering and dissemination processes followed by WIAL and its consultants for producing the Environmental Effects Assessment, the Master Plan and the District Plan Proposal. I trust the results of the Independent Review Panel's work over this time will be useful to the Wellington City Council in its deliberations. In addition to this submission to the Environment Committee, the Wellington Airport Independent Review Panel will be delivering their final report to me before notification of the WCC District Plan in June 1994. I will then release a report that can be part of the information provided for public submissions on the WCC District Plan.

Yours sincerely

**Helen R Hughes**  
**Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment**

*Copied to:* Mr N Lewthwaite  
Manager  
Environment & Resource Management Services  
Wellington City Council



15 April 1994

TC 2/3

The Chairperson  
Environment Committee  
Wellington City Council  
PO Box 2199  
WELLINGTON

**Att: Lloyd Pallesen**

Dear Sir

**AIRPORT REVIEW PANEL'S COMMENTS ON WIAL'S PLAN SUBMISSION AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION**

The Wellington Airport Independent Review Panel received Wellington International Airport Ltd's (WIAL) draft Plan Submission, Designation Requirements and Background Documentation in the last week of March. We emphasise that the version of WIAL's Plan Submission we are commenting on here is that dated 15 March 1994. The version that the WCC Environment Committee is examining may have been modified by WCC officers.

**Miramar Golf Course**

It has been generally understood that WIAL have no intention of pursuing the 9-hole course option (Concept 3) if the realigned 18-hole course option (Concept 2) is negotiated satisfactorily with the Golf Club. (Also see peer review conclusions on p.107 of Background Documentation.) The reason for applying at this stage for a designation to accommodate the reduced golf course is given in the last two paragraphs of 5.4.2 on p.149 of the Background Documentation. However, the designation requested far exceeds the public understanding of WIAL's intentions. Therefore a proposed District Plan which envisages such developments is likely to give rise to unnecessary public debate, acrimony and concern. If Concept 3 is developed, there are a number of issues



that have not been adequately followed up to date. These include the acceptability and desirability of commercial accommodation in this area as well as the implications for neighbouring residents.

We therefore recommend that it would be in the interests of the Wellington City Council and local residents if this aspect of the District Plan could be held over until the wishes of WIAL were better clarified. Alternatively, a clear requirement for a full environmental assessment and public consultation process could be written into the Plan for whenever changes in land use activities are proposed for particular parts of the designated area.

### Noise

The Review Panel does not think the noise issue has been adequately covered in the WIAL documentation. There is insufficient information about analysis of options or reasons for the approaches taken.

Purely for illustrative purposes, we will highlight instances below where we consider insufficient technical information has been provided.

For example, the decision of where to put the 65 Ldn airnoise boundary is an important one. Its position is based on people's expectations, current technology and the extent to which noise reduction would be negated by increased airport activity. To what extent has its position been based on current usage levels? Should a 55 Ldn airnoise boundary be drawn also? It appears from the NZ Standard for Airport Noise Management that various land use controls and appropriate acoustic insulation are required even at this level of noise. If noise levels increase or are not reduced to the extent promised by hushkitting, this imposes increased costs for acoustic insulation on residents within the 55 Ldn airnoise boundary. The question of compensation in these instances should be discussed. From now on, the baseline for airport noise must be the current level of usage with Hushkits fitted.

There is insufficient information given about how proposed operations differ from the current situation, for example, the change in night curfew hours. The public need to know such details.



In the Amended Designation document, under 5.2.5(b)(ii) on p.17, 'holiday periods' should be defined. In the same document, under 5.2.5(d) on p.18, we understand these permitted noise emission levels from land use activities are **additional** to those permitted from aircraft. Can there be rules set to control the **total** emission of noise from the airport?

We question the need to 'temporarily' exempt aircraft-mounted auxiliary power units (APU's) and ground-based portable power generators (GPU's) from general land use noise controls (pp.116-117). We understand Air New Zealand's APU's already comply and GPU's can readily be substituted by mains supply.

### **Discretionary Activities (pp.12-13, Plan Submission)**

The Independent Review Panel consider the list of discretionary activities on p.13 unacceptable. We understand that if WIAL were planning to depart from the rules set up for activities (i)-(xi) on p.13, there would be no need for the public to be notified. Not even the adjoining landowners would need to be notified (p.13, para.1). As the non-notifiable decisions would be made by WCC officers, they would not even be discussed in a public arena by Councillors.

