

From: _____

Date: 1 September 2022 at 1:14:40 PM NZST

To:

Subject: Ashburton Airport

On another note, I have missed the deadline for the submissions on the Ashburton Airport. Can you please convey my feelings or pass them on to the appropriate person, as follows: I have read through the documents supplied by Ashburton District Council. Having flown out of Ashburton Airport for the last twelve years, I would be very happy to see hangar homes there. This would be wonderful for the airport, and for aviation enthusiasts to be living onsite!

I would be most concerned if the Flying School from Oamaru were to transfer to Ashburton Airport. My reasons for this are that our airspace is known to be a very safe airspace. Mid Canterbury Aero Club is a very active club that strongly supports young (and older) kiwis learning to fly. Flying is not just the domain of senior members of the community who have extra funds at their disposal. I ran the Young Eagles programme at the airport for a number of years which supports teenagers interested in aviation and learning to fly. I was also the Club Captain for a number of years, organising flying activities based out of Mid Canterbury Aero Club. We would regularly have other clubs join us for activities and flyaway trips because of the wonderful places we'd go to locally and further afield, and for the safe flying culture promoted at Ashburton Airport. We never had an incident or accident.

I understand that Oamaru have had a number of incidents/accidents due to an offshore flying school coming to the area, and a number of other NZ pilots no longer feel confident flying through their airspace due to the Flying School students' lack of English language understanding and legibility, to be able to conduct their radio safety calls to a clearly comprehensible level. This gives me grave concern. Flying is a fantastic hobby that for many goes on to be their vocation, yet safety is absolutely paramount.

My other concern around this is that, many years ago, Canterbury Aero Club, based at Christchurch International Airport started their International Aviation Academy to help raise funds for their club. It eventually got to the point where kiwis were not easily able to apply because international students paid a lot more and kiwis missed out. I am all for diversification and making the airport more profitable, but it also needs to be affordable for kiwis and others to use it.

Having put thousands of volunteer hours personally into the airport over the years, I see it as a fantastic asset. At present, learning to fly is expensive, yet due to the wonderful work of the Mid Canterbury Aero Club and others, learning to fly at Ashburton is more affordable than many other places – this needs to continue in order to keep people using it.

Here in New Zealand, we have a very reputable aviation safety record. Our standards are exemplary. Ashburton Airport is known to be an exceptionally safe place to learn to fly from. Because of our proximity to Christchurch and Timaru, other pilots know it to be a safe place to fly to and have a rest stop in, with great quality grass runways and grounds. Helicopter and fixed wing instructors and students use it on a regular basis for cross country flying experience because it is not overwhelmed with users. I think that having a flying school based here is not conducive to the bright future of the airport.

Nga mihi kind regards,
Annie Jacobs