

A helicopter is shown landing on a snowy, rocky mountain slope. The helicopter is dark-colored with red skis and a red tail boom. It is positioned on the left side of the frame, facing towards the right. The background features a large, rugged mountain peak with patches of snow. In the foreground, there is a body of water, likely a lake, reflecting the surrounding environment. The sky is clear and blue.

Effects to think about when considering airports:

- 1 Noise
- 2 Dust emissions
- 3 Smell of exhaust fumes
- 4 Visual effects of helicopters
- 5 Cumulative effects of different operators on the same area
- 6 Health and Safety issues including:
 - Risks to pilots, passengers and people on the ground
 - Visual distractions to motorists

Managing Airports in Rural Areas Issues and Options

Council is reviewing the District Plan and looking at what works well and what needs to be changed. As part of this process, we've been looking at the provisions that manage the take-off and landing of aircraft from landing areas in the Rural Area. This does not include Queenstown and Wanaka airport.

'Airports' are very broadly defined under the Resource Management Act and this means any identified area intended for take-off and landing is included.

Research has identified some issues with the way we currently manage airports and we'd like your feedback. You can view the full research report at www.qldc.govt.nz/monitoring.



The Situation Today

The District Plan rules that manage the take-off and landing of aircraft from airports require a discretionary resource consent for all use of land as an airport, regardless of the frequency. The exceptions to this are:

- Emergency landings, rescues and fire fighting
- Activities related to farming.

In addition to consent, airport activities may also require a Recreation Permit from the Commissioner of Crown Lands or a concession from the Department of Conservation (DOC). This could be a 'double up'.



Proposed Changes

The Council would like to use the District Plan Review process to improve the rules regarding the management of airports. Possible questions include:

- Q Is there a need for resource consent for airports on:
 - Rural General zoned public conservation land where operators already hold a Concession from DOC, subject to a 500m setback from adjoining sites?
 - Rural General zoned Crown Pastoral Land where operators already hold a Recreation Permit from Land Information New Zealand, subject to a 500m setback from adjoining sites?
- Q Should we permit 3 aircraft take-off and landings per site per week for private land in the Rural General zone where the landing location is at least 500m from other sites, public roads, public places or trails? This would occur only where the 500m setback could be met so that landings would not significantly disturb adjoining residents.
- Q Do you think the 3 aircraft take-off and landings per site per week threshold (subject to a 500m setback) is appropriate? If not, what do you think the thresholds should be?
- Q Should we permit occasional use of land as an airport in association with temporary events, such as sporting events, musical concerts, or school fairs?

- Q When assessing the effects of helicopter use of airports, should we fully adopt the existing New Zealand Standard NZS 6807:1994 - Noise Management and Land Use Planning for Helicopter Landing Areas, which is specific to helicopter noise?

What do you think?

Please send your comments to:

Policy and Planning
Queenstown Lakes District Council
Private Bag 50072, Queenstown 9348
Email services@qldc.govt.nz

Or comment online at
www.qldc.govt.nz/district_plan_review

Comments should be received by **16 November 2012**.



airports in rural areas