### **Buffer Zones**

Provision for landscaping and screening is outlined on p.3 of the Plan Submission. WCC may wish to consider a landscape development plan for the whole area, involving community consultation.

### **Tangata Whenua Consultation**

The Review Panel notes that WIAL have not consulted tangata whenua about their development plans. It may be something the WCC Maori Committee may need to address.



I trust the Review Panel's comments will be useful to the WCC in the production of the District Plan. In addition to its final report to the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, the Review Panel will be releasing a press statement when the proposed District Plan is released to increase public awareness of the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

**Brian Tyler**

**Chairperson**

**Wellington Airport Independent Review Panel**



- 
- The initial timetable called for the environmental effects assessment to be completed by the end of 1992. Towards the end of 1992 two issues became of major significance. One was the WCC's need to purchase airport land for the sewage treatment plant. The second was whether there was a requirement for extending the separation distance between the runway and taxiway.
  - The first issue was eventually resolved in late October 1992 when agreement between WIAL and WCC was reached. Land was sold to WCC for the treatment plant and WIAL purchased land from WCC on the western side of the airport.
  - To resolve the second issue WIAL reviewed the need for greater separation between runway and taxiway. WIAL noted that Wellington Airport did not comply with the New Zealand Standard or the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) recommended practice for runway to taxiway separation. The Air Transport Division (Civil Aviation Authority or CAA's predecessor) had advised WIAL that these requirements would become mandatory. The original draft Master Plan was prepared on that basis.
  - On 8 December 1992, WIAL announced it would undertake a comprehensive review of the land use plan in the draft Master Plan. Most of the above specialist studies were put on hold.

## **Key Issues**

## **Land Sales**

## **Runway and Taxiway Separation**

## **Master Plan Revision**

An application was made and subsequently approved in June 1993 by CAA for a dispensation to retain the current runway to taxiway separation distance. This approval resulted in WIAL's announcement of a new draft Master Plan. Only 20 houses would need to be purchased for airport development compared with the 180 over a 20 year period proposed in the original draft Master Plan. Development would now take place substantially within existing boundaries which means some of the specialist studies are no longer required. Work continues to determine the optimal use of this area.

## **Public Uncertainty**

- The public and the Miramar Golf Club were left for some time in a state of considerable uncertainty as to the effects on their properties. The need for extensive acquisition of land from the Miramar Golf Club has now been reviewed and negotiations in this regard are well under way.

## **Public Consultation**

- Public consultation was a minor part of the development of the draft Master Plan. The period initially set aside for public debate and consultation after release of the December 1991 draft Master Plan was inadequate also. The panel considers that WIAL grossly underestimated the amount of public and political opposition there would be to its 1991 draft Master Plan. When this became apparent, WIAL took steps to improve its public consultation process.
- The Panel encouraged the Airport Company to keep the public fully informed.
- WIAL announced in September 1992 that comprehensive community consultation and a social impact study would take place. However, when these consultations were delayed, full explanation was not given to the public.

## **Where to Now?**

- The Panel has shown the benefits of involvement in the planning process of an independent group. WIAL is preparing material for submission to WCC for its District Plan (scheduled for June 1994). At that stage the material required for full public debate and submissions in respect of the WCC District Plan will be a matter of public record. The Panel's involvement will continue until WIAL formally lodges its planning submission with WCC.

## **Conclusions**

- **The Panel concluded that lack of public consultation in the initial Master Plan process was a major shortcoming. However, once WIAL realised the extent of public concern, it took steps to improve public consultation. The Company announced a revised draft Master Plan in June 1993 and with its environmental effects assessment should be able to put a proposal to WCC which better meets the needs of all affected parties.**
- **The level of public concern about the proposed airport development has diminished considerably. Initially, WIAL anticipated the eventual acquisition of 180 houses and a large part of Miramar Golf Club land. WIAL has now determined that development can be substantially within existing boundaries.**

---

## **Membership of the Panel**

*Convenor:* Mr Brian Tyler  
*Members:* Ms Sylvia Allan  
Mr Giff Davidson  
Dame Miriam Dell  
Mr John Egan  
Dr Eric Palmer  
*Secretary:* Ms Carol Lough